

Features

es its worth to Guilfordians



Photo courtesy of Alica Stubnova

themselves to face whatever problems may arise in the future. We know there will always be problems in the poor communities. We are not trying to solve them all, but only to show the children that they are not powerless, that they can make a difference working together."

Cari Boram

Completing my education studies project was by far one of my most rewarding experiences in Mexico. I not only gained cultural knowledge and teaching experience, but I developed a deeper understanding of education as a universal issue. Most striking was the enthusiasm of these children amidst often unimaginably destitute surroundings—so eager to learn, so free to love...I now know why education truly is a privilege. This realization was their greatest gift to me.



To the left: Children from the Jardines de la Barranca hold up their handy work.

Above: Guilford students pose with the children from the Jardines de la Barranca.

Photos courtesy of Carl Bloom

Alica Stubnova

For centuries, different pre-Hispanic civilizations blossomed in Mexico. By the time the Spanish landed on the shore, only ruins and legends were left of some of them. Others, like the Mayas and the Aztecs, welcomed the sailors. Wrong step. In the following years, their empires were destroyed, and Catholic churches were built on the bases of the pyramids. Mexico became a Spanish colony until the Mexican Revolution.

On our travels, we visited some of the most important and beautiful historical samples of both pre-Hispanic and Spanish cultures. Our first trips were to Guanajuato and Zacateca, important mining towns built in colonial style. The biggest adventure was a 10-day trip during our fall vacation. Our bus be-

came our home, and we spent hours driving from one place to another, but it was well worth it.

We made the first stop in an old colonial town, Querentara. For me, the most exciting part was meeting Eric Dawson there. (Eric graduated from Guilford last spring, and now works in an orphanage close to Queretaro. It's been a long time since he saw anyone from Guilford—he says "hi.") The next day we climbed the pyramids of Teotihuacan; many of us were left with almost no money after checking out its numerous stores.

From Taxco, we moved further south to Oaxaca, and walked through the Zapotecan and Mixtec ruins in Nutla and Monte Alban. Our last stop was Mexico City, the biggest city in the world. It was the most depressing and fascinating city I have ever been to—polluted, crowded, and noisy, full of galleries, museums, and architecture.

These excursions were my favorite parts of the Guadalajara semester. They helped me to understand Mexican culture much better.

Kelly George

Two months in "Jardines de la Barranca" gave a group of native Guilford students the gift

of friendship. The people of this community, our "amigos," invited us on a picnic into the vast canyon that slept behind their weathered homes. I, along with Kathryn, Alica and Cathy, met our friends at 9:30 a.m. (which really means 10:30 or 11:00 a.m.) in the dust of their streets. Hand in hand, children on our shoulders and food in our backpacks, we departed into a world unknown to us. We were of all ages, 3 to 63, yet we were all together. Together we played soccer, volleyball, and freeze tag. They transformed a small flat of earth into a playground. A rope tied onto a board and thrown over a branch became a swing. A knobby rock became a spiraling slide. Later the same rope became a jump rope. A

rock wall became an assembly line for ham and cheese "de tipo americano" sandwiches. They prophesized our futures with a cistology book. Our last surprise was John Travolta in *Dance Fever* in the body of a nine-year-old Mexican boy, who bedazzled us with his "moves." It was fatigue alone that took us home. We left the community in elation, as we did every other time we took bus #25 from the Barranca to downtown Guadalajara. Hopefully, the Guilford groups in the years to come will be able to share the same family experiences that we did.

Many thanks to Carol Clark and all the students who contributed to the stories on the abroad programs.



Alica Stubnova, third dancer from left, performs with her dancing class.

Photo courtesy of Alica Stubnova



View of Jardines de la Barranca

Photo courtesy of Alica Stubnova