

# Annual Report 2021



**BIBLIOTECA PÚBLICA**  
DE SAN MIGUEL DE ALLENDE, A.C.  
*Somos más que libros*

# President's Letter

Dear friends,

As many parts of the world feel very uncertain, I feel very fortunate to be a part of the Biblioteca community in San Miguel de Allende. We don't all necessarily agree on everything all of the time but I've noticed we agree to work hard, to listen and learn from each other. We do this through respect for others, literature, education and the arts. The Biblioteca is really at the center of this wonderful San Miguel vortex.

I wanted to take a moment to share with you the accomplishments of the Biblioteca during 2021 and give you a look ahead to our plans for 2022.

During 2021, the Biblioteca staff and board worked steadily to emerge from the Covid pandemic, as the staff became even more creative in safely offering educational and cultural programming. With a new high-quality outdoor stage, many events took place in the open air patio that appealed to guests of all ages and backgrounds, including several musical concerts, book launches by local authors, a Pen Foundation lecture, Christmas cookie decorating, pinata making classes, puppets shows and even a Christmas posada. The new stage was funded by a cherished donor who feels strongly about the impact of live entertainment on our community.

The children's reading rooms were reconfigured for better airflow, repainted, and new lighting and fans installed so that the library team was able to welcome back families with children and offer fresh programming for them. The "Read With Your Baby" sessions have been a big hit with local families. Thanks to funding from Little Things Matter, the youth choir was able to take their show on the road and has been performing choral concerts at small churches in the campo. By the Fall, our tech team was once again offering classes in computer literacy. On the flip side, teachers with students being homeschooled took advantage of our patio and educational resources to get children away from computer screens for a bit and offer in-person classes in the comfort of the Biblioteca patio and surrounding salas.

We restarted the ever popular House & Garden Tour in a new format. Tours are now offered multiple times during the week for groups of no more than 12. We look forward to returning to the larger format tours at some point in 2022.

In 2021, the Biblioteca was able to offer scholarship opportunities to nearly 100 students but we have a continuing need for volunteer mentors for students and more funding to continue this important commitment.



We were also fortunate to add a large collection of books on art and architecture donated by the Toller Cranston Foundation. We can see a clear path to becoming a regional research facility for art.

There is so much to look forward to in 2022! In the past year, we hired a new manager for the Teatro Santa Ana who is responsible for cultural events programming throughout the building. Children are enjoying Saturday matinee movies in the theater. She is working now to launch a new speaker's series. Theatrical performances have returned to the Teatro with the San Miguel Playreaders and a "miraculous musical" by Eli Hans. I hear repeated compliments from performers and lecturers about the new level of professionalism they find in interacting with our events team.

We are delighted to be inaugurating a new art center and will offer various classes for our entire community. Volunteers and staff have worked together to transform a dark, musty old storage room into a bright, light filled art studio. The costs to upgrade the space were fully underwritten by a charitable family foundation. A local artist has donated the use of a kiln so we will be able to offer ceramics classes, as well as drawing and painting.

Sprinkled throughout this letter you may have noted the numerous references to gifts and donations. Last year, our President Ali Zerriffi wrote about the need to secure more donations and gifts for the Biblioteca caused by a change to Mexican tax laws that limited the ability of non-profit organizations, like ours, to generate income from social enterprises or business activities. For many years, the Atencion newspaper was published by the Biblioteca and had been the primary source for our funding. To comply with the new law, the board of directors took steps to restructure the newspaper. Starting in August 2021, the Atencion newspaper and QuePasa supplement have been published by a third party under a License

Agreement authorizing the use of our names. The Biblioteca no longer receives 100% of the proceeds of these publications but we have begun receiving monthly royalty payments for the use of the names generated by advertising sales. The newspaper and supplement are much improved because of significant investments by the new publisher. The Atencion now enjoys a much larger circulation expanding throughout the states of Guanajuato and Queretaro. Please continue to purchase the newspaper in print and read online to see all the improvements being made. And, of course, you should advertise your businesses and promote events there. It's not the same old newspaper!

