

Annual Report Los Niños 2004 - 2005

Los Niños has been working with communities in Mexico along the US/Mexico border for the past 30 years. In the early years the focus of the work was to address immediate needs of malnourished children in the many communities stretching along the western border from Tijuana to Mexicali. Over the past 20 years the program has evolved, changing focus to a participatory development approach as the organization realized that the best solution to alleviate food security is to create opportunities for families to address their situation of poverty.

The mission of Los Niños is: *to improve the quality of life by creating opportunities for children and their families to discover their human potential through participation in the development of the community.*

Los Niños' outreach workers in the **Family Health and Food Security** program are trained to work in their own neighborhoods disseminating information about nutrition, health and organic gardening. The Los Niños outreach workers (*promotoras*) are community members, generally women, who are resident members in the low-income areas. For this work they receive a stipend, transportation funds and teaching materials. This strategy has proven to be effective, reaching many families in this complex border region. The needs are many: access to water, electricity, adequate housing and, most basic of all, sufficient nutrition for the children and their families. As these community classes continue, in the process the groups get organized and seek to address other issues in the community. There are now nearly 60 trainers providing education that reaches 25,000+ community members, either directly or through their families.

In 2004-2005 the **Family Health and Food Security** program accomplished the following:

- The 50 Los Niños *promotoras* (outreach workers) provided training in nutrition, organic gardening and preventative health in 60 communities in Tijuana and Mexicali, Mexico. In Tijuana 1,020 adults received training and 1,760 children participated in the classes. The benefits extend to their entire family, therefore a total of 13,900 family members were reached through this outreach strategy in Tijuana alone. In Mexicali 1,234 adults received training and 1,247 children from 20 schools participated in breakfast programs. This comprises 12,405 family members. The family members benefiting from heightened nutrition and ecology knowledge total: 26,305.
- In Mexicali the emphasis continues for the development of nutri-kitchens and breakfast programs in the schools. Ten of these kitchens were functioning this past year. They provided 21,764 breakfasts to 1247 children by working with community mothers to serve as volunteers at the schools. In Tijuana, each *promotora* offers breakfast one day a week in concert with the nutrition class, consisting of 52,800 breakfasts for the participating children.
- In Mexicali, 134 organic home gardens were established by program participants with an additional 1,400 created in Tijuana for a total of 1,534 in the region. An additional 110 model gardens (several families or school groups participating) were created in Tijuana. The vegetable production contributes between 10 and

15% of consumption for participating families. Some families have little terrain and develop potted gardens, usually growing herbs.

- In Tijuana, Los Niños has implemented a seedling nursery project using organic seed to produce small plants gifted to children in recycled containers at EcoParque, a water-recycling site where 11,740 children, students and teachers received environmental education this past year.
- A special activity was designed this year to bring 2000 children from the lowest income communities to EcoParque. Fondly called EcoParque 2000, Los Niños coordinated the participation of 1700 of the 2000 children attending. Each child learned basic concepts about the environment and had follow up sessions in their schools with the support of the *promotoras*.
- Also, in collaboration with Ecoparque, Los Niños supported environmental education days including May Day (330 participants), Day of the Child (347 participants) and Earth Day (300 participants) for a total of 977 children reached.
- In the environmental/ecology program in Mexicali, a green soccer court was developed. Most soccer/play areas are dirt and children experience considerable problems with dust, allergy and respiratory problems. Water is scarce and by creating a simple irrigation system that saves 70% of water normally used for such a space the project established a green field for play where 775 children in the school benefit. The idea is to replicate this model in other schoolyards.
- Mexicali continued to develop the nursery for the sale of grape, berry and cactus plants.
- Each group has a graduation ceremony where program participants share what they learned by creating a variety of dishes. This year there were 173 graduations, with as many tasting events. Nineteen tasting events were open to the community with 472 dishes served to demonstrate the use of soy and low cost meals, with 1268 people participating. In Mexicali *promotoras* made sales to 235 community members of home-produced nutritious products such as honey, cactus, soy sausage, granola and whole-wheat pastries.
- *Promotoras* conducted several soy preparation workshops, presented workshops on ecology and nutrition at 4 health fairs, and continued to promote a program of creating handcrafts with recycled items involving groups of women and children's groups.

