



THE PALAPA SOCIETY
LA SOCIEDAD DE LA PALAPA

Building Bridges Within A Multicultural Community

Annual Report 2018



Dear friends

OUR 15TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR IN REVIEW



As president of The Palapa Society of Todos Santos, A.C., I am so proud to join with our entire community in celebrating our 15th anniversary as a Mexican non-profit. While our founders, Jean Cordova and Lynn Ballen, may not have foreseen the scope of all we have accomplished and continue to accomplish together, I know they would be pleased we have remained true to our original mission: improving educational opportunities for the youth and families of Todos Santos.

Our organization has had many homes over the years. We began in donated space in a small bookstore in the historic district of Todos Santos. When our after school English program began, we quickly needed more room and moved to the back patio of what was then a community center. When the demand for the English program grew and space for a community library was needed, we rented our own little building—complete with leaky roof and difficult landlord. After several years of making do, we were fortunate to receive the gift of a free rental in the San Vicente barrio. Now we could offer classes in dedicated rooms on two floors as well as under a large outdoor palapa that we constructed for this purpose.

In 2017, thanks to a most generous gift, we moved to a new home: a purpose-built, state-of-the-art learning center comprised of three separate buildings. The Puente building houses a children’s library, the after school English programs for children, and the evening program for adult English instruction. The Biblioteca Elena Poniatowska is a bilingual community library of over 9,000 volumes and is available to all members of the Todos Santos community. The third and largest building houses our most ambitious program: The Palapa School, a private middle school that will add one grade per year, eventually resulting in a high quality, comprehensive middle school and high school unlike any other in Baja.

The improvements in our physical space are mirrored by the growth all our programs have experienced over the years. In the following pages, we will highlight each of our primary programs and introduce you to some of the key people responsible for their success. We will also share the highlights of our new Palapa Learning Center. Of course, as an ambitious and growing organization, we face many challenges. We will share those with you as well and let you know how you might help.

Together, we will continue our mission to provide quality educational opportunities for the youth of Todos Santos. I am reminded of the following wisdom from Paulo Coelho: “And when you want something, all the universe conspires in helping you achieve it.”

Saludos a todos,
Erick Ochoa
President, The Palapa Society
Board of Directors



The Palapa Society of Todos Santos, A.C.

The Palapa Society of Todos Santos, A.C. is transforming lives in our small community of over 6,000 residents in Mexico's state of Baja California Sur (BCS), located between the state capital La Paz and the resort community of Los Cabos.

The Palapa Society is cultivating the future leaders of Todos Santos, Mexico, and the world by providing a 21st century education for local middle school students since 2017 and high school students starting in 2019. The Palapa Society also continues to offer quality educational programs and cultural experiences for children and their families since 2003.

In the last 15 years, a rapid population boom in Todos Santos has evolved the local commerce from agriculture and fishing to construction and tourism. As a result, there is an increased demand for higher education, offered locally, to empower the youth to participate in the changing economy.

Nationally, Mexico's public education system faces enormous challenges which are particularly severe in rural areas. Required fees for public school uniforms and books

can be an insurmountable barrier for children from lower-income families to attend school. Many schools lack modern teaching materials and equipment including computers and science labs. Mandatory education extends only through the age of 15, with the final years focused on vocational training rather than university readiness.

These challenges are addressed by The Palapa Society by making the best possible education available to all young people in our community.

The progressive curriculum offered at The Palapa School enables academically gifted students to master vital skills in preparation not only for university, but for their lifetime. This includes interactive learning guided by accomplished teachers using successful teaching methods, plus opportunities for growth both on and off campus. The blind application process for The Palapa School is based solely on academic merit, and not on the family's ability to pay the tuition.

Now in its 15th year, the Beca program provides scholarships for public school fees as well as tuition support for public universities in Mexico.

The Palapa Learning Center serves the community of Todos Santos. The campus includes the Biblioteca Elena Poniatowska, the largest bilingual library in BCS, plus additional classrooms for multi-level English courses for children and adults, and children's art and environmental awareness programs. All educational opportunities respect the principles of equity, quality and inclusion, to give the people of Todos Santos the ability to forge the future that our community deserves.