Please come join us in 2022. More now than ever, we need your financial support but we also need you to roll up your sleeves and volunteer. You have talents that we need: librarians, accountants, grant writers, teachers, authors, artists, event planners, mentors, graphic designers, marketing, and sales people.

Filled with optimism for 2022,

DEBRA BROUSSARD

Presidente

La Biblioteca Publica de San Miguel de Allende A.C.



**Mission** La Biblioteca Pública de San Miguel de Allende, A.C. provides educational and cultural activities to foster a harmonious community.

**Vision** La Biblioteca intends to be a multi-disciplinary and inclusive cultural center that responds to the need for training, information, and the dissemination of all that develops the prosperity and peace of our community facilitating access to knowledge.



OUR PROGRAMS

# Literacy Program



Today, after nearly 70 years of existence, the Biblioteca is a cultural center with a multitude of activities. Inside our premises, users can find much more than books. La Biblioteca offers classes, movies, public cultural performances, lectures, conferences or even free access to Wifi in our shaded patio.

But at the heart of activities has always been our reading rooms and our outstanding bilingual catalog of books. Loyal to the initiative of our founder, Canadian citizen Helen Wale, who in 1952 opened the doors of her home to her neighbors so that they could enjoy her private library, our organization continues to promote reading as a source of information, and entertainment.

The catalog of books of the Biblioteca is as diverse as our community. Books for adults and children, books in English and Spanish, novels, non-fiction, graphic novels, yoga books, cookbooks and art books... All that matters to you can be found on our shelves.

In total, we provide access to more than 50,000 volumes, distributed in our 3 large and comfortable rooms: the English Room, the Spanish Room, and the Children/ Youth section.

Consulting our books inside our rooms is absolutely free and unrestricted, yet you do need an annual library membership to remove a book from the library.

### **Our membership: more simple, more benefits**

In 2021, we decided to make the membership easier to get. Now the annual cost is \$100 pesos for adults and \$50 pesos for children, teenagers and students.

Our members can borrow 4 books for 30 days (only 2 weeks before), and the membership offers more benefits: 10% discount in the Theater Santa Ana, access to Scholarship application and access to registration to our workshops and classes.

## **Refurbishing of the Children and Youth Areas**

Our young readers are the most enthusiastic! The children and youth section has historically shown the best statistics: higher numbers of visits, higher numbers of books loaned, and longest period of visitation by each user. It is for all those reasons that the staff of the Biblioteca decided to refurbish this area in 2021.

With just a simple - yet very useful - fresh coat of paint, a set of new lights and new fans, our rooms now look cleaner, fresher, and ready to welcome our young readers and their parents.

Based on our visitor's practices, we also decided to relocate and purchase some furniture to offer a more ergonomic and comfortable experience.

The room dedicated to advanced readers, from age 7 to teenagers, is now situated in the smallest area. In this intimate space can be found the first novels and the young adult section, as well as non-fiction. There

are also a few comfortable and spacious working tables where teenagers can enjoy reading or doing homework.

The room dedicated to the youngest readers and pre-readers is now set in the larger space. We know that children are accompanied by at least one adult, so they need more space to move around. In this room we have books in English and Spanish for readers from 0 to 7 years old.

The central room in between the two children's reading rooms is now dedicated to welcome and provide recommendations to our youngest readers. Our manager of this important area is, Alondra Vázquez, who is ready to answer any questions regarding the catalog of books, the activities open to young readers and how to register for our classes.

With these simple upgrades, the children and youth sections are now spaces filled with life.





