



## A Community We Support: Plan Juárez

In 2006, we learned of a great need outside our self-imposed geographic boundaries. We made an exception and opened a kitchen at Plan Juárez, a rural school in the community of Misión Chichimeca. Plan Juárez is part of the San José Iturbide municipality. Although outside of the San Miguel de Allende municipality, our organization supports this school kitchen because, quite simply, these children are in severe need of sustenance and balanced nutrition.



The textbooks of the children are in two languages: Spanish and Chichimeca. There is no middle school in Misión Chichimeca, which means most of these children will not study beyond elementary school. Children must attend school to receive a Feed the Hungry hot lunch, so they are getting an education in addition to a meal.

There are only around 10 families that make up Misión Chichimeca. Their houses are built with rocks, a few bricks, and elements of their surroundings, such as dried maguey leaves. The kitchens at the homes are mostly coal-powered. When it rains or gets really cold, the conditions can be extremely harsh.

The families make their income mostly from the sale of nopales and tunas (cactus fruit), some zucchini - whatever they can grow in their small plots of land. Sadly, these are reserved for sale and hardly, if ever, cooked to be consumed at home. The families mostly subsist on tortillas, rice, and beans.

A severely poor indigenous community, it is the last native Chichimeca settlement in the country. Feed the Hungry was approached for help, because the poverty there was overwhelming. Children at the school sometimes lost consciousness because they were so hungry.



### Nutrition Report – School Year 2018-2019

During the 2017-2018 school cycle, the children were given a larger meal portion to meet nutritional needs as it was very likely that the FTH meal was the only one received a day. The children eat heartily and enjoy second servings. They devour the food more tenaciously than we see at most of our other school kitchens.

In 2019, the Early Childhood Nutrition program and addition of a second meal a day was introduced in this community. Pre-Kinder children younger than three years old, and their mothers, eat breakfast and lunch on school grounds.

For the remainder of 2019, we will serve more than 100 hot meals every school day to Elementary students, and 10 moms and 15 toddlers are benefiting from the Early Childhood Nutrition Program. FTH is also kick-starting a pilot program to encourage Economic Development to teach the mothers how to make crafts to sell.

Feed the Hungry's nutritionists track the status of the children by weighing and taking their measurements, to measure progress against the previous assessment. We're pleased to report that these children are improving, although many still exhibit signs of malnutrition, such as mottled skin color.

Since the increase of food portions in 2017, we have seen the percentage of underweight children drop to 62%, a reduction of 13% from the prior year.

The mothers are receiving on-going cooking classes and nutrition workshops from the Operations team. The classes and workshops have been well-attended and received. The mothers are now actively involved in instilling the importance of a balanced meal to their children. Physical activity is also encouraged. The children go out and play in the newly installed set of swings kindly donated by Guadalupe Alvarez of Penzi Bodas.

Condition	Percentage
Obese	0%
Overweight	0%
Normal	37%
Light Underweight	9%
Moderate Underweight	28%
Severe Underweight	26%



### General Observation

The on-going rate of underweight children who enter first grade yearly has been static. We are optimistic that with the newly introduced Early Childhood Nutrition program, which targets pre-kinder children and their mothers, will drastically reduce the percentage of first-graders that are malnourished and underweight. This community has shown dedication and commitment to the programs FTH offers. The mothers are involved and willing to learn what is taught at the workshops and implement at home when resources allow.



### Our Commitment

The Plan Juárez school is 80 kilometers each way from the Feed the Hungry center, yet our dedicated volunteer drivers continue to make biweekly deliveries of food and supplies, come rain or shine.

We intend to continue supporting this community for as long as it is necessary and to improve the lives of these children and their families in any way possible.