Our Impact by the Numbers

THE PALAPA SCHOOL

100%
SEP Compliant
21st century education

Palapa School tuition
\$2,400
\$4,200
Actual cost per student

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

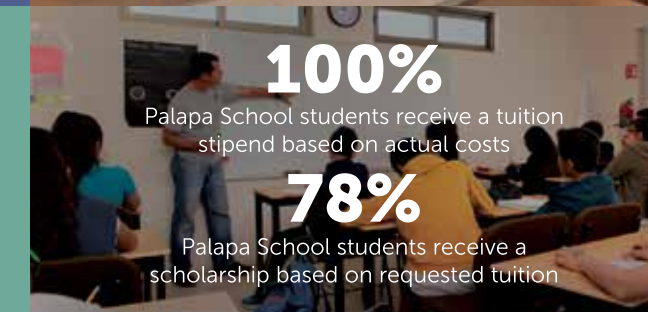
150+ Children
study English in the
Puente program each year

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

9,000
English and Spanish books in the
Biblioteca Elena Poniatowska



Middle school opened
2017
2019
High School will open



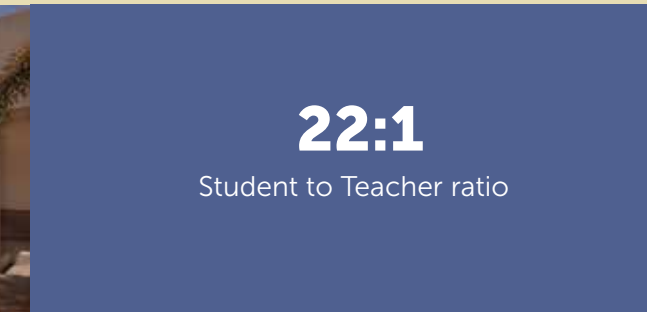
100%
Palapa School students receive a tuition
stipend based on actual costs
78%
Palapa School students receive a
scholarship based on requested tuition



200+ Children
studied Art after school
since 2007



60 Volunteers
contributing in-kind services and
expertise to all programs



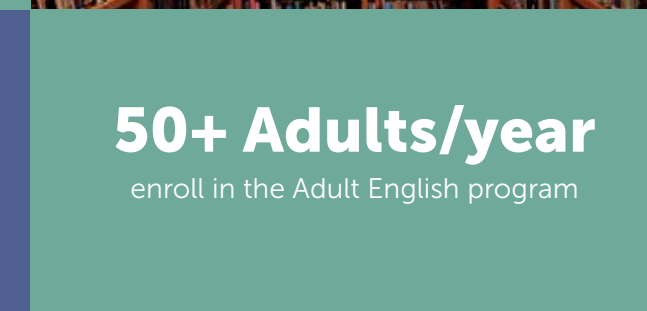
22:1
Student to Teacher ratio



1,000
Palapa School, public School,
and university scholarships
distributed since 2003



170 Children
have library cards



50+ Adults/year
enroll in the Adult English program

The Palapa School

OPENED IN AUGUST 2017, THE PALAPA MIDDLE SCHOOL HAS A 21ST CENTURY APPROACH TO EDUCATION THAT COMBINES THE BEST OF TRADITIONAL AND PROGRESSIVE TEACHING METHODS THAT NOT ONLY MEET BUT EXCEED FEDERAL SEP-CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS. ITS ACCOMPLISHED EDUCATORS DELIVER POWERFUL LEARNING EXPERIENCES TO PREPARE TODAY'S STUDENTS TO BE TOMORROW'S LEADERS IN THE COMMUNITY AND BEYOND.



With core classes that focus on Language, Science and Math, students receive intensive reading and writing instruction in Spanish and in English and have access to computers and a well-equipped science lab. Students also choose from a variety of elective courses each semester, including creative writing, philosophy, music and biotechnology, to round out their academic studies. Analytical thinking, leadership skills, social engagement, and individual learning are emphasized throughout the students' education.

These bright and eager students are the Todos Santos community leaders of tomorrow, potentially becoming our future teachers, doctors, accountants, entrepreneurs, artists and more. It is because of the ongoing support and encouragement of the community that The Palapa Society has been able to create and continue to grow this opportunity for the young people of Todos Santos. We look forward to opening The Palapa High School in August 2019.



The Palapa Scholarship and Children's Programs

The Beca Program

The Palapa Society provides financial assistance in the form of scholarships (Beca means Scholarship in Spanish) for public school and University students in need, as well as tuition subsidies for Palapa School students. More than 90 scholarships are awarded each year, based on students' financial need and previous academic accomplishments.

