



Newsletter for the Mission of Friendship

Diocese of Erie, USA

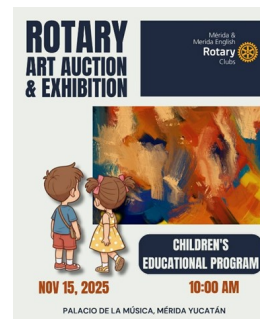
December 2025

Memorable Cultural Experience

Our Mission of Friendship children recently enjoyed a unique cultural experience. Rotary International has several clubs in the city of Merida. Last month, two of those clubs collaborated to sponsor an Art Auction and Exposition at the *Palacia de la Musica* museum in Merida. For this annual event, local artists are invited to show and sell some of their pieces. The artists also donate works to be auctioned off. A percentage of the art sales and auctioned items is given to non-profit agencies. For the second year in a row, the Mission of Friendship was chosen to be one of the beneficiary agencies. On the morning of the exhibition day, before opening to the public, the MOF children were invited to come and explore the interactive museum of music history – trying out instruments and listening to music from throughout the centuries. Then the kids were invited to the exhibition hall to view the pieces of artwork that would later be featured in the sale and auction. For many of these children this was a cultural experience the likes of which they have never had. We are grateful to the Merida Rotary Clubs who collaborated to make it possible – and who continue to support the work of the Mission of Friendship!

Charitable and Fun Activity to

Benefit the Mission of Friendship!



Wonderful Beginning of Christmas Season at the Mission of Friendship!

At the beginning of this Christmas season, we had the opportunity to be special guests at the Christmas tree lighting ceremony at the Holiday Inn Hotel in Mérida. Our children were welcomed with much love from the moment they arrived at the hotel, receiving a stocking filled with candy. After the nice welcome, they enjoyed a delicious dinner, and the hotel staff gave Christmas presents to each of the kids. And if all of that weren't enough, the children were invited to enjoy a Christmas show in which they all sang and danced until they were exhausted! Everyone was very happy to start the Christmas season this way.

On December 22nd, the Mission's children will have their Christmas festival at the daycare center facility, where they will perform dances, songs, and a play for all our special guests— such as the Mission's volunteers and supporters in Mérida. During the Christmas celebration the children will receive a piñata filled with candy along other little gifts (which were donated by different sponsors).

We are truly so grateful for all these Christmas blessings!

Azucena Santos



*A Great Start of Christmas at the
Mission of Friendship!*



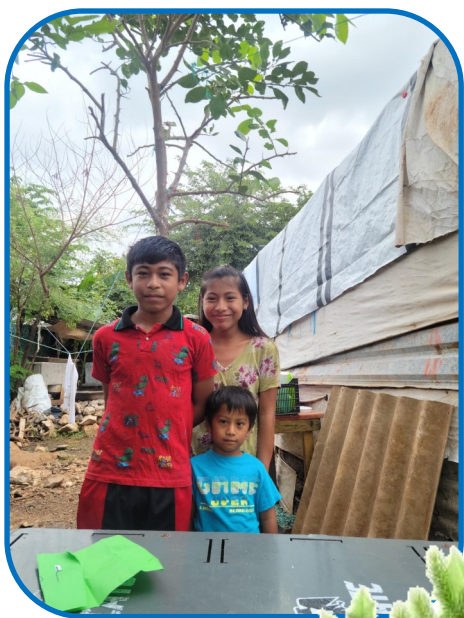
A Life Changing Visit



Last month I had the opportunity to visit the Mission of Friendship in México. It is always surprising, at the same time hard to explain, that every time I visit the Mission, it feels like the first time! The warm welcome, hospitality, and the love shown to me by the Mission's children and staff is overwhelming. Even though the Mission is now facing serious challenges -- with financial difficulties and uncertainties about their future -- their smiles, great spirits, and faith remain undimmed!

What a lesson it is for me personally to see these people, so much less materially fortunate than me, being so grateful for what they have. And at the same time, displaying a deep and joyful faith in spite of their circumstances.

While there, I had the honor of meeting some of our Amigos sponsored families at the periphery of the city of Mérida. As difficult as these families' living situations are, they were most happy to receive a stranger like me into their homes!





A Nice Sister Parish Experience!

The Mission of Friendship coordinator, Azucena Santos, and I had the chance to visit one of the sister parishes in Yucatán -- St. Peter and St. Paul Parish in Chacsinkin -- (sister parish of St. Patrick, Franklin). The pastor of this parish, Fr. Freddy, takes care of ten communities which belongs to his parish. Even though he is obviously very busy, Fr. Freddy was more than generous to take us to visit three of his communities. In each of these villages a group of parishioners were waiting to welcome us and to offer their warm hospitality. They made a great lunch for us and dinner as well.

During our visit Fr. Freddy shared with us some of the many challenges that he has been facing since being assigned to St. Peter & St. Paul's Parish, like one of the churches burning down. When that happened, Father Freddy had to rebuild the church without the help of any insurance or emergency funds! As he described to us all that he had to do to raise money to rebuild the church, I realized that pastors in Yucatán must be creative and committed to preserve their churches amid difficult circumstances.

Father Freddy's kindness and generosity, and that of his parishioners, was truly indescribable!

Indira Suárez



A Note From the Director's Desk

As Christmas time is fast approaching, I wish to take this time to deeply thank you for all the support you have given over this past year. And as this year draws to close, I reflect on how your prayer, friendship, and financial gifts have made a tremendous difference in the lives of many children and their families. I am so grateful to you. Be proud of the work you have done.

I am most proud of the outstanding generosity shown to the Mission of Friendship through this year's **#iGiveCatholic campaign. \$ 5,650.00** was donated by 29 individuals, and we were lucky to have won **\$500.00** from the Catholic Foundation prizes during the Giving Day this year! Those funds will go directly to support urgent needs at the Mission of Friendship's programs and facilities. We did it again, great job everyone!

Some Important Reminders:

The Mission Office in the Diocese of Erie will continue to receive and forward to Mérida cards, letters and photos for your **Amigos families and Sister Parishes**. We also continue to receive financial contributions by way of checks and online credit card donations. These funds will be wired periodically to the Mission account in Mérida. Amigos sponsors can send special donations, in addition to their regular monthly contributions, that are earmarked specifically for their particular sponsored family as **Easter gifts, birthday gifts or Christmas gifts**. These special gifts are not added to the common Amigos fund. They are kept separate to be given only to the sponsor's particular Amigos family. If you would like to give a special gift just for your sponsored family, please make a note in the memo line of your check or enclose a note of explanation with your donation. Your intentions for the special gifts will be communicated to the Mission staff in Mérida.

Tax letters for 2025 contributions will be sent out in January. If you wish for a donation to be counted toward 2026, please be sure to send it to our office after January 1, 2026.

If you have any questions regarding your donations, tax deductions, or new sponsorships or would like to update your contact information or sponsorship status, please contact Mission Office director Indira J. Suarez by e-mail: isuarez@eriercd.org or phone (814-824-1231).

I wish a blessed and Merry Christmas to you and your families during this holy season!

Gracias,

~ *Indira* ~





Mission of Friendship

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