

A Community We Support: Alcocer

Location Statistics

At the time of the latest INEGI census report (2010) the population of Alcocer was 1,224, men, women, and children; 411 were children under the age of 14. In 290 households, 253 had all services – electricity, water, and sewage.

Only 30% of the population over age 12 had a source of income, and 13% are illiterate. The average level of schooling is 5.57 years.

The Weekly Support and Supply Cycle

Our 36 rural 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 Alcocer is **Jim Ellsworth**.



The Feed the Hungry kitchen in the Alcocer community opened in 2002. Meals are served to students at the Melchor Ocampo preschool (kindergarten), now benefiting 65 children every school day.

General Observation

The children of this community are very participative and have shown great progress in choosing good foods for their daily diet. Mothers also show interest in making changes in their family’s diet. Two volunteer mothers cook the meals in the Feed the Hungry kitchen.

The work that has been carried out in this community greatly improved the acceptance of the healthy foods. The balance between children with normal weight and children with low weight shows steady improvement.

Previously, FTH was providing meals for as many as 85 preschoolers. There are now 65. This is due to the fact that the community has changed since the kitchen began operations 17 years ago. There is better transportation and a paved road, which makes it easier for mothers to bring their children to urban schools. And some families have left the community altogether and moved to San Miguel proper to work.

Nutrition Report - School Year: 2018

Feed the Hungry staff nutritionist Irving Eduardo Ayala Zuñiga assessed 46 students through height, weight, and body fat measurements.

Unfortunately, with better access to transportation, there is also easy access to low quality food products such as soft drinks, sweets, and fried foods, and cases of overweight have increased. However, cases of underweight have declined. The Feed the Hungry program has made a noticeable improvement in the nutrition status of preschool children in this community.

| Condition | 2018 | 2016 |
|--------------------------------|------|------|
| Obese and overweight | 13% | 5% |
| Normal | 63% | 55% |
| Light underweight | 17% | 24% |
| Moderate to severe underweight | 6% | 16% |

We observe that often malnourished children enter the first grade of preschool, but graduate with a normal weight by the end of their first year. The school meals provide the nutrition and satiety that prevent the children from being as interested in junk food that is sold in the area.

Deficiencies related to lack of vitamins and proteins can be seen in some of the children of this community, including dry skin and hair, spots on arms and faces, and in some cases, retarded growth. In many cases, these deficiencies have been reduced, thanks to the meals they receive from Feed the Hungry at school.

It is important that in this community we continue to provide healthy meals to prevent children from relapsing into bad eating habits. And to continue providing nutrition education for families, because busy mothers may prefer to serve processed foods that are easy to buy, prepare, and consume. It is important to continually fight against bad eating habits, especially among preschool-age children in their critical stage of development, and to establish good habits for the rest of their lives.