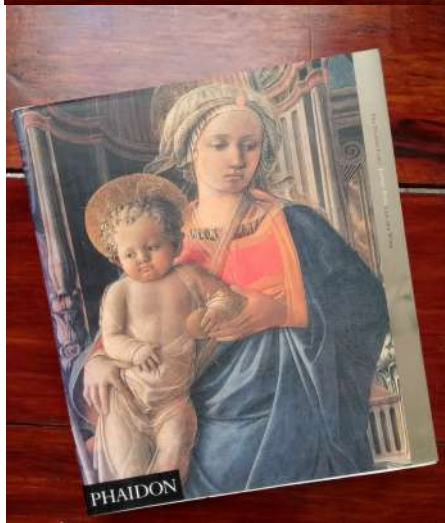
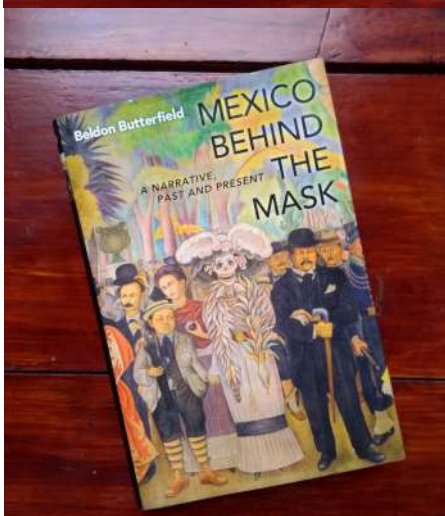
### **Read with your Baby, a new program for our smallest book lovers**

In January 2021, thanks to the great recommendation from our friends at Amistad Canada, we received funding from the International Assistance Program led by the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF) to run our new program "Read with your Baby".

The program consists in providing a safe and adequate space for the youngest readers and their parents, along with a high quality selection of children literature books for a range of age from 0 to 5 years old. The Read with your Baby program also offers a weekly session of group reading, directed to toddlers and their parents.

The staff of the Biblioteca attended a 3-day training program with Beatriz Soto, founder of the Children library at the University of Querétaro, to better understand the specificities of literacy in young children. The support of the OSSTF also allowed us to purchase 100 new books and comfy mats and cushions to welcome our baby-readers.

Since its launching, the Read with your Baby program has been a big success.



## The Toller Cranston Art Books Collection

The estate of Toller Cranston, a renowned Canadian figure skater, winner of an olympic medal in ice-skating, and active member of the San Miguel artistic community until his death in 2015, donated his entire art book collection to the Biblioteca.

This catalog contains close to 1,000 volumes dedicated to arts in all its forms and eras: from archeology to contemporary art, from Egyptology to modernity. Toller Cranston's legacy is now part of the collection of the Biblioteca and is accessible to everyone in our community.

This collection is located in the Sala Ingles and is housed in new bookcases funded by the Toller Cranston Foundation and gifts of individual Canadians through Amistad Canada.

OUR PROGRAMS

# Learning at the Biblioteca



### **Learning at the Biblioteca**

We promote free expression and creativity thanks to our workshops for artistic practice.

Dancing, Chorus, Guitar playing, Chess, Literary creation.

We improve the skills of citizens with our educational workshops, in English as foreign language or computer science.

### **2021 IN A FEW FIGURES**

13 free classes and workshops

1279 students

225 hours of free classes

### **Proficiency Classes for Adults**

If many know about our classes for children and teenagers, few know about our proficiency classes directed to adults.

There were 2 workshops offered in 2021: English as a foreign language and computer science.

Those 2 skills are key to access qualified positions on the labor market. Interestingly enough, only women registered for these free classes at the library.

According to socioeconomics studies led in Mexico\*, thanks to those skills, the payroll of these women could increase no less than 30%!

This is good news for them and also for the families they support.

\*<https://www.milenio.com/negocios/si-sabes-ingles-tu-sueldo-puede-aumentar-hasta-36>



## The Children's Chorus of the Biblioteca sings in el Campo.

On Sunday November 28th, the Chorus of the Biblioteca gave the first presentation of free public concerts in rural areas in the church of Puerto de Nieto, a community located 30 minutes away from Centro, on the road to Querétaro. This concert was extremely well received by the inhabitants of the community: 100 persons enjoyed one hour of classical music performed by our chorus and 2 professional musicians (piano and flute). The next scheduled concert of this series took place in the village of Guadalupe de Tambula on December 9.

By organizing those outings, we have 3 goals. First, we want to offer to the audience of rural communities the joy of beautiful music. We know that the population who lives far from downtown has little to no access to cultural activity. We also want to challenge our young singers and give them more experience “on stage”. Finally we want the public from distant

communities to know more about the many free activities of the Biblioteca, and eventually inspire them to take part in them.

