



---

## **NEWS FROM ASCA**

*An ongoing series of reports, articles, and news items about the Arlington Sister City Association's programs and activities, plus news from its Sister Cities*

---

March 2017

### **Arlington Student Represents ASCA in San Miguel**

*Editor's Note: Marisabel Jimenez is a student at Wakefield high-school. She was interviewed upon her return from San Miguel where she participated in the Carnival along with representatives of the Arlington-San-Miguel committee. This month "News from ASCA" is a summary of her trip and of their educational and charitable work.*



*Marisabel and her mother with Arlington-San Miguel Committee members*

### **The Arlington-San Miguel Committee and our Arlington Sister City Queen**

For more than ten years ASCA members have been active in creating an on-going relationship between Arlington County and San Miguel in El Salvador, supported by a vital local community of Latin American residents and businesses.

The Arlington-San Miguel Committee has been recognized for its steady and reliable

involvement in the local community through a series of programs and charitable works that are illustrated during the festivities of the San Miguel Carnival.

### **The Arlington - San Miguel Queen pageant**

One of the flagship programs of the San Miguel Committee is the competition to elect the "Arlington Sister City Queen" to represent the County during the Carnival at the end of November. Each year, for one month, cities and neighborhoods of the San Miguel district hold beauty contests, and designate a Queen who is crowned to participate in the pageant at the end of November, becoming the official "San Miguel Queen". International queens are not formally part of the pageant but are invited to participate in all the activities and responsibilities of the Queen in terms of representation and charitable works.



*The International queens participate to the San Miguel Carnival.*

The San Miguel Committee holds elections in Arlington and this year Marisabel Jimenez, a student at Wakefield high-School, was invited to represent Arlington. Marisabel was born in Arlington but has been going back to El Salvador on a regular basis. Her ties with San Miguel are deep as many members of her family still live in Intipuca, 15 minutes from San Miguel.

She was crowned at a party with over 150 family and friends of the Committee attending, thanks to the dedication of the many members and businesses that make all of this possible.

The San Miguel Carnival is held during our Thanksgiving holiday and for the past 11 years our Queen has spent the week there with a heavy schedule. The memories and impact this trip had on her life is well described in the letter she presented to the ASCA Board of Directors upon her return and that is published at the end of this newsletter.

After meeting at the City Hall with the mayor of San Miguel, Marisabel started the most "tear-jerking, heartfelt and memorable experience".

### **A week full of fun and charitable works**

From the moment the Queen sets foot in San Miguel, the work begins. Upon arriving at the hotel a welcoming party awaited Marisabel and her family, hosted by the San Miguel

local Committee and the students of the English program which is organized by our Committee in the summer.

The next day was the consecration of the Committee's yearlong fundraising efforts as the Arlington-San Miguel Queen distributed the many items that are needed in the community, and more importantly remind them of our on-going and reliable support and care.

### Dancing at the nursing home



*Who is teaching whom?*

Each year the elderly of the local nursing home eagerly expect the visit of the Arlington Queen, as the Committee organizes a party filled with Mariachi music, food, gifts, and dance. That same day an ambulance was given to the nursing home thanks to local donations and Marisabel's family members from San Miguel.

### A day at the orphanage and a new roof for the local school



*A day full of fun at the orphanage.*

The next day she visited the orphanage. Twenty-seven children of all ages waited for her to play with them as she brought along soccer T-shirts, played soccer games and ordered pizzas.

These are sweet memories for Marisabel who wants to go back and meet with the children again and with one of them who is especially close to her heart!



*Such a sweet memory.*

That visit was followed by a ceremony at a school to cut the ribbon unveiling a plaque to thank ASCA for their new roof, donated by the Banco Agricola and the Arlington-San Miguel Committee from their fundraising events throughout the year. This was also

the perfect occasion to deliver the certificates of completion for this year's English program to the students who attended the ceremony.



*Marisabel delivers the English program certificates.*

### **The San Miguel Carnival**

The carnival was held on Saturday. The procession started at 7pm with more than 50 floats and lasted until midnight. A special International Party was organized for the queens, four of whom came from the U.S. (Houston, Arlington, New-York, California). They were then introduced on stage by the mayor and each presented themselves and the city they represent.

