



**CASA**

Center for the Adolescents  
of San Miguel de Allende



Creating a safe space

**for all.**



ANNUAL REPORT 2022

# A Safe Space . . .

for each of us to be our authentic selves.

We, at CASA, understand the need to express who we are in an environment which is non-threatening and supportive.

And the safe spaces we foster invite curiosity, expression, creativity, freedom and health.

We invite you to learn more about us in these pages . . .



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# Seizing the Opportunity as Normalcy Returns

In 2022, the Mexican nonprofit CASA once again worked hand-in-hand with its local community and the federal government to fortify the country's health system, especially in the areas of sexual and reproductive health. It was exhilarating to almost be able to return to our normal level of community work. For example, Citlalli Guadalupe Colin Olivares and Ana Karen Lopez Salazar of CASA's Community Health Program or PSC were able to give free sex education to 999 teens at 14 different public schools! The CASA Elegir Team dedicated to combat violence is composed of lawyers, psychologists and abortion right experts and they worked in 10 schools and universities with 942 students and thousands more in communities. Overall, tens of thousands of people of all ages and backgrounds were connected, nurtured and given opportunities to thrive thanks to CASA and all of you that support CASA. Muchisimas gracias!

CASA's staff and its Mexican board of directors worked more closely than ever in 2022 with its Texas-incorporated, sister organization called San Miguel – CASA, Incorporated, (SMC-Inc.) that is registered with the IRS as a 501c3 and can provide tax deductible receipts for U.S. dollar donations. Norman R. Briere, a full-time San Miguel resident is the enthusiastic President of SMA-Inc. Norm took over the presidency from the hard-working Alice Sperling and it has been a pleasure to work with both of these individuals. In Alice's case she continues to work tirelessly on multiple activities, including the successful December 2022 Second Annual House Design Event that annually raises needed funds for CASA.

Finally in 2022 we had national and international reach. We are particularly proud of working with the federal health ministry on desperately needed regulations to improve health care, especially birthing services in Mexico. The country's suboptimal health care system is quickly improving and will improve even more in early 2023 when new regulations about midwives and birthing centers will be implemented.

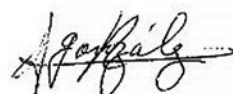
Of course there were very difficult moments and disappointments in 2022 and the most difficult occurred in April. Tragically a woman gave birth to a healthy newborn at CASA and then began to have serious problems, which warranted her being transported to another hospital where she unfortunately died. Board members, the state and federal health ministries and CASA midwives are working hard together to improve quality control for all the women and families that seek CASA midwife birthing services.

More than 11,000 women have had safe and loving births with CASA midwives in San Miguel de Allende and yet, unforeseen emergencies can always happen and must be handled appropriately to hopefully never loss a life. At the moment CASA birthing services are currently not being offered to the public but we plan to reopen improved birthing services in early 2023 under new leadership and with the sorely needed new government regulations and support in place.

I do want to congratulate the health team at the CASA Clinic because in 2022 more than 7,000 people received primary health care services such as out-patient medical consultations with physicians, midwives and dentists and, ancillary services such as laboratory.

Finally, Rocio Bautista who enthusiastically took on the position of executive director in 2020 after 20 years of service to CASA asked in September to return to her previous role as Director of CASA's Early Childhood Development Programs. I responded affirmatively to Rocio's request and there is now an exhaustive search occurring for a new Executive Director that we hope will start during the first quarter of 2023. In the meantime, it has been very encouraging to see how the directors of the CASA's 7 major programs are engaged in collaborative problem solving, their level of mutual trust is climbing and also their individual and collective creativity. In addition, Nadine Goodman, volunteer board member on the San Miguel – CASA, Inc. board has agreed to serve as volunteer liaison between staff and board members until the new executive director is found.

We are excited about 2023 and say - Stay tuned and we mean this literally because in 2023 we are launching CASA's own radio station with 24/7 transmission! This community vehicle will be open to all. Worldwide we need more facts and constructive, respectful debate and dialogue as opposed to ideology in a vacuum and violence. Music and culture fill and connect us. Our community radio will make the arts more accessible to all. Please join us in 2023 as we reimagine and make real a better present and future for all.



