



Greetings from the Mexican Exchange Committee!

It can be hard for families to imagine sending children at such a young age on an international exchange program. When Paige and Victor Urzua were looking at schools for their rising second-grader, they looked ahead in the PMFS program and couldn't wrap their head around sending Braedon ('15) on a two-week trip to Mexico without parental supervision. Paige remembers thinking, "Well, we'll send Braedon to PMFS for a few years, and then pull him before fifth grade."

Time flew by and soon, Braedon was reaching the end of fourth grade and his younger sister Vanessa ('17) was also enrolled at PMFS. Paige volunteered to help out at the end of the year Faculty Luncheon, and remembers vividly working alongside two fifth grade parents whose children had recently returned from Cuernavaca on the Exchange. Their perspective on the trip and how beneficial it had been for their children gave Paige a new way of looking at the program. She says, "I started to think, it's going to be ok."

Both Braedon and Vanessa had positive experiences on the exchange. The Urzua family traveled to Mexico the following winter to visit Braedon's hosts, the Ramírez family. Paige and Victor were able to create a lasting relationship with the family and see some of the places that Braedon had previously experienced with his classmates and teachers.

As a mother, Paige reflects that participating in the Exchange gave her a new perspective on the human experience of parenting: how caring for another person's child and entrusting her children to other families created a sense of how similar human beings are as parents. She also saw the importance of letting her children have independent experiences, and to navigate challenges on their own.

Vanessa and Braedon remember that despite encountering many new things during their travels to Cuernavaca, that they were aware of how many commonalities there were in family life between the Colegio Williams host families and theirs. Vanessa credits the trip with opening doors to a love of travel, and Paige sees that both children are interested in exploring new cultures and learning about the world—something they might not have realized so early on without the PMFS Mexican Exchange Program.



*Paige, Vanessa, Braedon and Victor Urzua visiting Braedon's host family, Gloria, Mike, Ximena and Miguel Ramírez 2015.*



*Vanessa Urzua with her buddy Alejandra Mendoza, 2016*

**Order your Mexican Exchange 50th Anniversary Gear!** Sweatshirts and T-shirts available. We can ship directly to you or you can save the shipping and have it delivered in a bulk order directly to school. Orders must be placed [HERE](#) by August 30th.

**Stay Tuned** We are still planning our 50th Anniversary celebration for Saturday, November 28th, but we are also keeping an eye on the spring in case we need to reschedule. We'll keep you posted as things unfold!

**Keep in Touch and Spread the Word** Please update your contact information and provide us with a little info about your Mexican Exchange. It will take less than 5 minutes! This helps us keep you up to date on news and future events. [Keep in Touch](#)

**Join us** at the 50th Anniversary Facebook page, where we post photos, videos and updates. We welcome you to share content here! [Facebook: 50th Anniversary of the PMFS Mexican Exchange](#)