

# SOL AZTECA

PROJECTS ABROAD MEXICO NEWSLETTER



VOLUNTEER UPDATE

*Kine-Lee Flugesang - Dentistry*

DESTINATION

*Puerto Vallarta*

MEXICAN CUISINE

*Carne a la Mexicana*



## ***Editor's Notes:***

**Hello Everyone and welcome to May's issue of this newsletter.**

**Everything is going well with the placements and the volunteers working there, We've been saying goodbye a lot but also welcome to Mexico to the new people arriving.**

**Guadalajara looks great, sunny and a bit hot! But that doesn't stop our volunteers on their effort to help somebody who needed no matter how big or small the task or necessity might be.**

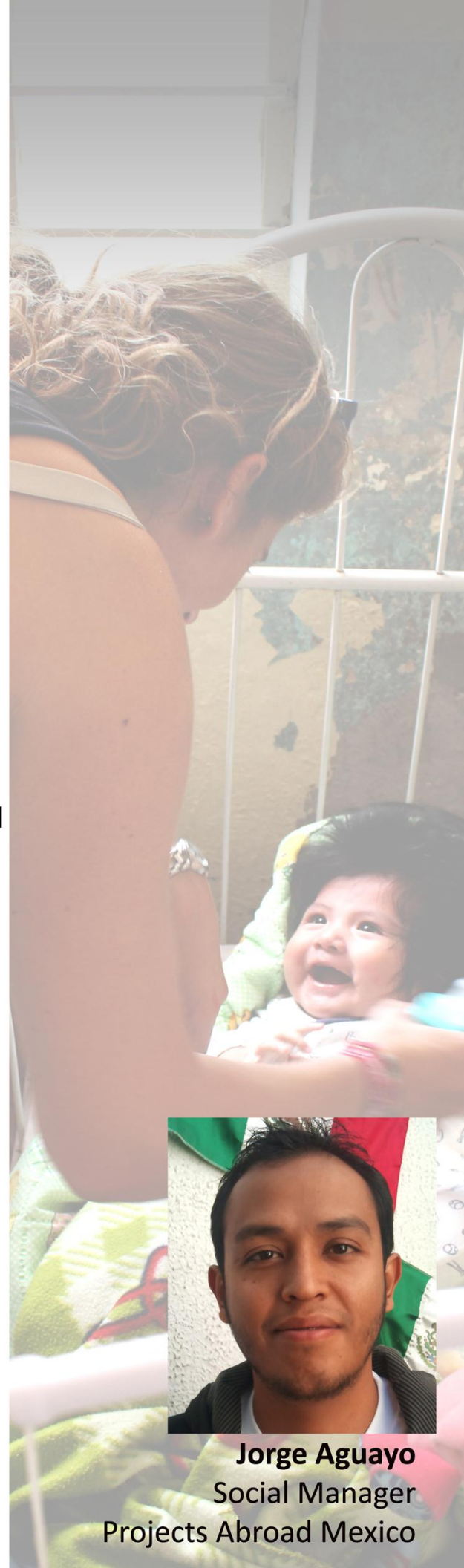
**We are also getting ready for the summer, which is the most busy time here in Mexico. During June and July lots of volunteers arrive to Mexico to have a different experience .**

**I would like to thank to Kine-Lee Flugesang for her article about her Dentistry project.**

**Also to Alejandro Soto for the recipe he publishes each month.**

**Hope you enjoy this issue**

**Cheers!!**



**Jorge Aguayo**  
Social Manager  
Projects Abroad Mexico

# Volunteer Story

## Kine-Lee Flugesang. Dentistry

After a long journey from Norway I arrived at the airport in GDL, where a friendly and reassuring Alejandro from Projects Abroad was waiting for me. Everything went so smoothly, just like I had been informed beforehand. He took me to world's best host family, and it was the start of three incredible months living with a Mexican family. The mother, father and the son, who was about my age, showed me so much of the Mexican culture and welcomed me in their home like an extra family member.



The mother completely spoiled me with all her delicious cooking, and getting up every morning to make me my breakfast and lunch to bring to work. And for *Semana Santa* (easter) they even brought me on a “family trip” to Mazatlan, the Pacific beach town northwest of GDL.

In the dental department in the general hospital of Zapopan I was also received very well. I was surprised at how old and worn everything was, and I had to get used to doing things very differently, also regarding the lower standard of hygiene. This, I learned, was only because it was a public hospital, I saw some pictures of a private clinic, and it looked just as modern as the one I'm working at in Norway.



My dentist associate in Zapopan impressed me with his good dental work despite minimal equipment. He taught me a few tricks, and most of all lots of Spanish, which I really needed.

One month of poor Spanish classes in Playa del Carmen really wasn't enough, but little by little, all the time practicing a lot, I got to know the language at a level that allowed me to move around on my own and explore.

Guadalajara is such a beautiful city – its grand churches like La Catedral, El Expiatorio and La Basilica really can take your breath away.



During my project I got to do two dental outreaches that were very nice in two very different ways. The first one was in an orphanage for boys that was very poor.