Alejandro Gonzalez Rullan  
President of the Board of CASA, A.C.



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# Weaving Safe and Secure Networks

Established by CASA in 2005, ELEGIR, has had as its objective, to raise awareness, identify, prevent and address all forms of violence in society. Through various activities such as workshops, campaigns, counseling, support and care, for the general public, children, youth, adults and seniors, ELEGIR raises awareness of the physical, psychological and social impact of violence to an individual and the community.

ELEGIR has a shelter in place for people who are vulnerable or at risk of violence, providing a comfortable haven. The program arranges the necessary sleeping quarters, food, clothing and footwear. It also guides victims throughout their psychological and legal processes at no cost.

The mainstay of our team is to firmly have in mind a leveled point of view, with a common thread of collaborative weave of alliances. We build safe spaces so that everyone can access services, receive quality care, and above all be treated with kindness, without infringing upon human rights, and improve the quality of life.

This year 147 women, 44 men and 102 youth received psychological care, providing 1,748 sessions, with 6 mental health professionals in the volunteer network. In the legal area, 37 counseling services were provided, of which 33 legal files were initiated, with 206 legal interactions. Child support orders resulted in 12 agreements. We had one no-fault divorce and assisted 29 women and eight men.

The CASA network, which includes My Safe Abortion program, aided 430 pregnant women, partnering with seven in and out of state feminist collectives. The emergency line recorded 268 WhatsApp messages and received 161 land line calls. ELEGIR provided services to 1,705 people.

*"I think and feel that people who contact CASA asking for the ELEGIR program are highly emotional: grief; anger; pain; from one extreme to the other. Delving deeper, we learn that violence, in one form or another, is in the mix. It tries to hide, but in the end, we find it and learn the truth. It is here where the team holds fast and works together to build and provide a place where people feel cared for, listened to, and can trust. They can talk about the cause of their anguish, their pain, or the thing that has been kept quiet for so long. I believe that requesting psychological services, legal aid, and support for the termination of a pregnancy is not at all a simple process. It is said that what is not named, does not exist. We seek to defend the right to a life free of violence. A right that is sanctioned by state, national and international laws."*

*"ELEGIR aims to weave strong networks within and outside of San Miguel de Allende. People should know that there is a place where they can reach out, raise awareness, identify and prevent violence. Small wins and achievements perhaps have not been easy to swallow, but we will continue to fight against that which has a name: violence."*

– Mariana Cano, Coordinadora del programa ELEGIR



**ELEGIR Team**  
 Dylan MacKay - administrative assistant  
 Adriana Ramirez Diaz - Coordinator, "My Safe Abortion at Home"  
 Mariana Cano Cerrito - Elegir and psychology team coordinator  
 Laura Maraiz - Legal Coordinator.



A children's Emotions Workshop at the Palmita de Landeta, SMA community.



A joint workshop at CECYTEC discussing the psychological theme "Resilience."



CDI children attending the Emotions Workshop using the color monster, campaign for the prevention of suicide.



CDI children at the Emotions Workshop using the color monster; campaign for the prevention of suicide.



Health Campaign at the San Diego de la Union jardin, sharing information about CASA and its diverse programs.

# A Rhythm for Peace

One of CASA's newest programs, Ranchero Pandillero, is currently led by three self-taught urban artists: Gabriela Hernandez, aka Sombra, as coordinator of the Rap collective; Merle Herrera, general coordinator of Ranchero Pandillero, and Alonso Yanez, graffiti advocate. Established in 2017, the program is committed to promote peace through the Hip Hop culture, bringing youth closer to culture through graffiti, rap, and other artistic expression. It provides a channel for emotions and energy towards productive activities that prevent wrongdoing and delinquency.

