

A Community We Support: Los Ricos de Abajo

Location Statistics

The latest census data (2010) reported the population of Los Ricos de Abajo is 364 men, women, and children; 124 were children under the age of 14. In 78 households, only 26 had all services – electricity, water, and sewage.

Only 31% of the adult population was employed and 11% were illiterate.

The community is 29 kilometers from the Feed the Hungry Center.

The Weekly Support and Supply Cycle

Our 36 school kitchens are visited each week by our kitchen supervisors who use an inventory par stock system to prepare the “shopping list” for the following week.

On **Saturdays**, volunteers package the individual dry goods and supplies from bulk purchase stored in our center.

On **Mondays**, our vendors deliver fresh produce and perishables which are then cleaned and packed to order by another group of volunteers.

On **Tuesdays**, a third group of volunteers pick up the “shopping list” order for “their school” and delivers it using their own vehicles.

Our volunteer driver for Los Ricos de Abajo is **Bill Stuart**.



The Feed the Hungry kitchen in Los Ricos de Abajo opened in 2005.

Hot, nutritious meals are served to students at the Naciones Unidas primaria (elementary) school and the Helen Keller kinder (preschool), benefiting 79 children every school day.

This remote village is one of the most challenging for our volunteer drivers to access, especially during the rainy season. Yet they make the trip every week during the school year.

In this community, it is important to maintain vigilance and offer continual nutritional guidance. Although they are a very participative community, and we have their support, it cannot be overlooked that at the same time, the junk food companies push their products and are constantly working to inculcate bad habits. On this front, we must work with great effort to win the battle.

For the latest Nutrition Report (June 2018), staff nutritionist Irving E. Ayala Zúñiga, assessed 78 students in primaria and kinder through height, weight, and body fat measurements.

Nutrition Report

Underweight Children

17% light underweight
29% moderate to severe underweight

In the community of Los Ricos de Abajo, the children we monitor are diagnosed as moderately and severely underweight; only 41% are at normal weight. The 2017 assessment showed 55% at normal weight. The reduction in satisfactory nutritional status is due to the exit of the sixth grade students and the entry of children into kindergarten and primary school.

In the case of kindergarten children, they tend to enter school in a state of malnutrition, because the mothers usually do not have the necessary resources to adequately feed young children in the early stages of life. The vitamin deficiencies of the children who enter this school are reflected in their dry, scaly skin with white spots, and in some cases, yellow eyes.

Once the children enter the Feed the Hungry meals program we see improvements in their nutritional status, due to the vitamins and minerals present in the healthy foods that are included in the menus.

The participation of the principal and parents is quite high, which helps to ensure gradual positive changes in eating habits.

Obese and Overweight Children

8% obese
5% overweight

Obesity has been a recurrent problem due to consumption of products such as soft drinks, churros, and sweet bread. Companies facilitate access to junk food in remote communities, which makes it easy for mothers to acquire these products. Although mothers know this poor diet is a problem, children tend to influence their mothers by begging them to buy these harmful items.

We have worked hard to combat these bad eating habits, and little by little, we have made mothers and children aware of the importance of good nutrition for growth and development. Even so, with each new generation we need to take up these issues and continue meeting the challenge.

Condition	Percentage	Children
Obese	8%	6
Overweight	5%	4
Normal	41%	32
Light underweight	17%	13
Moderate underweight	6%	5
Severe underweight	23%	18