During the last decade of providing nutrition, alternative health and organic gardening training, the class participants began to talk about other needs, particularly the need for additional income. Los Niños' **Micro Credit for Family Financial Security** program provides access to credit and/or training to enable people to start small business ventures. These have included community kitchens, daycares, sewing cooperatives, small community stores and a teen center. More and more community members are looking at ways to augment income and many aspire to self-production of home produced food and handcraft items, resale of products as street vendors, and sale of their services and training expertise, now that community members are becoming community teachers.

The women often state that they know what to feed their children; they just lack sufficient income to do so. In the **Micro Credit for Family Financial Security** program a restructuring occurred over the last 16 months to focus the program on smaller loans for individual businesses versus group efforts. The intention is for this model to be self-funding with interest on loans covering the cost of outreach and fund administration.

Training and specific seminars are also provided to encourage and assist income-producing activities regardless of whether the particular *promotora* or participant formally enters a credit group and requests a loan.

- *Specific income-producing projects in Mexicali:*
 - a. The beekeeping program involving 6 women harvested 1050 liters of honey from 140 hives with community members benefiting with low cost honey. Some derivative products were developed including creams, pomades and candles. In the rural area of Algodones, a simple rural oven was constructed for the family to be able to make and sell bread as there is no bakery in the area. In this same community 2 beehives were donated and training was provided for beekeeping.
 - b. One community kitchen's catering business hosts events for up to 250 people in a community of 5000 inhabitants.
 - c. The sewing cooperative has 9 women sewing for their families with 4 gaining income in a community of 6000 people. An example is Sofia who earns 500-700 pesos (\$50-70 US) per week and is now employing two other women.
 - d. Another woman launched a miscellany store in her neighborhood of 2000 inhabitants and has now purchased a copy machine to offer that service.
 - e. In Colonia Carbajal with 2500 inhabitants, one woman's clothing store employs 8 other women and is offering a form of credit card to families.

- *Specific income-producing projects in Tijuana:*
 - a. A group of 3 *promotoras* are creating purses and bags from recycled juice containers and selling them in fairs and to visiting groups from the US.
 - b. Having learned welding through a special Los Niños seminar and having purchased the appropriate equipment, 2 *promotoras* are creating candleholders and lanterns from recycled cans. These are sold to visiting US groups and to a woman in the US doing street fairs.
 - c. There are 5 *promotoras* who have learned to create handcrafted paper. These are sold for wedding invitations, cards and as rustic paper than can even be put through a printer.
 - d. Two women are selling embroidered and woven items.

- e. One *promotora* is dedicated to selling granola in schools, small stores and to the community at-large.
 - f. A school supply store located strategically on a corner continues to provide added income to one *promotora*. Her children often help.
 - g. Two small miscellany stores in different sections of the city are up and running in areas where communities do not have easy access to large grocery stores.
 - h. Seven women are now providing classes in the community teaching themes they have learned through Los Niños training. They receive income as “teachers”. Classes include creating handcrafts from recycled materials, Chinese cooking, vegetarian cooking, and teaching in private schools.
- *Savings and Emergency Loan project in Tijuana:*
 - a. The history of the savings group is interesting. Four years ago when promotora Maria Elena lost her home to fire she had no safety net. The promotora group collected funds from breakfasts that they sold to each other at meetings. These funds were then passed along to Maria Elena. The habit was retained and the group continued to save. Last spring when a *promotora* passed away unexpectedly, the group loaned her family funds for the medical expenses and the funeral. At that point the group started tracking the savings being collected by individual member.
 - b. During 2004-2005 forty members received sixty loans of \$200/each. The purpose of the fund is to provide for emergencies including illness, death and, most recently, a construction loan to a *promotora* whose house burned. Organized in four-month cycles, all loans were repaid in full plus 12% interest. Begun with a \$1000 fund from Los Niños, the savings fund now has \$6162 in capital. Participants contributing to the fund provide \$2/month to the fund in addition to the interest for any loans.
- *Micro Credit Program. Creating a self-funding model to provide access to credit for more people.*
 - a. In December 2003, a new loan model was launched. This new system offers individual loans of \$250 for a four-month period at 15% interest. Organized by group, the group agrees in solidarity to repay any individual loan in default.
 - b. Starting with \$6,000 in capital provided by Los Niños, the piloted program began with an initial group of 34 women this past year, offering a total of 76 loans. The initial capital was loaned 4 times with a total of \$24,700 disbursed in loans, earning \$3,714 in interest. During the first 16 months (4 cycles) all loans were repaid in full with interest.
 - c. The mini-businesses are primarily for the sale of homemade products and resale ventures. These include sale of canned cactus, soy chorizo, baked goods, jello cakes, piñatas, honey and derivatives, and other home-produced items. Resale items include sale of seafood and hotdogs from street market carts, candy and miscellaneous snack items, paper and personal hygiene products, clothing, jewelry, shoes and purses, Mary Kay cosmetics, and aromatherapy product ingredients. Two projects invested in materials for providing services, one woman invested in hair styling products and another in material for making school uniforms.

