



Best International Service Project

Rotary Year 2023-2024

THE "CUENTA CUENTOS"
STORYTELLER
INITIATIVE



Rotary District 6910

April 15, 2024

THE “CUENTA CUENTOS” STORYTELLER

INTERNATIONAL SERVICE INITIATIVE (MEXICO – USA)



WHAT IS “CUENTA CUENTOS” (STORYTELLER)?



“Cuenta Cuentos” (Storyteller) is an impressive **Basic Education and Literacy Program** led by Rotarians of the Rotary Club of Mazatlan Oriente (District 4140, Mexico). Elementary school students called “Cuentistas” (Storytellers) attend a creative writing workshop, write their own stories, and then present them to an audience of classmates, teachers, school staff, family, and friends.

This initiative supports our **Rotary International Basic Education and Literacy Area of Focus**, and aligns perfectly with our vision of **Empowering Young Leaders** and **Create Hope in the World**.

TOPIC FOR THE STORIES

The topic for “**Cuenta Cuentos**” (Storyteller) this year was, “**Crea Esperanza en el Mundo**” (Create Hope in the World). Young storytellers shared with everyone how they are creating hope in their family, school, and community.



The stories written and told by our Storytellers were not only amusing, but also wholesome and inspiring!



WHY STORYTELLER?

For many years, the Rotary Club of Mazatlan Oriente has worked closely with schools in underprivileged areas of Mazatlan, Mexico. Mazatlan Rotarians have led projects to support local schools with installation of clean water drinking fountains, as well as donation of desks, chairs, blackboards, school painting, among other needs.

Given the close relationship between Mazatlan Rotarians and educators, they have identified many other needs at the schools they serve. **“Cuenta Cuentos” (Storyteller)** was created to address needs that are particularly important to Rotarians: Encouraging talent and creativity, nurturing dreams, as well as fostering values such as respect, kindness, generosity, and responsibility in children.

Canton Rotary Club President Francisco Lozano was born in Mazatlan, Mexico. When he applied for a scholarship of the Georgia Rotary Student Program (GRSP) in 2002, Mazatlan Rotarians sponsored him. Ever since, he has kept in touch with them and has built and nurtured a friendship that has become stronger in recent years due to our collaboration in Rotary projects.



Canton Rotary President Francisco Lozano in Mazatlan, before being a GRSP Student

HOW DID WE COLLABORATE IN STORYTELLER?

President Francisco traveled to Mazatlan, Mexico, in December 2023 and January 2024. He met with Mazatlan Rotarians and started to collaborate in **“Cuenta Cuentos” (Storyteller)**. They met and had planning sessions to discuss the details of Storyteller 2024, promotion strategies, and fundraising efforts.

Upon his return to Georgia, President Francisco shared the initiative with Canton Rotarians and continued to collaborate with Mazatlan Rotarians remotely.



Mazatlan Rotarians collaborate directly with teachers and school leaders. They put together the schedule of **“Cuenta Cuentos” (Storyteller)** in December 2023 for the Spring Semester 2024. They also determine the prizes for students and teachers.

Starting in the semifinal stages of the competition, Mazatlan Rotarians participated as mentors and judges. They also promoted Rotary and the extraordinary work done by Rotary around the world.



PARTICIPANTS

This year alone, 21,000 students from 100 different schools participated in **“Cuenta Cuentos” (Storyteller)**. They live in the southern municipalities of the State of Sinaloa in Mexico: Mazatlan, Rosario and Escuinapa, as well as rural areas near these municipalities such as Villa Union, Escamillas, El Recodo, Barron, La Noria, Puerta de Canoas, among others.

In addition to educators and Mazatlan Rotarians, other participants are Rotarians from other countries who may be visiting in Mazatlan, Rotary Youth Exchange Students, families, friends, and classmates of the Storytellers.



WINNERS

Winners were selected in their classrooms, schools, districts, and municipalities in two categories by grades. Please note that elementary school in Mexico goes from first to sixth grade.

- ✓ **Category 1 (Beginner):** One winner representing first to third grade.
- ✓ **Category 2 (Advanced):** One winner representing grades fourth to sixth.

The winners were:



Category 1: Lourdes Valeria Zapari, who received guidance from her teacher Martha Alejandra Zevada Iribe. Lourdes' story was entitled, "Egolib".

Category 2: Christian Daniel Lizárraga Tirado, who received guidance from his teacher Joel Ramos Zamudio. Christina's story was entitled, "El Pescador de Sueños" (Fisher of Dreams).

Fun fact: Both winners of Category 1 and Category 2 attend Justo Sierra Elementary School. It was a coincidence that both winners attend the same school, and it was an even happier coincidence that this is the same elementary school that President Francisco attended as a child 30 years ago!



PRIZES

The final event for the competition was on February 22, 2024. The winners received computers, tablets, and bicycles. Most of the participants study at public schools and many of them are from rural and impoverished areas.



BUDGET

- ✓ The necessary money for Storyteller was provided by sponsors such as local businesses, community organizations that support basic education, and Rotarians.
- ✓ The Board of Directors of Canton Rotary approved a charitable donation for Storyteller in the amount of USD 651.38 (US Dollars) equivalent to approximately MXN 10,000 (Mexican Pesos), which covered the cost of some of the prizes for the winners of the competition such as laptop computers.
- ✓ Rotarians of the Canton Rotary Charitable Board (Treasurer Clark Cordner and Charitable Fund Chair Lynn Epps) processed an international wire transfer to the bank account of the Rotary Club of Mazatlan Oriente on January 30, 2024.

EXPENSE	MXN (Mexican Pesos)	USD (US Dollars)
Rental fee of venues for semifinal events	\$30,000.00	\$1,809.41
Rental fee of venue for final event (auditorium)	\$50,000.00	\$3,015.68
300 Backpacks (\$400 each)	\$120,000.00	\$7,237.64
300 T-shirts	\$30,000.00	\$1,809.41
6 Bicycles	\$15,000.00	\$904.70
2 Desktop computers for winning schools	\$30,000.00	\$1,809.41
2 Laptop computers for winning students	\$10,000.00	\$603.14
Certificates of recognition for all participants in all stages	\$10,000.00	\$603.14
Breakfast for all attendees at the final event	\$20,000.00	\$1,206.27
TOTAL	\$315,000.00	\$18,998.79



CONCLUSION

“Cuenta Cuentos” (Storyteller) promotes values such as responsibility, kindness, empathy, generosity, friendship, and respect. It is a truly empowering program where children learn creative writing, storytelling, and public speaking. They learn that their imagination, talent, hard work and courage can take them anywhere they set their minds and hearts to go.

“Cuenta Cuentos” (Storyteller) encourages young minds to keep dreaming, keep exploring, and keep creating a better world. The guidance from teachers and the mentorship from Rotarians are invaluable in shaping the future servant leaders of our international community. Their eagerness to learn and their willingness to dream big truly inspired us.

“Cuenta Cuentos” (Storyteller) does not only benefit Mazatlan youth, but it also reminds us all that the sky is the limit, and with determination and ambition, anything is possible! Together, Canton and Mazatlan Rotarians are Creating Hope in Our Communities and the World!