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## Editor's notes

Hi! My name is Paulina Martinez, and I am happy to join Projects Abroad Mexico as Information Manager, from where I will be managing all the information about Mexico to make it reach you. Also I hope to be a good support for the volunteers, as a project coordinator. Thank you to all the staff who has supported me so far and trusted me this labor.

November is a month full of festivity in Mexico. To start with the Day of the Dead's celebrations that is recognized as a world's intangible heritage and to which we joined. In this edition we also share with you a Care Project story from our volunteer Amy Cotton, who has had an outstanding performance there, we really thank her contribution.

And other interesting sections, get ready to see our suggestions for your next trip nearby and the recipe to share with your family and friends here in Mexico or abroad.

## Paulina



**Project:** Care

**Placement:** NIAFAM

**Name:** Amy Cotton (24)

**Country:** United States

New Hampshire Health Sciences graduate Amy Cotton spent three months volunteering at an orphanage and hospital with Projects Abroad in Mexico.

“For a long time I had a yearning for the knowledge that remains unique to one with worldly experience, and my desire to explore this truth was my true motivation for my decision to volunteer abroad,” she shared.

Amy chose to volunteer with Projects Abroad after much consideration and deliberation. “I spent a long time researching to find the right volunteer organization,” she shared. “I went with

my parents to an information session that Projects Abroad held in my city,” she explained. “The presentation was very informative, and I felt that Projects Abroad

was a smart and safe option - I can now say with confidence that Projects Abroad has proven to be great option,” she enthused. “Whenever I need support, there is staff to help,” she added.

Amy had very specific reasons for choosing to do a healthcare project in Mexico.

“Living in the US, I feel that the necessity for culturally competent healthcare has become our reality,” she opined. “With the fast-growing and increasingly prominent Hispanic population within America, the acculturation process has to a degree become a reciprocated phenomenon -American culture has begun to adopt Hispanic culture and this incorporation is seen in all aspects of society,” she explained. “My enthusiasm to advocate for the importance of providing culturally competent healthcare helped me decide which volunteer path to choose,” she continued “With Mexican Americans being the largest subgroup of the Hispanic population in the States, it seemed logical to immerse myself in Mexican culture,” she concluded.

The orphanage at which Amy worked houses nine boys from the ages of eight to 13. The fact that there are only nine boys in the facility allowed Amy to form a special relationship with each individual. “I felt welcome from the moment I walked into the orphanage,” she shared. “There was never a dull moment, as the boys were full of energy and there was always something that needed to be done,” she added.



Amy's daily tasks at the orphanage included teaching the boys English, playing games and exercising with them, helping them with their homework cooking and cleaning at the centre.



The hospital at which Amy worked specializes in emergency services. “One reason I chose to do this after working at the orphanage was so that I could work on improving my Spanish before immersing myself in the hospital setting,” she explained.

Amy learnt a lot about Mexico, its people and its culture during her time at the projects. “My volunteering experience was one of complete immersion into the Spanish culture,” she shared. “I have been exposed to such a unique opportunity to integrate myself into the culture,” she continued. “The way of life in Mexico is very

different from what I am used to - people are very friendly and giving, the culture has so much to offer and I try to take advantage by meeting as many people as I can and experiencing the true way of life through them,” she explained.

Amy’s advice to future volunteers is to stay true to their initial motivation. “I think it is important to remember why you chose to do this,” she explained. “From the moment you wake up in the morning until the moment you go to bed at night, you need to approach every situation with energy and enthusiasm,” she advised. “There is so much to learn and so much to do - stepping outside of your comfort zone will personally challenge you and give you a unique sense of independence,” she concluded.

We hope that great stories like these inspire others to help Projects Abroad to make a difference and, in doing so, to learn something themselves along the way.

## Day of the Dead’s celebrations



# TRAVEL



La Manzanilla is a small fishing village on the Pacific coast about an hour north of Manzanillo and three hours south of Puerto Vallarta in an area known as the Costa Alegre.

Its long beach with palapas with classic and exquisite dining and lodging establishments of economic class, has bungalows, hotels and camping area. The calm waves and moderate slope are part of its attributes, ideal place for fishing and water sports. Its golden sand gray and palm villages extend to the beach of Boca de Iguanas.

There is a camp located on the beach near the lagoon, which is a protected ecological zone. There are tour guides on the lake, where you can see: alligators, herons and bird fisherman, a wonderful experience of nature.

The Tenacatita Bay has one of the best fishing in Mexico including snapper, tuna, dorado , and sailfish cat .Some of the activities available are: horseback riding, scuba diving, hiking, cycling and yoga.

### Getting to La Manzanilla Jalisco

By land: Colima has an excellent network of highways and roads are mostly paved. Among the busiest are shafts that connect to other cities such as Colima - Guadalajara - Barra de Navidad Manzanillo and Colima-Morelia, as well as internal roads of Colima, Manzanillo, Colima and Colima - Tecomán Armory.

Puerto Vallarta is connected to the rest of Mexico by the Guadalajara - Vallarta Compostela (it goes to Manzanillo ) pathway Autlán Guadalajara - Vallarta , both in good condition . The distance between Puerto Vallarta and Mexico City, the capital of the Republic is 891 miles.

By air: The International Airport “Playa de Oro” Manzanillo is located 44 kilometers from downtown and 35 miles from the hotel zone. Flights from the United States, Canada and major cities are available. The International Airport “Gustavo Díaz Ordaz” is located 6 km north of Puerto Vallarta, is the main access route to the destination.

By sea: Manzanillo is one of the most important ports in Mexico. Several cruises anchor at their dock. FOR MUCH of the year luxury cruise ships from around the world and private vessels , reach the shores of Vallarta. The city offers all the facilities to ships and tourists docking at the marina for 400 boats.



# Mexican Kitchen





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