"Being part of the Beca Program was motivation to always give my best. I'm proud of my achievements but eager to keep preparing to help future generations have access to a better education."

~ Martha Elizabeth Pérez Díaz
Beca Recipient



The Puente (Bridge to English) Program

Now in its 14th year, enrollment for The Puente program has increased by 70% because of parents' desire for their children to learn English earlier in their development. Our Puente classes are taught by professional educators for beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels. Classes use a structured syllabus which incorporates songs, games, and art in a fun and creative, cross cultural language learning program.

The Leadership Program

The Leadership Program is a unique, exciting and experiential learning environment that empowers students to develop into confident individuals, thoughtful, engaged citizens and outstanding leaders committed to serving the community and future of Todos Santos.

After School and Summer Programs

The Palapa Society also offers a number of programs to children in the community including Children's Art, Water Safety, and Environmental education.



The Palapa Community Programs



Biblioteca Elena Poniatowska (Bilingual Community Library)

In November 2017, the library was formally dedicated in the name of world renowned, award-winning author Elena Poniatowska, the “Grande Dame” of Mexican literature. Our adult collection, the most comprehensive bilingual library in the state of BCS, includes more than 9,000 books, magazines, and DVDs.

Biblioteca Elena Poniatowska Infantil (Children’s Bilingual Community Library)

The Biblioteca Infantil has a growing collection of books in Spanish and English and includes special programs to help local children develop a lifelong love of reading. This includes the weekly Reading Circle and Craft Hour where kids create an art project inspired by the story that was read. Since opening in October 2016, there are now more than 170 children with library cards who check out over 50 books each week. cards who check out 50+ books each week.



The Palapa Adult English Program

Our Adult English classes follow a similar structure and curriculum, geared towards older students who have completed the Punte program, and adults who wish to enhance their English and increase their employment qualifications. Classes are made up of parents of children who are learning English, plus business owners and employees who interact with the English-speaking community on a regular basis. There is a nominal enrollment fee with need-based scholarships available.

Financial overview

REVENUE AND EXPENSES JAN-DEC 2018

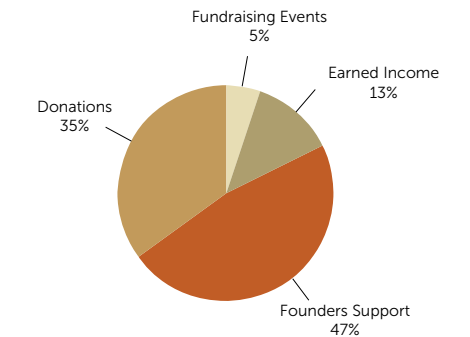
The Palapa Society’s 2018 operating budget was \$287,197 USD, with four primary sources of income:

1. Earned income including The Palapa School tuition and fees from the Biblioteca Elena Poniatowska and English programs.
2. Contributions from individual donors.
3. Fundraising events including the Tianguis (community flea market), the Carrera de Todos Santos 5k Run, Todos Santos Open Studio Tour and Historic Home Tour. The Todos Santos Music Festival had ended the previous year, making for a notable decrease in revenue in 2018.
4. The Palapa School Founders support funding for organizational stability.

2018 REVENUE

Earned Income	\$52,831	Tuition, Punte, Biblioteca Elena Poniatowska, English Program
Donations	\$148,771	Contributions from individual donors
Fundraising Events	\$22,336	Tianguis, Carrera 5k, Open Studio Tour and Historic Home Tour
Founders Support	\$200,000	Palapa School Founders funding for organizational stability
TOTAL REVENUE	\$423,938	