The foundation, Little Things Matter, recognized in this program a high community impact and decided to support the Biblioteca to organize a series of 5 concerts in rural areas, to be scheduled between November 2021 and June 2022. The Biblioteca is grateful for this support that allows us to fulfill our mission of providing cultural activities available to everyone in our community.

OUR PROGRAMS

# Scholarship Program



## The Biblioteca Scholars

There are many qualities that make our scholars genuinely unique; however, they all share resilience and a passion to learn. These qualities are supported by our knowledge that the library will see them through their graduation. Financial stress is reduced on the families of these students thanks to the biannual distribution of their scholarships. In spite of the challenges posed by studying in high schools with discouraging dropout rates, unreliable access to the internet, and home environments frequently with limited space and evening light for completing class projects, our recipients model great determination or as many in México would say, “Le echan ganas”.

### Application Cycle, Orientation, Celebration and Special Recognition

The 2021 call for new scholarship applicants resulted in over 130 inquiries and 96 completed applications were received. The social media publicity, organization of incoming applications, coordination of candidate interviews and final selection of new recipients was successful thanks to the expert support of our library team. There were 27 candidates interviewed and 21 new recipients were selected.

Thanks to the generosity of our donors we were able to start the 2021 scholarship program year with 101 recipients who were 83% female and 17% male. Approximately 52% of our recipients represent San Miguel de Allende’s municipalities or ranch communities. Up from two in 2020, seven scholarship recipients were from Comonfort.

On February 25, 2021, the 21 newly selected scholarship recipients and their families attended an orientation and celebration program in the library’s Teatro Santa Ana. This year, the program recognized professors whose dedication to teaching has inspired many of our new scholarship recipients. A certificate of recognition went to Professor Wenceslao Santana Rendón of Universidad Patria, San Miguel de Allende and Professor Dolores Martha Treviño Gelover of - Universidad de León San Miguel de Allende.

## 2021 Program Overview

Scholarship recipients continue to average a 97 percent retention rate. 2021 was also a year of program growth, policies and procedures were revised and organized to better support the success of our scholars.

The following list represents the 23 professional areas of our 2021 university graduates: Administration, Business Administration, Public Accounting, Nursing, Agricultural Engineering, Dental Surgeon, Geophysics, Industrial Engineering, Surgeon, Pedagogy, Psychology, Physical Therapy - Rehabilitation, Engineering in Manufacturing Technology, Social Work, Visual Arts.

The Scholarship Coordinator, Alma Elena Cervantes, with the support of the Library Director, Miguel Ángel Barquet, and the scholarship advisory committee completed a scholar's orientation guide. It introduces the program's mission, vision, and values, while also celebrating the sense of belonging that scholars can proudly and confidently assume. In addition, the guide provides important information about scholarship renewal requirements, program policies and processes, recipient responsibilities and additional benefits.

Because over 52% of our scholarship recipients live too far from the Biblioteca to enjoy frequent visits, the use of social media continues to strengthen the unity of our

community of scholars. Even becarios with poor internet access were able to rely on receiving and sharing information with fellow library scholars and to anticipate a quick response to general questions by the group's administrator and coordinator. Additionally, Whatsapp serves as a conduit for the scholarship coordinator to distribute timely invitations to scholars and their families to enjoy the library's free cultural and entertainment programs.

In collaboration with Junior Achievement México, library scholars enjoyed a three day workshop on personal financial management that took place March 3 to 5, 2021. Participant scholar Abigail Garcia Ramirez said: "I enjoyed my experience in the Personal Finance Workshop. It helped me to better manage my income. I learned how to create a budget, which I didn't know how to do. The workshop not only helped me but also allowed me to share what I learned with my family."

On July 5 to 9, Junior Achievement México in collaboration with the library also provided a workshop titled Entrepreneurial Women. The public event was open to San Miguel de Allende and many of our scholarship students, their mothers and sisters were amongst the participants.



## Community Service; Outstanding Scholars

Members of the library scholarship advisory committee launched a community service scholarship competition for our university scholars. The project submissions were evaluated for content, sustainability and potential cultural and educational impact.