### **The San Miguel Committee English program - a day at the beach**

On Sunday, Marisabel chose her favorite beach to gather some of the students of the English program: the San Miguel Committee runs an annual English-language summer school in July for approximately 120 students in San Miguel. Mrs. Kim Crittenden, ESOL/HILT teacher at Abingdon Elementary School in Arlington, and Mrs. Arlene Rodriguez of San Miguel serve as principal faculty for the program. The municipality of San Miguel provides transportation for the teachers, lunch for the students, as well as a festive graduation ceremony at a local school. The San Miguel Committee also grants scholarships to four students selected by the teachers for outstanding academic performance. Marisabel now keeps in daily contact with some of the students through Facebook.

### **Soccer teams for girls**

Marisabel is a dedicated soccer player. She has been playing since she was 5 and is playing as a Defender and as a Striker on two different teams: the Storm and with Springfield Youth Soccer. She plays five days out of seven with two games on weekends, and has made her school's varsity team for the second year in a row. She became involved with the San Miguel Committee through her coach Mauricio Correas from the Arlington Soccer Association. Marisabel is therefore very engaged with the Committee's soccer program to help develop girls soccer teams in El Salvador, and help women find a way to a better future. Marisabel considers that sports in general, and soccer in particular, has taught her a lot about life.

The San Miguel Committee organizes a one-day women's soccer tournament in San Miguel during the same period as the English language instruction. Eight teams composed exclusively of girls compete in the event, which is designed to increase opportunities for girls and young women to participate in team sports in the country. This event also provides an opportunity for soccer coaches and players from Arlington-especially those working with girls' teams within the Arlington Soccer Association-to transmit not only soccer skills but the civic values of inclusion and sportsmanship to their counterparts in El Salvador.



The San Miguel Committee's fundraising events help the girls with all the costs involved in creating and maintaining a team, including team T-shirts, soccer balls, trips, etc. This year the Committee also helped a local area soccer academy by providing soccer balls and donating a bike for the coach to hold a raffle to buy uniforms.



### **The Military Ball**

Marisabel represented Arlington at the Military Ball, a party at the base for the crowning of the Military Queen. They had a band and fireworks. Marisabel was very touched to see they has a missing soldier table.

And of course on the last evening before they went back home there was a final party at the hotel to wish them a good trip back home and the hope to see them return soon.

### **Marisabel and her future involvement in the programs.**

Her involvement with ASCA has been highly regarded by her friends who assist with the fundraising efforts and are eager to help her in the future.

These fundraising events finance the Queen's pageant, her trip, hotel, make-up and the three dresses she needs for the official parties, as well as the items needed for the different programs and requests. The nursing home for instance is in dire need of various equipment.

### **Marisabel's letter to the Board of Directors**

*Marisabel Jimenez*  
*January 2017*

*"My trip to El Salvador for the International Carnival of San Miguel 2016 was the most tear jerking, heartfelt and memorable experience I have ever done. I wish I could go back and do this trip all over again.*

*The way I was received on the first day is something that I could never forget. We arrived at El Tropico Inn hotel and students from the school Milagro De La Paz greeted me with signs, balloons and noise makers. We took pictures and then we all went to some tables in the courtyard and started talking. And to think that it was only the beginning of what would turn out to be the most amazing trip yet.*

*The rest of the trip was very emotional and hectic trying to get so much done in so little time. But despite how exhausting it was the new friends I made and all the people I made connections with will forever be in my heart. Meeting the orphans and the elderly people was the main reason why I accepted to be the queen of Arlington Sister City San Miguel. I went to El Salvador with the hope of helping others, I came back to the United States not only knowing I helped others but also determined to do more and return one day in the near future. The trip has changed not only the way I view things but also to be grateful for the little things in life. I want to thank the Association for choosing me to be their queen but also for giving me the opportunity to be a part of something remarkable".*

---

**SUPPORT US BY BECOMING A MEMBER!**