Most of the boys there were around the age of 8-9 years old – they were very dirty, but so sweet. They did not have a habit of taking care of their teeth, so there was a lot of gum inflammation and caries. We gave a talk about dental hygiene and diet, and why these things are so important.

Then afterwards we demonstrated for everyone how to brush their teeth effectively, before we did a dental check-up on everyone. Each boy was given his own toothbrush, and we also gave toothpaste and dental floss to the orphanage – the children looked so proud and happy.

The second dental outreach was in a daycare, where the children mostly were 3 years old. Although some of them had perfect teeth, there was a lot more caries than among 3 year olds in Norway. We made a plan for informing the parents and giving advice, as well as sending the children with caries to specialists.

Mexico is very different from Norway in the sense that the children are allowed by their parents to eat far more unhealthy food, for not to mention candy, every day. This contributes to major health problems not only in relation to dental health, but also general health.

I got to know so many wonderful people during my project, the host family and all the people they introduced me to, the people from the Projects Abroad office, other volunteers, and other Mexicans.

I must say that Mexicans strike me as a very friendly people with a very good sense of humor. As I loved to take salsa classes and go out to dance, without always having somebody to go with me, I was very happy to find how easy it was to get in contact with other Mexicans. In this way I made a lot of new friends; men and women alike.

During the weekends I traveled quite a bit. I went to Puerto Vallarta with the other volunteers, I visited a friend in Colima and we got to free turtle babies into the ocean at a Turtle reserve. Before we went to the beach in Melaque,





I went to the awesome Mexico City and visited another friend, and together we went to Cuba for a week, and I went to Mazatlan for Semana Santa with my Mexican family like I mentioned earlier. It has been more of an adventure than I could imagine! And the best part about it is that it is all real – I know I have made friends, even a Mexican family, that I will have maybe for the rest of my life.

Before I went I thought that Mexico was a dangerous country, and that I would have to worry about my safety all the time. But my advice for future volunteers is just to keep your eyes open, and be open for all the wonderful opportunities that present themselves, to experience, to get to know people and to live a life so adventurously different from the one you have at home. I



know it has given me so much, and I can only recommend for everybody who is considering it to go ahead and do the same thing. Projects Abroad is the perfect organization for people who have never travelled like this before.

Kine-Lee Fuglesang (27), Dentist.

# Placement of the Month

## Desarrollo Infantil Divina Providencia



The Day Care Center "Desarrollo Infantil Divina Providencia" is a center founded by a catholic group of nuns with the aim to provide to poor and single moms of the area an excellent place to leave their children while they have to work to support their families.

A regular nursery is most of the time not affordable for these families, which sometimes causes the mothers to take their kids with them and as some of them have to work in street stands selling food or any kind of products, putting their kids in risk. The center provides a clean, safe and loving place for them.

All the parents have to leave their kids in the centre at 8:00 am latest.

The children are divided in groups by age. Then they have their breakfast and volunteers will help to feed them.



Then is free play time where you can help only by making sure they are doing fine or implementing your own educational activities.

Then, it's lunch time, followed by nap time. Parents will start to pick them up later in the afternoon.

Volunteers will be an extra pair of hand helping the staff in the task required.

Activities besides, playing with the children, includes cleaning the areas for the kids, changing diapers, helping the staff in the organization of the "free play time" and feeding the children.





# Destination

## Puerto Vallarta

Located 5 hours away from Guadalajara, Puerto Vallarta is one of the top destinations for volunteers, Mexicans and people all over the world.

Puerto Vallarta is a town that offers absolutely everything for travelers no matter the age, from cheap hostels for young travelers to big resorts and with all-inclusive for the seniors of families.



Picture by Lisa Andres: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/lilu12323/>. Creative Commons license.

In the very centre of the town, right next to the hotels area, you will find the traditional market, where you can find some gifts and crafts. If food is your thing, all over the centre it is possible to get all kinds of food, since the traditional Mexican restaurant is the most recognized and international place where artists and famous people have eaten before.

Different beautiful beaches such as “Playa de los Muertos,” “Las Gemelas,” “Conchas Chinas” are just a few examples. Also you can hire a guided tour to the “Islas Marietas” or to see the whales.

And of course the nightlife! One of the most famous in the country!

# Mexican Kitchen

Carne a la Mexicana (serves 4)

**Ingredients:**

1/2 kg. steak  
1 onion  
2 red tomatoes  
2 green chillies (optional)  
Salt & Pepper

**Preparation:**

- 1) Chop the onion and the two red tomatoes in squares. Also, if you want, chop the chillies in circles.
- 2) If you have whole steaks, cut them into smaller squares or ask in the meat shop to chop it for you.
- 3) Pour a bit of corn oil (or any of your choice) in a fry pan.
- 4) Once the oil is hot, place all the vegetables and the meat at the same time.
- 5) Add salt and pepper to your taste.
- 6) Cover it and wait till the meat is fully cooked and when it has released all its juice. Allow 30 to 40 mins for this.
- 7) Serve and enjoy!







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