Four projects were selected, each scholar was assigned a mentor to coach them as they prepared their presentation for an in-person audience. Each presentation addressed the research and hands-on work dedicated to their individual community service projects. The topic areas included health, education, and culture.

To prepare for each student's in-person presentations, a team of library staff assisted them, including the scholarship coordinator, library director, TICS members, the mentors and Santa Ana Theater staff attended each scholar's practice presentation. In the months of March and April 2021, each of the recipients presented and were recorded live in the Santa Ana Theater. The video presentations can be viewed on Youtube.



"El Arte Sacro en San Miguel de Allende"  
Felipe de Jesús Aceves Delgado



"Tratamiento fisioterapéutico y psicológico para la parálisis cerebral infantil"  
Jazmín Torres Lopez



"Sesiones de apoyo y regularización a niños de nivel básico escolar"  
Kenia Estephania Ramírez



"Mejorar la salud mental y apoyo a niños con problemas de aprendizaje"  
Ingrid Osmara Servín Vaca

## Scholar Profile: Mariana Rico Palma of Rancho Viejo

Rancho Viejo is a San Miguel municipality with a population totalling 2,076 people. It is located over 14 km from the Biblioteca, just off the Dolores Hidalgo 51 highway.

In January 2021, Mariana Rico at 15 years of age accompanied by her mother, took a bus from her community of Rancho Viejo to the library where she interviewed for a high school level scholarship. She was awarded her first scholarship in February 2021.

Mariana is the daughter of Mrs. Jazmin Marisol Palma Zapatero who, in spite of being a busy mom, worked through a government program that offered adults in Rancho Viejo the opportunity to earn a secondary school certificate. Mariana's father Gerardo Rico Baltazar got as far as primary school. Mr. Rico Baltazar provides for his family by working as a poultry distributor.

When asked if she had friends who also enjoyed learning as much as she did, she said that it is more common to hear classmates speaking of wanting to go to work. Mariana sadly described seeing a friend being pulled out of her high school by her parents because they did not see or understand the value of what she was learning. Instead, she was put to work. Mariana went on to describe the jobs available for someone as young as 15 in Rancho Viejo: "Cleaning chickens, stone mason, in Atotonilco you can sell food, handicrafts or become a chicken packer."

Mariana's grade point average is between a 9.5 and 9.9. In December of 2021 her scholarship renewal application presented a perfect 10.0. When asked what she attributes to earning such excellent grades

she responded, "never missing classes and completing all of my homework. At home, there are no problems to be concerned with. I have all the support of my parents, they are very proud of me."

Mariana is not sure which university she will attend but she is looking forward to majoring in pedagogy with a focus on working with children in kindergarten. She is the oldest of four children and when Mariana is not busy doing homework or helping her mother, she plays a traditional Mexican game called Enchanted/Encantado with her siblings and cousins. She also enjoys helping her younger sister with homework. Mariana chuckled when she described that her younger brothers are proudly self-driven in their studies, they only ask her for help when they cannot figure out a problem. When asked if she realized that moving onto a university program will raise the likelihood of her siblings following her path, she did not hesitate to confirm that such a possibility resonates with her.

There is an additional family member who supports Mariana's dreams, grandmother Antonia Baltazar Jiménez. Every child should have a grandmother like Antonia, a pillar of strength and wisdom for her grandchildren.

The Biblioteca scholarship program supports students who are dedicated to education, when combined with family unity and love, together we become a force behind a first generation scholar.



OUR PROGRAMS

# Teatro Santa Ana



**“Theater is poetry that rises from the book and becomes human enough to talk and shout, weep and despair.” Federico García Lorca**

During 2021, the Teatro Santa Ana adapted to the changes set by the pandemia, and has managed to reunite performances and emotions with our community.

In January 2021, the Theater closed its doors for a second time, due to the contagious new variant of Covid-19. Once again the theatergoers, actors and directors would have to hold on to their appetite for movies, concerts and live shows. Yet the Biblioteca takes with much seriousness its responsibility and puts the safety of its audience as one of our top priorities. Thus with patience and new strategies, our activities resumed in April, with a brand new approach for our live events: open air events on the Main Patio of the Biblioteca!