As Los Niños gained experience in the neighborhoods, the need was apparent to provide more formal orientation to community processes. In the **Community Leadership Education** program, the organization trains community members to be able to attract students to the nutrition and gardening classes. These community members then act as agents of change in their neighborhoods. This education includes teaching skills, self-development and technical training in nutrition, health and gardening. In addition, Los Niños has now developed, in collaboration with two universities, a formal program for community outreach workers.

- *Community Leadership Education/Women, Poverty and Education in Mexico.*
 - a. Los Niños collaborates in this work with Ibero-American University, Tijuana and Simon Fraser University, Vancouver Canada. Funding was received from the Canadian government for this initiative. The curriculum includes basic education (securing primary or secondary certificates), teacher training in community outreach, self-esteem and self-development as well as technical aspects of nutrition, health, organic production and business development. Each participant is required to identify, research, plan, seek resources, implement and evaluate a community project. This effort targets not only Los Niños *promotoras* but also the pool of *promotoras* who are working with other non-government organizations in the region.
 - b. Key activities include the design and delivery of a curriculum that cleverly and seamlessly melds basic skills (e.g., basic mathematic, communication, computing and English skills), human and social development (e.g., community development, human development, negotiation and human rights), professional development (e.g., nutrition, ecology, health, disaster planning) and complementary knowledge (e.g., analysis of border issues); a train-the-trainer program; and a training program for the local coordinators. Four outreach sites have been identified and equipped for the training.
 - c. Several advances have been made on the curriculum. A binder consisting of the basic curriculum materials has been created. The binder includes a section on each theme covered in the four levels of the program, the information for the lectures for each theme, ideas for instruction and a bibliography. It also contains a section on the methodology of teaching adults- community promoters.
 - d. The demand for the program in other communities in Mexico continues to be remarkably high. Replication of the program depends to large extent on having adequately trained program instructors. A high priority for the spring of 2005 is to design an instructor's certification program. The program will be between 200-250 contact hours; it will commence in July 2005 and continue until December 2005. The cost of design and delivery is approximately \$5,000. The anticipated capacity of the program is 25 to 30 instructors.
 - e. Now beginning the fourth year of operation, 63 women are enrolled and are completing the third of the four-semester program. This year the program expanded into Mexicali and is now offering courses in 5 centers, serving twelve organizations, accounting for 400+ outreach workers.
 - f. The inaugural class of *promotoras* graduated from the "university in the community" program that credentialed their work while many of them completed their primary and secondary education credentials. Sixty-eight

women completed the first two-year program. Forty-five of them have secured full and part-time employment. As part of the program requirements, participants have developed and implemented over 42 community projects that respond to critical community needs.

- g. As a component of the education program, program directors and participants were trained in results-based participatory evaluation and monitoring. Interviews assessed program satisfaction and simple tools were used to evaluate program materials.
- h. A delegation of nine representatives from the program visited Vancouver, Canada for a five-days in February 2005. Among the delegates, there were four women *promotoras*, graduates of the first generation, three staff and faculty from Ibero University, the program director from Los Niños and two representatives from the State of Baja California. The visit centred on a three-day program organized by Community Education Programs named “Beyond Paradigms: An Alternative Approach to Adult Education” as well as visits to different local community entities. The goal of “Beyond Paradigms” was to invite the university community and non-profit sector organizers in Vancouver to participate with and learn more about the development and outcomes of the program in Mexico. During the visit academics, community organizers and other guests heard presentations from members of the project team in Mexico and Canada, as well as from the four *promotoras* graduates of the educational program in Mexico.
- i. Healing Communities (HC) is a stand-alone, cohort based project developed and implemented as a collaboration between Community Education Programs at Simon Fraser University, Naramata Centre, and over 20 community organizations. It began in June 2003, and its overall purpose is to promote greater effectiveness, sustainability and collegiality among community leaders and front-line poverty workers in Vancouver, with a view to developing a model for further application. The work that project participants do has a great deal in common with the work of the Community Leadership Education Mexico participants, and so the idea of a learning exchange between the two groups was envisioned as an opportunity to share both professional and personal best practices in front-line community work. The exchange took place in March 2005 in Tijuana.
- j. In August 2004, the project management team initiated an innovative skills building dissemination project that contributed to raising awareness of the broader community in the north and south about the women involved in this project and the knowledge gained through the implementation of and reflection on the Mexico program. The women’s capacity developed through involvement in this activity also contributed to the overall project impact. More specifically, this activity enabled the graduates of the first generation to analyse and systematize their personal and transformative experience in the Program for the Education and Formation of Community Promoters (as it is called by the Mexican partners). The outputs included the formation of an independent and mutually supportive team of graduates, the development of the web site, and a proposal for a video.

