

Our trip to El Oasis Orphanage in Guadalajara, Mexico

We received a very warm welcome from the staff and children at El Oasis. There are 39 children, aged between 4 and 14, living at the orphanage.

I had been lucky enough to meet the children in 2015 and asked them what activities they would like to do this year. They were fascinated by everything to do with England and asked if I could teach them some English.

So, from there I completed my TEFL course (Teaching English as a Foreign Language), and was all ready to go! Craig was travelling with me to volunteer too and Marie, whose charity is partnering with Fundacion Checo Perez, was visiting Guadalajara to visit the foundation's projects and to find some great fabrics and gifts for her online shop, which directly benefits various charities including the foundation.

On our first visit to the orphanage we had a meeting with one of the members of staff who gave us a tour of the building. Everything is kept really clean and tidy there by the staff and children. In fact, all the children help with the cleaning tasks and sweeping each day (it does get very dusty outside!).



Left: one of the bedrooms for the boys

Below: bedroom for the older girls



Right: The canteen/dining room



Above: The toy room was lots of fun, but it's not so much when you imagine this is shared between nearly 40 children

Right: The second bedroom for the boys





The children were split into two groups for their English lessons depending on their age. By the end of the week the children could say hello & bye, introduce themselves, say how they were feeling and how old they are and count up to 10.



We did other activities each day with the children to do something fun after our lessons.....



And finally we presented each of the children with a personalised gift bag, which included a notebook, crayons, and some small toys and stationery items. The children don't have their own belongings and their clothes are shared or handed down so we wanted to give them something that they could keep for themselves.



We also left some toys and stationery for the foundation, which will be used to help other orphanages and some star night lights especially for the sensory centre, also helped by the foundation. Special thanks to everyone who contributed to our collection this year (and last year for the items that I couldn't quite fit in the case last time!).



On our final day at the orphanage we did a photobooth for the children and gave them masks and props to dress up with. We printed the photos and made the photoboard below for them as a memento from our visit.



I'd like to thank everyone that helped to make the visit possible. Thank you to all the individuals and organisations who donated gifts for our raffle, and a huge thank you to everyone who fundraised and donated. A total of £1,648 was raised for the foundation, which has decided to use the money to help with renovation works at an orphanage in Guadalajara, Mexico. This will allow the 200 orphans that have had to move out into other orphanages to be able to return back and be reunited there with their siblings and friends in a safer environment. Thank you again also to everyone who contributed gifts and stationery for the children and to Marie and Craig for your support and kindness during our time in Mexico.