Our Main Patio is indeed a successful extension of the Teatro Santa Ana! There, our audiences found a comfortable space, safe and functional for all kinds of presentations: concerts, talks or live shows. We were able to construct a portable stage to accommodate performances in the open air. Over the year, we presented in the Main Patio, more than 20 events, each one attended by 50 to 120 persons.

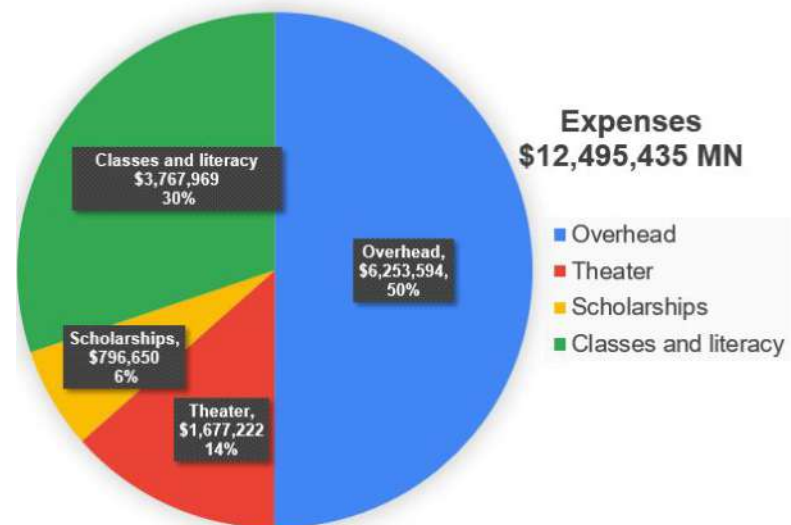
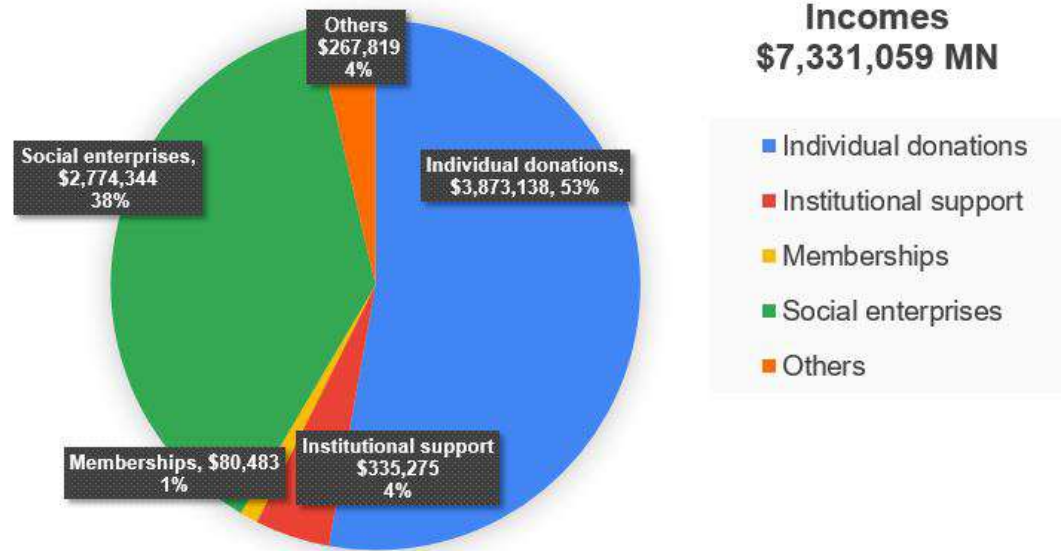
And our Sala Quetzal continues, receiving workshops, talks, intimate concerts that nourish the events programming of the Teatro Santa Ana. The mission of the Teatro Santa Ana is to offer an artistic and cultural lineup which will touch the hearts and minds of our spectators. The Theater is also a tool to fundraise for the other programs of the Biblioteca and for those events, donations are gratefully received.