- k. Also in August 2004, Los Niños received funding from the government of Mexico to publish *Cumplices de Suenos*, a book of testimonials of the program graduates.
- *Continuing Education of Promotoras.* Several Los Niños outreach workers participated in events and conferences for continuing education, to network with others and gain more knowledge. This year the *promotoras* created their own scholarship fund to support their participation in such activities, raising \$210 through raffles and the sale of breakfasts. The seminars/conferences included a wide variety of themes: fundraising training, yoga, Excel spreadsheet courses, paper art, diabetes, mental health, ecology, epilepsy, and cancer prevention. The beekeepers participated in 8 courses and conducted promotional events in Wisconsin, Rhode Island and San Diego that included the sale of their products.
 - *Internal Continuing Education.* Outreach promoters participated in internal continuing education in January and July. In Tijuana the *promotoras* continue to strengthen their organization working in three sectors of the city through Coordinating *Promotoras* who serve to organize groups of 10-12 *promotoras* by sector. This structure is supporting the development of leadership, governance and decision making in the communities as the Coordinating *Promotoras* meet weekly, determine next steps and organize materials. These sessions also served for the *promotoras* to conduct an evaluation of their activities. A particular focus this year has been how to create more self-reliant ways to provide services such as having the schools fund the transport of the *promotora*.
 - The *promotoras* hosted and participated with a group from the US in a Bi-Cultural Exchange. The group visited many community projects and participated in handcraft activities. They visited the Mexicali bee cooperative and learned about the Los Niños' method of community development.

In 2004-2005 Los Niños' **VOLUNTEERISM** programs served more people than ever before and diversified the groups being served. For nearly twenty years Los Niños has hosted students from all over the United States to learn about Mexico and participate in service activity with the community. Increasingly other groups and individuals have contacted the organization about volunteer opportunities. As well, businesses, conventions and meeting groups are seeking ways to involve their members in community actions that are team building and give back to the community. The intention is to create a model volunteerism program, **VolunTours™**, that covers costs through fees for services provided and will generate income to support Los Niños community programs.

- Los Niños designed an activity for corporate groups and schools where participants build beehives to support the women's bee cooperative in Mexicali. The participating groups pay for the hive materials and for the coordination of the event. Groups participating, learn about bees, and provide a service through their effort contributing to Corporate Responsibility goals of the company. This year groups included CHART (Council of Hotel and Restaurant Trainers), Rubios Restaurants management team, Papa Gino's Pizza chain held an event for 120 persons in Rhode Island, University of Wisconsin in Madison held two workshops, KidsKorps in San Diego hosted two children's groups and Medtronic Mexico (a maquiladora factory in Tijuana) traveled with their management team to Mexicali and made hives with the women.
- Several daylong service trips to Mexico were hosted for corporate representatives and service groups who wanted to create VolunTour™ opportunities for their groups for purposes of team building and volunteer outreach. These included Medtronic, Ministry of Money, and KidsKorps.
- Los Niños co-hosted the VolunTourism Forum in Washington, D.C. in collaboration with the Educational Travel Conference and George Washington University. This day-long event brought together tour operators, tourism ministries (Thailand and Mexico were present), community development organizations and other non-profits, as well as university representatives to discuss, define and develop the emerging industry of voluntourism.

Hundreds of volunteers each year participate in the Los Niños **Service Learning** program where US students work with Mexican community members to address community concerns, learn about issues of the border, and experience a process of grassroots community development. In FY 2004-2005, the Service Learning team put forward extraordinary effort to host 760 students and complete work projects at 47 schools and community centers in Tijuana and Mexicali. The program provides life-changing experience to the U.S. students who visit, and provides an atmosphere of openness to international activity when the national climate has been one of caution and concern of things foreign.