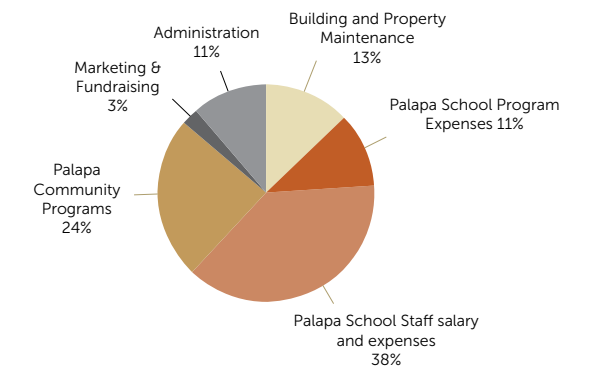
2018 Total Revenue \$423,938



2018 EXPENSES

Building and Property Maintenance	\$36,653	SEP-certification requirements, Insurance, Security, repairs and maintenance
Palapa School Program Expenses	\$31,880	Equipment, computers, furniture, books, supplies and materials
Palapa School Staff Salary and Expenses	\$109,463	Salaries plus ongoing training and education seminars
Palapa Community Programs	\$69,782	Beca, Punte, Adult English, Biblioteca Elena Poniatowska and After School Programs
Marketing and Fundraising	\$7,200	Accountant, Taxes, Insurance, Security, Custodial services, Grounds maintenance, Supplies, Equipment, Telephones, Water, Electric
Administration	\$32,219	Marketing and Communications, Social Media, Network, and Grant Writing, Accountant, Taxes, Supplies, Equipment, Utilities
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$287,197	

2018 Total Expenses \$287,197



Partners, sponsors, major donors and staff

2018 Leadership Donors

Donations of \$20k and higher

David and Cindy Higgins,
Founders of The Palapa School

Peter and Chloe Buck

Peter and Pam McIlroy

International Community Foundation

As a multi-cultural non-profit Mexican Civil Association (A.C.), the Mexican equivalent of a U.S. nonprofit organization, The Palapa Society partners with the International Community Foundation (ICF) as our US fiscal agent. ICF accepts and processes donations on behalf of The Palapa Society, and conducts ongoing mentoring, monitoring and due-diligence of our activities. Thus, donations and grants from US-based funders are tax-deductible in full accordance with the IRS tax code.

Top Local Business Sponsors

Our community event fund raisers could not be successful without the generosity of our local business sponsors including restaurants, hardware stores, and retail shops.

Board of Directors

PRESIDENT: Erick Ochoa
VICE CHAIR: Kathy Warnert
TREASURER: Hal Butler
SECRETARY: Tori Sepulveda
EDUCATION ADVISORY CHAIR: Tim Doyle
BOARD MEMBERS: Pam Bumann,
Dennis Naigle, Bill Nation, Jack Schaub
MARKETING: Jamie Sechrist

The Palapa School Faculty and Staff August 2017- July 2018

Palapa School Director:
Juan Diego González Castro

Educators:
Ana Castillo Mercado*
Ana María Peters
Armando Vazquez Garcia*
Francisco Xavier Quiroz González
Jorge Monteverde Torres
María Monserrath Sánchez Márquez
Odetta Ciancarelli

Staff:
Cruz Torres Cadena
Alondra Monserrat León Valenzuela
Adela Patricio Castillo González

*Start date: August 2018

The Palapa Learning Center Program Directors

Director, Children's Puente English program and After School programs: Jayna Schweitzer

Director, Adult English program: Kate Lewis

Director, Biblioteca Elena Poniatowska: Donna Schultz

Director, Biblioteca Infantil: Joy O'Brien

Educators, Children's Art program: Jill Mollenhauer and Doug West

Parent Association

In 2018, the formation of the Parent organization allowed the parents to become actively involved in fund raising and support for student activities.

Volunteers

The Palapa Society is fueled by the passion of over 60 volunteers throughout the year including Librarians, Teaching Assistants, Event planners and workers, plus those who donate their unique skillsets for the roles of graphic designer, content creator, meditation guide, field trip chaperone, science lecturer, photographer, and more.

We have a vision for the future



In helping to educate the children of Todos Santos, we are fostering and empowering the next generation of community leaders. Thoughtful, strategic, and visionary leadership is an urgent and growing need for Todos Santos and surrounding areas. The entire Baja peninsula is poised for tremendous development and growth. Todos Santos needs leaders who can shape the trajectory of that growth, balancing the benefits of development with potential issues such as water rights, pollution, displacement of historic industries, and overuse of a fragile municipal infrastructure.

It is the Palapa Society's privilege to help our community grow, training the future leaders of Todos Santos and educating our children for future success in an increasingly global workforce.





THE PALAPA SOCIETY
LA SOCIEDAD DE LA PALAPA

**Palapa Society Board,
Staff and Volunteers**

**Students, Teachers
and Parents**

**Donors, Sponsors,
and Partners**



WE ARE PALAPA

The Palapa Society of Todos Santos, A.C.
Calle del Huerto entre calles Guayaba y Mango
C.P. 23300 Todos Santos, BCS, MX
Email: info@palapasociety.org
Website: www.palapasociety.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/palapasociety.org
Instagram: www.instagram.com/palapasocietyoftodosantos/