Ranchero Pandillero offers a safe and artistic space for children, youth and parents. It has an art studio where young people can go and learn different art techniques such as drawing, the use of the chromatic circle, composition, and large format painting.

The program's objective is to reduce the drug abuse and violence prone to the Hip-Hop culture and exposed to youth at risk. We promote peace between neighborhoods and communities by organizing rap battles and Hip-Hop festivals creating cultural spaces where youth can freely express themselves.



Music volunteers trying out a new technique in the urban arts.



Youth volunteer recording his first song at the RAP studio.

We guide the creative process, reinforcing values and skills among the community with teamwork. We offer an alternative way of life; a different outlook turning away from violence; and build self-confidence.

Throughout the first three months of the year, we began with school interventions. These last three months of the last semester, we gave workshops in nine middle and high schools. A total of 23 chats were led regarding Ranchero Pandillero, and four workshops were presented on addiction prevention. We were able to reach 580 youth between the ages of 12 and 18.

We approached young gang members from the San Rafael neighborhood, who will hopefully join to become members of the graffiti collective. We also visited several neighborhoods to speak to their community leaders, offering our services with the possibility of having neighborhood interventions.

This year over 100 people visited the CASA recording studio who recorded 300 songs, with 33 artists participating in five "black sessions," all free of charge. During the semester, three recording albums were developed.

For the third time, Ranchero Pandillero was approached by the mayor of the neighboring municipality of San Diego de la Unión. We have agreed to team and work with the administration offering information and programs provided by CASA regarding crime prevention.

Artistic expression has become an alternative way to rehabilitate gray spaces in the city and is a tool to strengthen and create a connection between neighborhood residents. We believe that the music and visual arts programs led by Ranchero Pandillero provide a safe and inclusive space for anyone seeking to champion peace and joy.



Ale Poire, urban artist from Guadalajara who donated a mural to Ranchero Pandillero.



Rap collective performing at the Centro Cultural Ignacio Ramirez "El Nigromante" San Miguel de Allende.



Ranchero Pandillero graffiti volunteer creating a painting representing music at the Centro Cultural Ignacio Ramirez "El Nigromante" San Miguel de Allende.



Music coordinator performing at the "Rockingz" anniversary, hip hop cultural event in San Miguel de Allende.



A Janin and Ale Pore collaboration, mural dedicated November 2 in memory to those who are with us, yet in another plane.

# CASA: Where You Talk Sexuality

Since 1981, CASA has provided free comprehensive sex education, with the needs of the general population in mind, and has given priority to youth, women, and people from marginalized and rural communities. Our work has been brought and developed in the municipalities of San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato, San Felipe, Leon, among others.

We are committed to the mission of providing care and guidance regarding sexual and reproductive health to young people, parents, and teachers in educational settings. Our vision is to provide everyone access to sex education, promoting justice, sexual and reproductive rights, without discrimination and respecting sexual orientation.

Throughout the year, the educational program grew and expanded providing virtual off campus training and created two new courses: "Menstruating with Dignity: Getting to Know the Menstrual Cycle" and "Not Everything Is About COVID-19: HIV-AIDS, The Pandemic Continues." We served 373 youth under the age of 30 and provided 23 workshops, with 38 face-to-face chats regarding sexuality and contraception.

A total of 1,333 people, including mothers, fathers and youth were served. We opened 72 family planning warehouses and distributed 106,241 male condoms to 8,096 people. We accounted for 51% new users and 49% return customers.

COLORES SMA participated and planned four events on behalf of the LGBTIQ+ community: PRIDE Parade in Dolores Hidalgo, Human Rights Are Also in Color, B&W Night, and COLORES SMA Social Circus Workshop. The Social Circus Workshop provided empowerment tools to a community historically discriminated against through the circus arts. The regular participation of 10 people included two trans young women and two gay young men.

The campaign we called My Sexuality at CASA was launched, bringing ten informational tables to various rural and urban communities. We provided information on contraception, handed out condoms, and provided rapid HIV-AIDS, Syphilis and Hepatitis C tests.