- *Creating the experience of grassroots community development.* A key message we impart to visiting students is a demonstration of the power of community organizing, participation of the community to make things happen and how to complement the available community resources with those from government sources and entities like Los Niños. We are seeing that the visiting students benefit greatly from more involvement and interaction with community members

and this includes the connections we are making with our community outreach or *promotora* program. This year the visiting groups learned about this strategy and experienced the great, low-cost simple meals that are taught as part of that program through evening sessions with the promotoras.

- *Construction news.* Los Niños worked in 47 schools and centers, supporting construction initiatives of the communities with materials costing \$28,224. To picture the environment of the schools is important. Many are perched on dry, dusty hills, often made out of recycled boards and make shift materials. During the rains the dust turns to a clay-like mud, making it at times impossible to access the structure. The communities have a variety of ways that they work to support their school. They engage in fundraisers with each family giving what they can. Their efforts complement the resources from Los Niños to create safer places for the children, better access and play areas. The contribution of labor from the communities and visiting students is a source of pride for what they can accomplish when they are organized. A list of schools and projects is attached.
- *Publications.* Long-term Los Niños partner, Loyola College of Baltimore published a book, *Many Hands, One Dream/Muchos Manos, Un Sueno: The Story of Project Mexico*, about their many years of participation with Service Learning at Los Niños. Another publication, *Personal Quests and Quandaries*, by Carol W. Hotchkiss, contains a testimonial from a participant from Cate School, telling the story of his shift of perspective from having come to Tijuana with his school group.

Mexican Schools and Centers supported in FY 2004-2005

Name of School/Center	Days Projects Completed	# of Children
Kindergartens		
J. de Niños Terrazas I	1 retaining wall	110
J. de Niños terrazas II	2 ramp and stairs	255
J. Niños Kiliwa	1 walkway	160
J. Niños Los Lobos Lobos D.I.F.	3 retaining wall, floor, paint	60
J. Niños de Tijuana	2 expand walkway	320
J. Niños Municipio libre	1 floor for kitchen access	70
J. Niños Valle Verde	1 retaining wall	250
J. Niños Florido III	1 classroom floor	180
J. Niños Tonatzin	1 expand walkway	220
J. Niños Italuvi	2 retaining wall	150

Name of School/Center	Days Project completed	# of Children
J. Niños Los Volcanes en Rosarito	1 walkways	25
J. Niños Domingo Carballo	3 expansion walkway	221
J. Niños Diego Rivera	1 flooring	145
Primary Schools		
Esc. Primaria Antonio caso Antonio Caso	1 flooring/walkways	830
Esc. Prim. Villa Del Real	3 retaining walls	980
Esc. Prim. Francisco Villa	5 expand parking and paint	550
Esc. Primaria Lomas del Mar	2 expand walkway/stairs	190
Esc. Primaria Paseos del Guaycura	3 expand walkway,walls	520
Esc. Primaria 24 de febrero	3 entry and expand plaza	706
Esc. Primaria Division del Norte	5 flooring classroom parking/retaining walls	960
Esc. Primaria Villa del Real Cañadas del Florido	6 expand walkways	890
Esc. Primaria Niños de Baja California	3 expand walkways flooring of 2 classrooms	1000
Esc. Primaria Ojo de Agua Manuel Altamirano	2 expand plaza	205
Esc. Primaria Manuel Gomez Morin	1 paint classrooms/flooring	1000
Esc. Primaria El Niño	2 flooring for plaza	560
Esc. Primaria Martin Bautista	3 flooring for classrooms	857
Esc. Primaria Tzu-Chi	3 flooring for entry	660
Esc. Primaria Jaime Sabines	3 paint/expand walkways	800
Esc. Primaria Lopez Mateos Adolfo Lopez Mateos	2 flooring	810
Esc. Educacion Especial Florido	4 flooring classrooms	70
Esc. Prim. Leyes de Reforma Rosarito	1 flooring classroom	460
Esc. Primaria Forjadores de B.C.	2 walkway	1025
Esc. Primaria Ramón López Velarde	2 flooring	690
Esc. Primaria Heroes de México	3 walkways, flooring	550

