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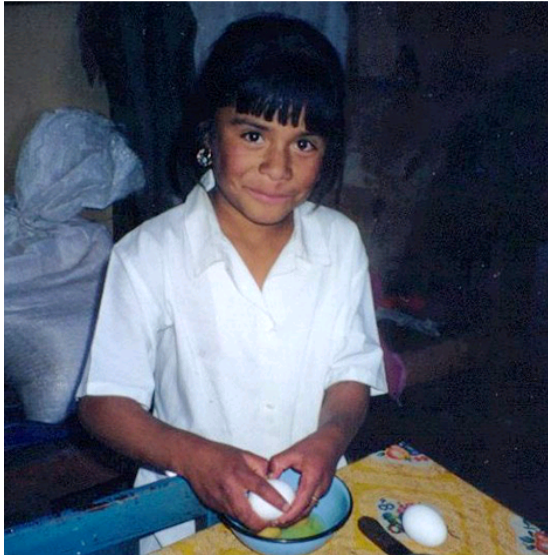
A Day in the Life of a Mexican Student



By Elizabeth Howard for Noemi

Every Monday morning, we sing the Himno Nacional Mexicano (Mexican National Anthem) but only the first verse, because it's a very long song. This is part of how I start my typical school day in the small village of Garatachea, Mexico.

"Mexicans, at the cry of battle lend your swords and bridle; and let the earth tremble at its center upon the roar of the cannon..."



First I do my chores: I clean and sweep my room and prepare my breakfast. By 8:00 A.M. I eat breakfast, usually *huevos* (eggs) or *frijoles con arroz* (beans with rice), with tea and then walk to school.

1



Our teacher has us start at 9:00 A.M. and for the next three hours we read, work on writing, and practice narratives.



Then we can have "break time"! My friends and I play *juegos* (games) outside on the slide, swings or monkey bars but my favorite game is *volibol* (volleyball).

2



At 12:30 we go back inside, and finish the morning's assignments, work on art projects and continue with more assignments.



3

After all this and if we have time, we begin la tarea (the homework) for the evening, even though I only have at the most an hour and a half of school work each night.



Usually when I arrive home from school, I eat lunch by 3:00 P.M., finish my homework, help my mom with the rest of the chores in the house (like washing and hanging clothes to dry, dishes, sweeping, feeding the animals or tending the sheep on our farm), and finally go to bed around 9:00 P.M.

4



At school, we get points for doing things well; arriving on time, helping with the classroom chores, and for completing our homework. I receive two points in the morning for each assignment I do well.



5

Generally I like being at school a lot, but what I like most is to work on my favorite subjects, *Matemáticas* (math) and *Español* (Spanish).



In this primary school the students are all different ages. Some are as young as seven, and some are as old as twelve. Almost all of the students in the school are my friends.

6

Mi major amiga (My best friend), who is my age, is Maria del Carmen. She's my closest friend because she always helps me whenever I have any problems and because she's so much fun to be with.



It is very difficult for many of my friends to continue studying in the secondary school in town, especially to go on to *la universidad* (the university). Nonetheless, I want to become *una doctora* (a doctor) someday and work with families that don't have a lot of income. Therefore I will have to continue to do well now, even though I am 11 years old.



In just a year, I can take the local bus that comes by our farm early in the morning and takes students to the secondary school in Angangueo. My older brother is there now and I know he is very lucky. I want to be that lucky someday too.