In 2021 we overcame the difficulties due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and we are grateful for the results we reached in 2021 using the Sala Quetzal and the Teatro Santa Ana :

- More the 10 theater and dance shows
- 5 conferences and book presentations
- 38 music concerts
- 75 movies, among which a series of movies adapted for audiences with vision loss.

The Teatro Santa Ana is an important part of the cultural life in San Miguel, where children, teenagers and adults find a place to enjoy and sustain their love for arts.

# Financial Report



# Our Team

## Board of Directors

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SECRETARY

Gerardo Espinosa  
TREASURER

Robert Remak  
ASSISTANT TRESURER

Federico Vidargas  
AT LARGE

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Cornelia Ulrich  
Rossana Conte Galvan  
Susan Christine Oneal  
Ali Zerriffi

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Executive director

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Subdirector for administration and operations

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Assistant of Administration

- PAOLA GUADALUPE MANZANO SANTANA

Assistant of Administration

- SOLEDAD CECILIA RODRIGUEZ PEREZ

Librarian

- IRMA AGUILAR RAMIREZ

Librarian's assistant

- EUGENIO DAVID MORALES ARELLANO

English room assistant

- MARTIN HABACUC DIAZ MUÑOZ

Spanish room assistant

- ALONDRA SARAHI VAZQUEZ MENDOZA

Children room assistant and Classes coordinator

- NARCISO CABRERA CARRION

Maintenance

- JOSE JESUS PACHECO VARGAS

Maintenance

- JUANA MANZANO ROJAS

Maintenance

- JOSE MANUEL LEAL ORDUÑA

Chef at Café Santa Ana

- ANA LAURA MENDOZA GONZÁLEZ

Manager at Café Santa Ana

- BIANCA RUTH MORALES GALVAN

Assistant at Café Santa Ana

- SANDRA MAYELA MENDEZ RAMIREZ

Assistant at Café Santa Ana

- HECTOR OSVALDO RAMIREZ GUTIERREZ

Tours coordinator

- MARIA LETICIA RODRIGUEZ CHAVEZ

Human Resources manager

- JOEL RAMIREZ MOLINA

Human resources assistant

- WENDY KARINA MENDOZA AVENDAÑO

Manager at Teatro Santa Ana

- IRINEO MUÑOZ

Assistant at Teatro Santa Ana

- JOSE ANTONIO RAMIREZ BAUTISTA

Assistant at Teatro Santa Ana

- MIGUEL ANGEL TORRES SAENZ

Technical assistant at Teatro Santa Ana

- DANIEL HERRERA VAZQUEZ

Manager of Technology and information

- VICTOR HUGO BENITEZ MENDEZ

Technology and information assistant

- REYNA RODRIGUEZ ROSAS

Community Manager

- FRANCISCO EMMANUEL GRIMALDI JASSO

Manager of Tienda Tesoros

- JAZMIN SANCHEZ BOWMAN

Asistant of Tienda Tesoros

- MARIE MOEBIUS

Fundraising manager

- ALMA CERVANTES

Coordinator Scholarship Program

# Volunteers

Polo Aguilera  
Phillippa Baran  
Susan Boland  
Tim Brockington  
John Chapman  
Alejandra Cisneros  
William Conklin  
Bret Costain  
Michael Dobbin  
Dale Eby  
Kathleen Ellsworth  
Patricia Frey  
Brigham Golden  
Kathryn Graham  
Bill Graham  
Ramiro Granados  
Jorge Graniel Gonzalez  
Bill Grinager  
Jan Gunn  
Martin Habacuc  
John Hittell  
Clare Howell  
Carol Jackson

Norman La Peters  
Steve Leher  
Sidney Leher  
Martha Liner  
Lulu Lum  
Fernando Luna Muñoz  
Erika Lyn  
Patricia Macleod  
Ana Mateos  
Anne McCoher  
Kate Mckorkle  
Pat McMackin  
Alejandro Mejia  
Susan Oneal  
Pat Pore  
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Robin Stacey  
Anna Tomka  
Cornelia Ulrich  
Ana Karen Zuñiga



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