Due to its many well-known years of expertise, individuals and outside organizations now request the services from the CASA A.C., staff, with express interest in the PSC team. People trust the information we provide, as well as its timeliness, quality and kindness. We are now known to be a safe space, free of prejudice.

*"For the LGBTIQ+ community, and in particular its youth, spaces are always in need for support; the opportunity to socialize; trust; self-identify; and have acceptance, allowing us to freely and safely appreciate our identity, skills and abilities. The Social Circus Workshop has become that space, even amid a stagnant, diversity adverse, and conservative demographic. We can face our fears, care for others and ourselves, and become involved in a venture that is profoundly transformative."*

– **Jorge Luis Aguilar**  
Assistant, Colores SMA, Social Circus Workshop



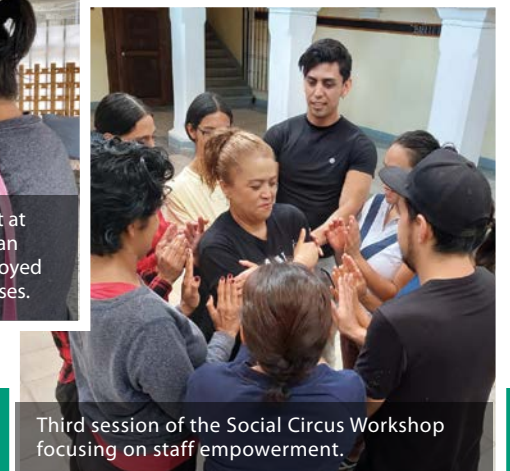
Members of the COLORES group participate at Pride Event in Dolores Hidalgo.



A supply delivery at the Barber Shop Rotary Family Planning Warehouse.



Family Planning Warehouse visit at "Smart Space," a workspace in San Miguel de Allende for self-employed professionals and small businesses.



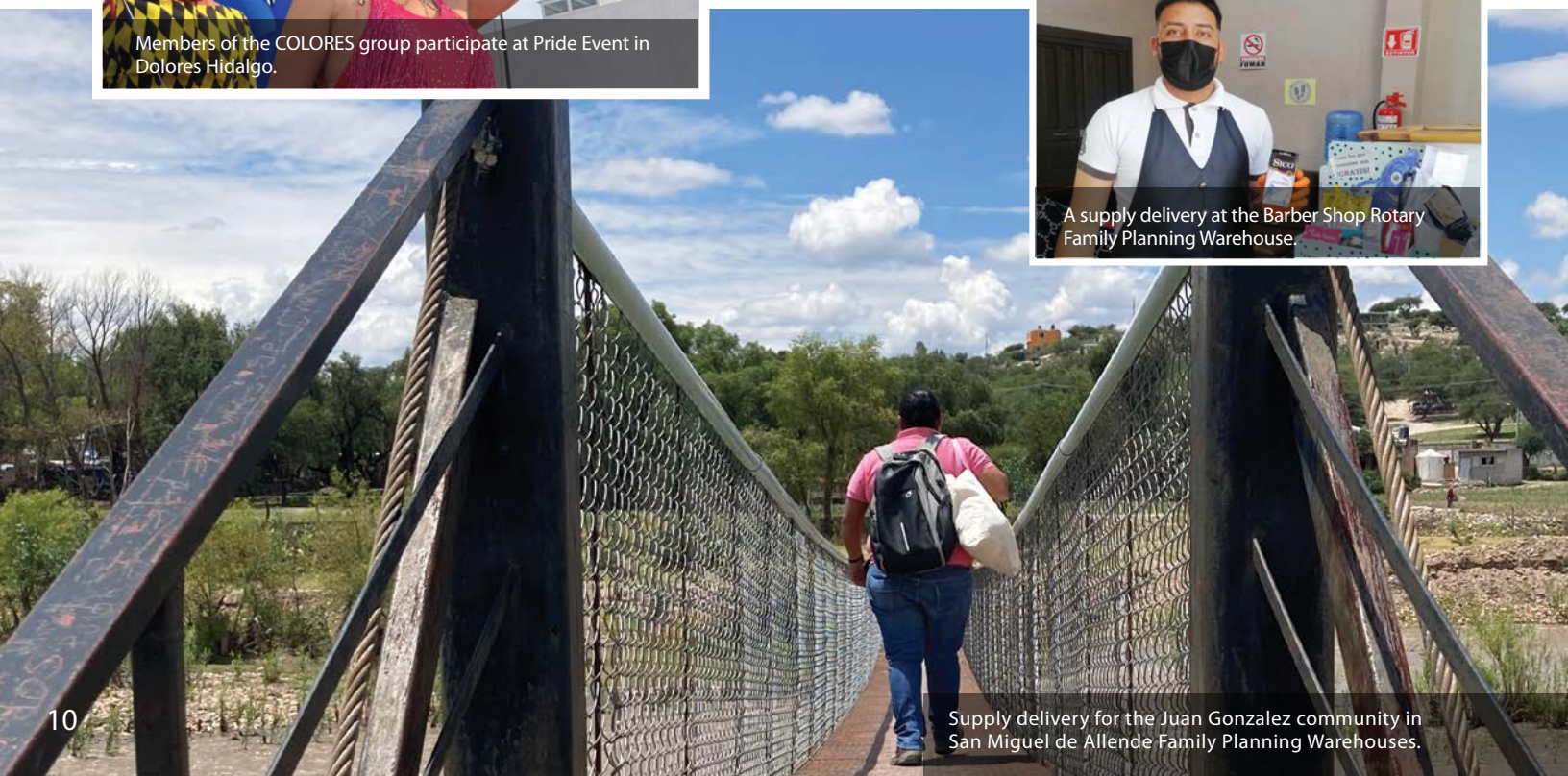
Third session of the Social Circus Workshop focusing on staff empowerment.



