

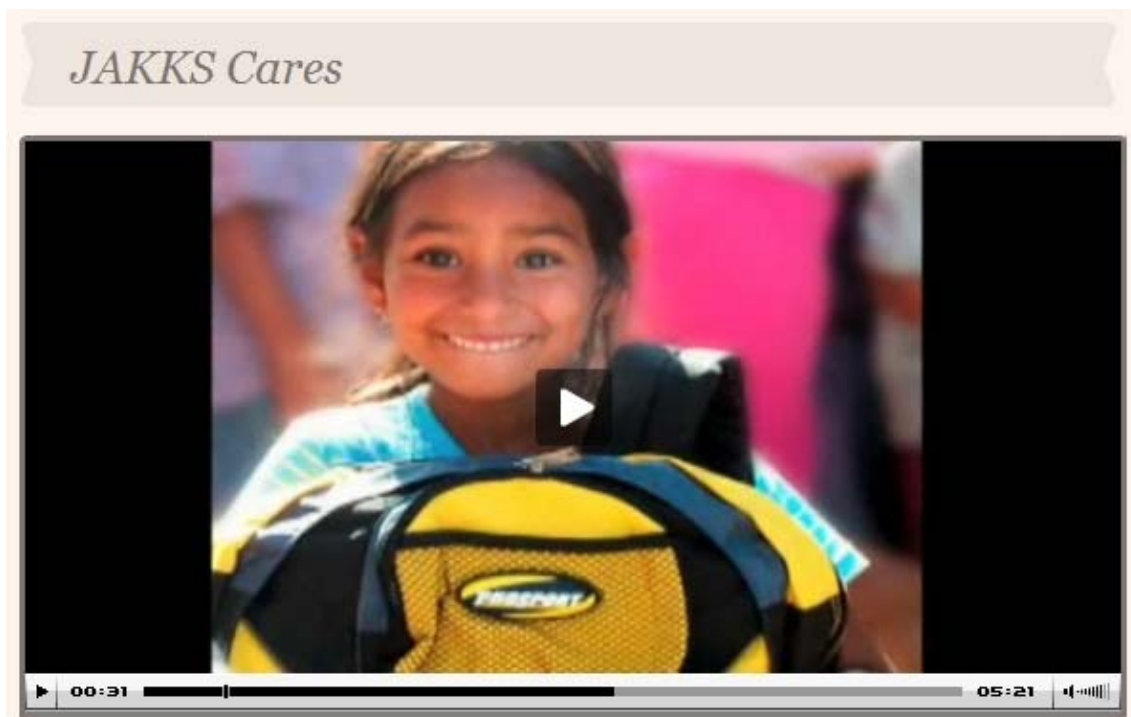


Hi Everyone,

Just a couple of quick news items...

JAKKS Pacific and Children of The Americas

JAKKS Pacific, one of the largest toy distributors in the country has been working with COTA for about three years now getting toys and school supplies to us for the children. I got a chance to view their promotional video for JAKKSCares, their charitable outreach division recently and saw that though we aren't mentioned directly, many of the shots are of our kids and volunteers. So I wanted to pass it along to you to take a look. We're happy to be associated with JAKKS, a company that has really shown us how much it does care about children. Click the image below to view the video. [<http://www.jakks.com/jakkscares>]



Mexico Safety Issues

Recently the media reports of violence in Mexico due to the ongoing conflict between drug cartels and both Mexican and U.S. enforcement agencies along with the swine flu problem has caused concern among many of us in the States, and especially among those who are planning to travel with us to help the children.

I wanted to take a moment to say that these issues in Mexico tend to have limited effect on most of the people, especially in the poor areas in which we work. As far as the violence is concerned, we've found and our friends in the neighborhoods in which we work bear out, that if you're not directly involved in the production or sale or law enforcement of illegal substances or related to those who are, there is little danger of violence or abduction. Avoiding the areas of drug sale and use so as not to be caught in crossfire is another issue, but since we work in areas where money is not prevalent, we don't see these issues in our work. The article below from another organization that works in Mexico mirrors our experience.

As for the swine flu, the virus doesn't seem to have the genetic markers to make it a widespread health problem, and it seems to have peaked. Once again, there is no evidence of any health problems in the areas in which we work.

The biggest problem we're facing due to all these issues seems to be increased regulations at the border--it's getting harder to get our materials across. So we're working with our staff and with officials sympathetic to our work to find ways to help smooth the way. As we plan more trips and distribution days, we wanted you to be aware of the issues as we see them so you can make your decision about participating. We hope this helps, but if you have any questions, please reply or call.



Corazón's Updated Border Statement

We want to update you on the violence that is occurring in Mexico and what it means for you and your participation in the Corazón program. For the past year and a half rather than address the emotional and often wildly exaggerated media reports, we have chosen to tighten our Saturday security measures, answer your concerns when they were voiced and post the information you needed on the website to make an informed decision. However, the recent renewal of the State Department's long standing travel advisory on Mexico this week has caused us to rethink our approach and let you know what is actually going on in Mexico.

There has been a "travel alert" for Mexico for over four years now. It is not a travel "warning" that says to stay away, it is a public notice to let you know that there has been trouble in the country and you should be careful when you go there. The alert is providing you with the information you need to make an informed decision about a particular travel destination. It is the same sort of information you would give a friend who is going to the Los Angeles Coliseum for a sporting event-have fun but be careful what you do and where you go. We reiterate that this is not a new alert but a regular renewal of past alerts.

We do not want to minimize the fact that Mexico, and especially some of the border cities, has experienced some horrific violence in the past few years. We do want to emphasize that very little has been directed at American citizens and none has been directed at any American doing volunteer work in Tijuana or Tecate. This violence is the result of a clash of the drug cartels and law enforcement on both sides of the border. These clashes are often sensational, providing easy exploitation by the media and a distorted sense of the reality on the ground.

Meanwhile, the needs of the people in the communities we serve in Mexico, and the opportunity for education, growth, and spiritual fulfillment that US groups (especially teens) can receive by participation in that service remains. If anything, it is intensified by the current economic conditions in the US and Mexico. We are therefore highly motivated to address these issues, implement changes and resolve them where we can in a rational way.

It is painful to explain to our participants how their country is perceived by most Americans. They know that there is none of this violence in their local communities. They know the sacrifices they have made to be part of the Corazón program. They know what a difference your trips to Mexico have made in their lives. They wish they had the opportunity to explain it to you face to face.

So that is what we are trying to do. We take our responsibility to both our participants in Mexico and our volunteers in the US very seriously. We have listened to the advice of both

governments and instituted prudent and responsible safeguards for your trip to Mexico with us. You can review the specific steps we have implemented on our website [here](#). We ask you to consider what your service means not only for those in Mexico but also for you and your family as well, and what a tragic loss it would be if the program was allowed to fail.

Please contact the office at 949.830.7494 or office@corazon.org with any questions or comments.

Thank you for your continued support!!

Corazón

Still Coming Soon...

We've had two crews come back from central Baja helping build out a home for a family of 10, we've adopted an orphanage in northern Baja, our dining room in the ejido celebrated its second anniversary, and lots more coming soon.

Thanks again to all of you who make all this possible. We love you and blessings always,

Dave

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Dave Brisbin
Children of The Americas
67 Gingham St.
Trabuco Canyon, CA 92679
949.709.0673 TEL | 949.709.0674 FAX
www.americaschildren.org