Name of School/Center	Days Project Completed	# of Children
Esc. Primaria Rufino Tamayo	2 walkways	760
Esc. Primaria J. de Jesus Martinez	2 walkways	825
Esc. Primaria Las Fuentes	2 play area	880
Esc. Primaria Maclovio Rojas	1 flooring classroom	270
Secondary Schools		
Secundaria 15	1 walkways	975
Telesecundaria 58	1 expand play area	400
Telesecundaria Rosarito	1 walkways	190
Secundaria tec. 31	1 flooring for parking	1700
Secundaria Tec. 40	1 security walls	680
Secundaria 115	5 cleaning/ramp	900
Other Projects/Centers		
Proyecto en Mexicali	1 flooring/patio	12
Casa de abuela	3 planting/walkways	22
Centro Comunitario D.I.F. Guaycura	2 flooring of conference area	444
Total	Projects 102	Children 24,537

US Universities and High Schools participating in Service Learning 2004-2005

Universities, Colleges and High Schools (31) participated with 43 groups/weeks

JUSTIN-SIENA HIGH SCHOOL/NAPA(CA)
GLOBAL EXCHANGE/SAN FRANCISCO(CA)
XAVERIAN BROTHERS HIGH SCHOOL/WESTWOOD(MA)
LA SALLE UNIVERSITY/PHILADELPHIA(PA)
JOHN CARROLL UNIVERSITY/UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS(OH)
FAIRFIELD UNIVERSITY/FAIRFIELD(CT)
SAINT JOSEPH'S UNIVERSITY/PHILADELPHIA(PA)
SAINT IGNATIUS COLLEGE PREP/SAN FRANCISCO(CA)
LOYOLA ACADEMY/WILMETTE(IL)
ST CHARLES BORROMEO/SKILLMAN(NJ)
ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA-O'NEILL/PHILADELPHIA(PA)
ST PHILIP THE APOSTLE/BAKERSFIELD(CA)
ARCHBISHOP MITTY HIGH SCHOOL/SAN JOSE(CA)
ST. MAGDALEN DE PAZZI/FLEMINGTON(NJ)
VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY/VILLANOVA(PA)
ARCHBISHOP MITTY HIGH SCHOOL/SAN JOSE(CA)
NOTRE DAME HS/BELMONT(CA)
CASTILLEJA SCHOOL/PALO ALTO(CA)
ACADEMY OF OUR LADY OF PEACE/SD(CA)
GARCES MEMORIAL HS/BAKERSFIELD(CA)
SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY/SANTA CLARA(CA)
LOYOLA COLLEGE/BALTIMORE(MA)
TEMPLE UNIVERSITY/PHILADELPHIA(PA)
BOSTON COLLEGE/CHESTNUT HILL(MA)
NOTRE DAME ACADEMY/LA(CA)
CATE SCHOOL/CARPINTERIA(CA)
GARCES HS/BAKERSFIELD(CA)
JUSTIN-SIENA HIGH SCHOOL/NAPA(CA)
CATE SCHOOL/CARPINTERIA(CA)
JOHNSON & WALES UNIVERSITY/PROVIDENCE(RI)
VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY/VILLANOVA(PA)
THE BRANSON SCHOOL/ROSS(CA)
UNIVERSITY OF UTAH/DRAPER(UT)
NOTRE DAME HIGH SCHOOL/SHERMAN OAKS(CA)
UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO/SF(CA)

Service Learning Program results

Impact statistics:

Mexican Schools and Community Centers	47
Mexican Children benefited	24,537
US Schools	31 schools/43 visits
Total Visiting Students	760

Value:

In materials Los Niños provided from group contributions \$28,224

The 102 work project days X approximately 4 hours labor X 20 students X \$6.75 US minimum wage is a labor contribution of \$55,080 (or 8,160 hours volunteer service). Approximately 40 Mexican community members also contribute labor at \$3.50 Mexican wage for 4 hours of work equaling a \$57,120 labor contribution from the community (or 16,320 hours of volunteer community service).

Labor US students	\$55,080
Labor Mexican community members	\$57,120
Construction contribution	\$28,224
Total Value Added to the Community:	\$140,424

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In fiscal year 2004-2005, Los Niños directed \$750,000 to:

- Family Health and Food Security,
- Micro Loans for Family Financial Security,
- Community Leadership Education and
- Volunteerism Programs.

All programs are focused on developing human potential through community participation and self-reliant initiatives. Children are benefited every step of the way whether through nutrition and ecology classes, or through small loans and increased education for their mothers that provides the path to more family income. Engaged communities with healthy children who stay in school, are the foundation of a strong civil society.