Health Fair at the SMA Coca Cola distribution plant with plant workers.



Discussion and lecture regarding sexuality, led by the family planning coordinator at the San Miguel de Allende Organization of American States Education Center.



Supply delivery for the Juan Gonzalez community in San Miguel de Allende Family Planning Warehouses.

# CASA Midwives Are Public Health Workers

## Defending the rights of all people to health care

I am midwife Gabriela Cardenas and in 2012 I began my 4-year midwifery training at CASA on full scholarship. I knew almost nothing about health, human rights, or the importance of public health. Growing up in poverty, what I knew about discrimination and abuse was from personal experience. Nevertheless, I never expected that my career as a midwife would include opposing human rights abuses. Nor did I imagine that I would someday be the Clinical Director of CASA's Maternity Clinic and Family Primary Care Clinic, and that I would work with the federal government to produce better and more equitable public health policies and regulations, especially in the area of sexual and reproductive health.

I am very proud that, over the years, nearly 11,000 women have had safe and loving births at our Maternity Clinic following the CASA midwifery model of care. And that tens of thousands more people have received needed services, including free family planning, preventive reproductive cancer screenings, consultations with specialists such as gynecologists and more. I am also proud that CASA has helped the federal government change its laws and regulations to provide broad access and better quality of care for all pregnant women and to women who give birth.

In 2022, we at the CASA Maternity and Family Clinics have provided 5,747 diverse services such as, clinical laboratory, gynecological consultations, midwifery consultation, family planning, ultrasounds and cervical cytology tests.

With thanks to the donations from organizations such as Direct Relief, 760 women were provided with long-acting contraceptives, free of charge to women between the ages of 13 and 49. In addition,

counseling for the prevention of unplanned pregnancies was provided to women using their first contraceptive, which represents 40% of the total number of clients served.

Unfortunately, 2022 was also a very sad year because we had a tragedy in April. A woman who gave birth to a healthy baby at our Maternity Clinic experienced post-partum complications and was transported to another better equipped hospital, where she later died. Together with the public health authorities, we are now working on how to better regulate and improve first level Maternity Clinics such as ours at CASA. We are working to improve the coordination of all the health resources in the community, so that we can better support women and their families, especially when unforeseen emergencies happen.

