

**ARTICLE FOR PV MIRROR
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WHERE DOES THE MONEY GO?

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Victor Hugo, the French poet, said, “As the purse is emptied, the heart is filled.”

This is the time of year when the International Friendship Club (IFC) decides how much money the club has available to distribute to its programs and charities in Puerto Vallarta over the next twelve months and who gets how much. It’s the time for the club to “empty its purse”, metaphorically.

The decisions are based on a long, vital process of inquiry and fact-checking.

Three committees of IFC are involved in the decision making. The Finance Committee establishes an annual budget of income and expenses, which it presents at the annual general meeting. There it is discussed and approved. It includes the amount we can use to support the community.

Seven club members sit on the Education Committee and nine on the Community Services Committee. In November 2021, a Request for Funding was sent to all of the charities the club supported last year, which asked how much they needed in 2022 from IFC and how it would be spent.

Every member of the Education and the Social Services committees is responsible for communicating with a specified charity and, in a typical, non-covid year, would visit their charity in person. These annual visits provide a personal link between IFC and the charity and allow us to see how the charity works and ensure that money received in the previous year was spent appropriately.

In mid-February, the committees meet and discuss allocating the amount available from the budget. Each member describes why “their” charity needs the amount they are requesting and, in some instances, why money should not be distributed this year. Eventually, a consensus is reached, and the individual charities are informed of how much money they will receive. These committees take their responsibilities for investing IFC’s money in programs and charities very seriously.

This year the Education Committee distributed money to six educational charities. Two of them support community outreach programs of senior high school students, and another provides scholarships for university students from the mountains of Jalisco. We support after-school programs and help impoverished students in the colonia of Volcanes. And we also enable students throughout the city to enjoy the benefits and camaraderie of musical education.

The Social Services Committee will be distributing its budget this week. In addition to the club’s major program of providing help to children born with cleft palates and cleft lips, we help eight other charities that provide medical and other support. Many charities focus their work on children and include two orphanages, children with cancer, and a rehabilitation clinic.

This year, we dropped two charities from the list as they no longer need our help.

Next week I’ll write in more detail about how IFC helps various charities and communities in Puerto Vallarta. Meanwhile, you can find more information on our website. ifcvallarta.org Donations are very much appreciated!