

Charity Founders Receive Standing Ovation at APROMEX Golf Outing



Monica Stevens, Detroit Immigration Examiner

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Impressed with their achievements, members of the Association of Mexican Professionals in Michigan and their international guests gave John and Cindy Shinsky, founders of The City of Children orphanage, a standing ovation during the APROMEX 2011 Golf Outing.

APROMEX celebrated yesterday Saturday, July 25th, its Annual Golf Outing at the Tyrone Hills Golf Club, and this year they decided to donate most of their proceeds to John Shinsky's orphanage "The City of Children" in Matamoros, Mexico, part of the Friends of the Orphans chain of charities.

"La Ciudad de los Niños" (its name in Spanish) became part of Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos and its American fundraising arm, Friends of the Orphans, in 2009. Through the efforts of John and Cindy Shinsky, and of their friends, and many companies both in Mexico and in Michigan, today "La Ciudad de los Niños" provides an education, food, shelter, sports and artistic activities to homeless children in the border city of Matamoros, Mexico.

In 2009, John Shinsky, Eljay Joe De Lamielleure and Eljay Bowron began riding their bicycles for 19 days, across the Mexican border, to the city of Matamoros, to raise funds to give birth to John's lifelong dream: To help homeless children. The ride began at half-time during the 2009 MSU Green and White Football Game at Spartan Stadium, before 25,000 spectators and well wishers.

Along the way, John and his friends received assistance from many institutions, such as the FBI, the Secret Service, and the local police, who provided protection. Through Eljay's connections as former head of the Secret Services, they received points from Holiday Inn Express, which gave them with a place to sleep for 19 nights while reached Mexico. The Mexican government temporarily shut down its borders to clear the way for these athletes to enter their country, and to help CBS to continue filming the bike ride.

An orphan himself, John explained to his audience at the golf outing how appreciative he has always been of the help he received at the orphanage that took him in when his father died, and his mother was forced to give him up. He talked about the generosity of Mexican entrepreneur Ramiro Gonzalez, who donated the 17 acres where the orphanage stands today, and of the help provided by the Rotary Clubs both in Mexico and in the US. He also spoke about companies like Xpedx, who provide all paper products to the orphanage for free -- and of their VP Dennis Walsh who personally visited the orphanage; of MSU, who donated all the bunk beds; and of the many volunteers in Mexico and in Michigan who have joined him and done physical work at the orphanage.

Other volunteers include Novalink, a manufacturing company in Matamoros who have helped clean the area and take care of maintenance and storage for the orphanage, and HILTI, an industrial fasteners manufacturing German company recently established in Matamoros, that was precisely looking for a long-term commitment for a community service project in the area, and found one in "The City of Children". They have provided a soccer field where the orphan children can play soccer and hold picnics.

"They try to create the culture of a family. They believe in the importance of social responsibility and in giving back to the community", explained Cindy.

"We have managed to begin sending our children to Colegio De La Salle, one of Matamoros' most prestigious K-12 schools. Some of these kids are really bright!", explained John. When not in school, "La Ciudad de los Niños"

children enjoy many activities throughout the year. They learn computer skills, hold a Halloween party, and practice Tae Kwon Do, soccer, or football. They also celebrate their First Communion

“You can rest assured that 100% of the money you donate to “The City of Children” will go straight to the children and the orphanage”, explained John. “Every time we travel to Matamoros, the money comes out of our own pockets”. John visits the orphanage approximately every six weeks.

As John spoke, attendees to the APROMEX Golf Outing were writing checks and taking out their wallets to further contribute to his efforts. At the end of John’s presentation came a very long and loud standing ovation.

Attendants to the event included Carl Galeana, president of Galeana Automotive Group; Lawrence Garcia, president of the Hispanic Bar Association of Michigan; Deputy Consul of Mexico Jorge Sanchez-Cataño; Miller Canfield’s international practice advisor for Mexican and Latin American legal and business issues, Marie-Alsace Galindo; and numerous representatives of the automotive industry in Michigan.

John Shinsky has overcome his own orphaned childhood and a later battle with cancer to devote his life to help children in another country. With 1 billion out of 2.2 billion children in the world living in poverty, and with hate crimes and xenophobia on the rise everywhere, the generosity and selflessness displayed by John and Cindy Shinsky, and their friends and supporters certainly are a breath of fresh air.

2011 Golf Outing



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