Educational and community-based programs at CASA play an important role in improving the quality of life, disease and injury prevention to promote healthy behavior. It is imperative that nonprofit organizations such as CASA work closely with the government to ensure that all people have access to the best possible public care, as well as private nonprofit and for-profit sectors.

In 2022 and throughout the first few months of 2023 we will continue with the renovations to the CASA Maternity Clinic and Primary Care Family Clinic. Soon we will be inviting the entire community to the re-opening of a place where all families can receive excellence and loving health services, with a particular focus: pregnant women and women during childbirth consistent with the midwifery model.

We are very excited to open our newly renovated Maternity Clinic to the public, holding our new government issued license, granted to all qualified Maternity Clinics in Mexico



A couple who received a free subdermal implant.



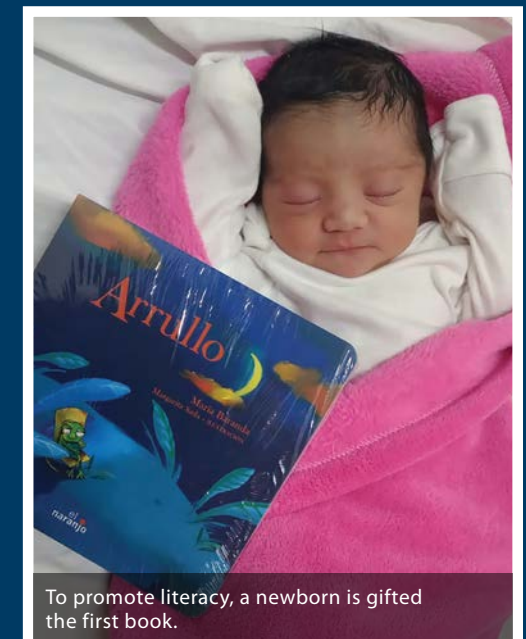
A family welcoming a new member.



CASA midwife receiving training in cervical anesthesia techniques and up to date Vacuum Manual Aspiration (MVA).



Midwives attending up to date obstetrics training.



To promote literacy, a newborn is gifted the first book.

# La Loma de los Chiquillos: A Safe Space Where My Development Means a Better Future

Our objective is to provide an accessible and safe space for children whose parents and heads of families of low-income, receive high quality and comprehensive education, including individually designed nutritional meal plans..

Our mission is to provide friendly quality educational services to children who are as young as 45 days to 6 years old. Through innovative educational practices that promote the development of skills and intellectual abilities in a friendly environment, we promote a comprehensive approach to child development, resulting in a better society.

So far this year, the Child Development Center has served 163 children from 146 families. Male heads of family account for three percent, and 30% account for female heads of a household. Last July, 23% of the graduates, or 21 children, were students who began 43 days after birth. They came from 32 neighborhoods and seven communities. Concerned about their nutrition, the nutritionist scheduled weekly menus where she ensured that each child received the necessary meals for a healthy development. The program provided 1,785 formula and breast milk, 7,314 breakfast meals, 3,158 morning snacks, 11,344 regular meals, and 4,434 afternoon snacks.

The program sponsored 553 promotional reading programs, lending out 12,784 books. Children made 939 visits to the library in different areas. Literacy outreach to 200 preschool and elementary school children in six communities were provided with lessons in reading and writing.

Parent committees were formed which included a Board of Directors; Community Protection; a Social Participation Council; a Violence Prevention School Organization; and a Health and Hygiene Committee.

The Child Development Center is a safe, reliable and inclusive space where all children are safe to move about freely. Here, they are valued and loved by the staff in charge. We encourage the development of a healthy self-esteem; support personality development by teaching proper habits and routines; promote emotional self-checks; and confidence in conflict resolution. We also develop proper reading skills and habits.

**There is always a moment in one's childhood when a door opens and grants passage into the future.**



Catrina and Catrin parade at a children's street fair, celebrating Day of the Dead November 1st and 2nd.



