

Group adventure



The Peru Kids Project was treated to a bright and cheerful influx of volunteers from San Juan College in New Mexico this month. Students and teachers gave up their summer vacations to discover Cusco and spend time with the children at the girls' and boys' orphanages and library project.

The group arrived bubbly and enthusiastic despite a night spent in Lima airport, and were keen to get started straight away. They headed out for a big lunch and a tour of the city for orientation, before launching straight into one of the famous Inca ruins, Saqsaywaman, the following day.

Monday morning the group split in half and headed off to the orphanages to begin tackling some important topics. During the week they came up with fun ideas to teach the children about street safety, health and hygiene, identity and recycling. They endured gruelling homework sessions and lightened things up with sports and games.

Later in the week the group shared a cultural exchange with a school group from Ccorca, about an hours drive out of Cusco. They spent the morning preparing a Pachamanca – a traditional Peruvian feast where a pyramid of stones is built over a fire, and then the stones are used to cook the food. The volunteers organised football matches, an obstacle course, tug of war and various other games, all of which the children loved.

The weekend arrived early, very early in fact – 5am Friday morning – with a trip to Machu Picchu and the Sacred Valley. The volunteers discovered why this attraction is the most popular in all South America and took in plenty of the magnificent scenery along the way.

During their second week, the team from San Juan College wasn't afraid to pitch in and get dirty for a good cause. One group did a great job of freshening up the girls' orphanage with a new coat of paint while the others repaired the greenhouse, toiled the soil and planted new vegetables.



To top it all off everyone pulled together in a fantastic group effort to prepare a special Sunday lunch for all the children. Bringing some home-grown customs to Peru, the students made Navajo tacos which was a roaring success with the children. They finished off the feast with an enormous cake, leaving creamy smiles all round.



There is no doubt that the children will remember the students and teachers from San Juan College for their generosity, smiles, laughter and tacos for quite some time!

Library excursion

The children in the San Sebastian district of Cusco have been developing their love of books for some time. La Pagina en La Puerta (The page in the door) library offers them an escape into the world of fiction, and helps them find the truth if that's what they're seeking. They come after school to enjoy reading alone or with friends, to get help with their homework and to participate in fun programs to help develop their reading abilities.



This month the children got to share that joy with the boys at the orphanage during a special excursion. The trip was organised as part of the program for our San Juan College group from New Mexico.

In an impromptu response to the visit, one of the regular library members from the neighbourhood took the opportunity to display his snail collection. The boys were fascinated by his menagerie of slimy pets and were quick to jump at the opportunity to hold them.



It was such a great success that other Globalteer volunteers organised excursions from the orphanage the following week so more children could enjoy the experience.

One of the volunteers said: "I just got such a kick out of seeing the boys there, fascinated by what the books could offer them, that we had to do it again. When you see them all sitting down and concentrating, it makes you realise how much potential these kids have if they're just offered a chance."



The volunteers took the initiative one step further and asked the director of La Pagina en La Puerta for help to set up a library in the boys' orphanage so they could enjoy books every day. The new venture is now underway.



Lights, camera, action!

The library is spreading its wings and offering more ways for the children to interact with stories. Thanks to the generous donation of a television, the library now offers movie nights once a month.

The topic of the movie is tied into the themes of the books the children are reading, and in this way encourages them to think about communicating ideas in a new way.



With just two movie nights so far, it is proving to be a popular addition to the regular schedule, which includes reading programs, homework help and educational games.