

## Friends of Accion, Inc.

*To render meaningful support to the charitable activities of Acción in the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico  
with a view to advancing the well being of the people served and the Christian faith.*

May, 2012

Greetings from Friends of Accion!

Former Board member Louise Ripple just returned from a six week visit to VIM, Villa Infantil Maya, our boarding facility for youth in the Yucatan, and would like to tell you a little bit about her experiences:

There are thirty-two wonderful students at VIM now, including ten young women and the director's three children. I got to know all of them, including Isaac and Juanita, the director and his wife. I also got to know Marta, the cook, and Marcos, the maintenance man, assistant driver and Isaac's right hand man.

Isaac and Juanita are two of the most dedicated Christians and hardest workers I have ever met. They love their jobs and love the students. They are parents, teachers, youth group leaders, Christian role models, cook, and driver; all rolled up into two! There is much laughter, prayer, work, singing, and play everyday at VIM. Marta and Marcos are also wonderful Christian role models for the students and allow Isaac and Juanita a little down time of which there is not much. Even though Marta is the cook, it takes both Juanita and Marta to prepare a big lunch for everyone each day. Juanita still prepares breakfast and supper by herself. Isaac spends much of his day driving the children back and forth to school. There is the drive to and from the primary school and middle school. Then there are multiple drives to the high school as the school is used all day until 8pm for the different grades. Isaac runs errands too during his trips to town. Marcos takes care of the maintenance around VIM and the grounds. The students all have chores everyday to help out that take less than an hour but with thirty-two sets of hands, a lot of work can get done. They water plants, clean the van, clean bathrooms and the kitchen, sweep and mop their quarters and public areas, etc. VIM runs like a clock.

A day at VIM starts at 6am with wakeup, breakfast and chores. Students then go back and forth to school all day. Juanita and Marta begin preparation for the big meal of the day which is lunch. I watched them make three hundred tamales one day which were eaten over a two day period and were fabulous. Each meal always begins with prayer, individually or by group. A hearty lunch is served at different times because the students are not all there at the same time. All the students come into the kitchen and wash their own plates, etc. As they leave the kitchen they always thank Juanita and Marta for their meals. There is homework in the morning, in the afternoon, and after devotions in the evening. Recreation time, led by Isaac, is around 5pm until supper. Volleyball, soccer and basketball are played by all the boys. Most of the girls play volleyball and soccer as well. The students are on different teams at school and compete with other schools from Valladolid and Cancun. Devotions are at 8pm and Isaac delivers a wonderful message each night. Each student usually speaks at devotions sometime during the week. After devotions, more volleyball (or some other form of recreation) is played by the students who have finished their homework, then all retire to their quarters at 10pm, unless they have still more homework.

Four different small groups came down from Charlotte, NC, during my stay. We installed ten raised bed vegetable gardens at VIM, and lived with the students and staff. As one of the team members from my church said, “the trip was so fabulous - my vision of a PERFECT example of Christianity in action.”

I also had a chance to visit CEM, Casa Estudiante Merida, the college students' house we support in Merida. CEM has a beautiful, new eating and common area but what is needed now are windows and doors. They are making use of the new areas since the climate is mild but we really do need to finish out the facility. The fifteen young men who live there are doing well and finishing up the school year. Two of them, Andreas (a talented youth abandoned by his parents) and Obed Isaac (the son of Isaac and Juanita) spent their high school years at VIM and are now in their second year at the university studying to be engineers. This fall, six young men from VIM hope to attend a university in Merida and live at CEM. Two more graduates from VIM, including one young lady, hope to attend the university in Cancun. This will be the largest graduating class from VIM and Isaac and Juanita are so proud of them.

Also, while I was in Merida for a weekend, I got to visit with Thelma Dorantes and see Oscar R. Dorantes, executive director of Accion, lead the prayer for people at their church, Confraternidad Presbyterian Church. Thelma is doing well, along with her husband Oscar Dorantes, Sr. They are both retired, enjoying their grandchildren, and traveling. I also got to visit and have dinner with the whole Accion staff and their families at a restaurant in Merida. All are doing wonderfully.

I posted the six weeks I was in the Yucatan on our non-profit Facebook page, Friends of Accion. You can see pictures and read about my stay at VIM. You do not have to have a Facebook account to see our Facebook page. Our board vice-president, Abby Gwaltney, is revamping our website, [www.friendsofaccion.org](http://www.friendsofaccion.org), which I hope will be online when this newsletter is received by our supporters. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach us at [friendsofaccion@carolina.rr.com](mailto:friendsofaccion@carolina.rr.com).

Let me close by stressing that we desperately do need your financial support. Your money is used to support our programs. Our tax returns, including our expenditures, are posted on the website. Your support is helping forty-seven students continue their education in a Christian environment. The students all stressed to me that they are so grateful to be able to continue their educations and will pay forward the opportunity that we have provided them some day.

Thank you for your interest in and support of Accion. God be with you always and God bless the building of his kingdom through the work of Accion!

Louise Ripple, Friend of Accion