

**Mexico Report
February 3-11, 2007**

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Why did I participate?

I participated in this program to increase my understanding of the continuously growing Hispanic population of Walworth County and to allow myself to build upon my understanding of the Hispanic ethnic background, the roads they have traveled, their incredible work ethic, and the culture. I want to bring my community a passion and better understanding of the Hispanic culture.

What did I learn?

The experiences that we shared while in Mexico were inspiring, sometimes heartbreaking, and at other times completely eye-opening. The people of Mexico were tremendously welcoming and sincere. In the end, I returned home understanding the richness of the Mexican culture. I can appreciate the dynamics of the family structure. I learned that many people are happy without all the materialistic amenities and will share with you even though they do not have that much to give. I learned that a discussion with a child can open a whole new light on the meanings of "giving" and "friendship".

What will I do with my new knowledge?

My goal is that this experience will lead to new programs devoted to engaging the Hispanic population within Wisconsin and for us to bring the understanding of what we learned into our projects. This opportunity will help me develop and enhance trust-based relationships and programs focused on the Latino needs. I would like to share my knowledge with many groups throughout the state and perhaps work across state lines with others that participated in the trip to enhance our programming. Overall, this experience was very powerful both personally and professionally.