CDI children watering plants in the garden.



Art classes motivate children to create all types of art and support fluency in child language development.



Reading outside the CDI classroom on OAS Day.



Preschool children celebrating El Grito, September 15, Mexican Independence Day.



# Reading, Dreaming ... Making Dreams Come True!

The Library Program aims to guarantee free and equal access to reading, culture and knowledge to children, youth, teachers and parents, through the Rosario Castellanos Public Library, with its extensions in the Network of Community Libraries and the Mobile Library.

Our mission and commitment, as librarians, is to bring literacy to all people, regardless of age; race; language; beliefs; sexual orientation; political and social views. Words, and the language books provide, should always be a means of harmony and connection. By providing a place for insight and its infinite possibilities, the CASA library becomes a safe space for everyone.

Language, and the remarkable possibilities it fosters, carries the crucial importance of bringing the light of books to every dark corner of ignorance. Because books are not just paper; books preserve the words and thoughts of many, they create vision. . . works of art. Books keep memories alive that otherwise could be lost. They incite descent and revolution, urging the daily need for a better world.

Although not visible at first, every small step to advance and expand the library has left a

footprint. This year, our small yet valuable gains have brought us closer to achieving the goal where anyone can learn and have even bigger dreams.

This year we lent 14,141 books to our “readers-in-training” providing the opportunity to share their books with their families. Holding a book in your hands every day and losing yourself to the stories it tells is the best way to becoming a true reader.

We also provided 29 workshops teaching knitting, embroidery, painting, as well as other crafts. The Braille workshop provided a brief, yet profound sense of how someone with blindness feels.

We participated in notable events, such as the San Miguel De Allende Book Festival, by hosting the closing event. Attendees included over 200 Mexican female writers, guests from the literary and cultural scene, as well as the general public.

We’ve continued to work with the Community Library Network and the Mobile Library to reach people in the most vulnerable communities and neighborhoods. We’ve strengthened our network of volunteers, without whom we would not be able to do this beautiful work. In addition, we’ve sought ties that have enabled us to reach more corners and touch more people. An example is the donation agreement with the Penguin Random House Mexico publishing house. This alliance, formed in 2021, brings more books and more dreams to our readers.

Our central operations center, The Rosario Castellanos Library, along with the extensions of our organization, the Community Library Network and the Mobile Library, has slowly become the comfortable haven every library should be. It is a space where readers can always feel welcomed, and without bias, find what they want and need. It is a space to share the love of reading books, to dream . . . and to make dreams come true.



Little ones from the Child Development Center at library's children's reading room.



Public reading of Cervantes during a Guadalajara state holiday.



Children reading at one of the Rosario Castellanos' community libraries.



Rosario Castellanos Library team, Claudia Espinosa, in charge of the Community Libraries, Margarita Monreal, in charge of the Central Library, Coco Marquez, General Coordinator, Alexis Cisneros, in charge of the Mobile Library.



The Mobile Library's Calaveritas (Small Skeletons) route with children from the Jardines de Allende community.



# thanks thanks thanks

**Thank you** to all of our donors who have supported us with amounts large and small. With your continued support, we are able to expand our services for more people who are most in need.

**Thank you** to our more than 150 volunteers. Day after day you work on the front lines inspiring all with whom you come in contact.

**Thank you** to our the CASA staff. You serve as the CASA foundation upon which every safe space is built.

We recognize that each of you place your trust in us and each day we strive to be worthy of that trust.



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## How can you express your support of CASA?

- Donate Online to CASA at: [www.casa.org.mx](http://www.casa.org.mx)
- Fund a Scholarship for a Young Person
- Become a Part of Our Volunteer Program
- Organize a Fundraiser for CASA
- Give an In-Kind Donation Such as a Spanish Book, Educational Materials . . .



*A copy of the 2022 Financial Statement is available upon request.  
Please email: [presidente@casa.org.mx](mailto:presidente@casa.org.mx)*

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