



THE CULTURAL SANCTUARIES FOUNDATION

Protecting the Protectors



Portraits by Chris Rainier of, from left to right, Los Cervantes Band Crescencio Morales, basketmaker Claudia Solorsano Espinosa and local student Soe Camilla Sanchez, all taken in the the new Casa de Cultura Mazahua in Crescencio Morales

An update on our project in Mexico...

There are many reasons to visit Crescencio Morales.

The small town in the state of Michoacan in Mexico lies in the buffer zone to the world famous UNESCO Monarch Butterfly Reserve. You have heard us describe before the miracle of Nature that is the migration of tens of millions of Monarch butterflies over thousands of miles to winter in the oyamel pine and fir trees of these beautiful mountains.

On land of the indigenous Mazahua community, you can go with local community guides to see a recently formed butterfly colony which is rarely visited. It is a wonderful and intimate experience away from the crowds of the main UNESCO Reserve.

And what most visitors who make the journey to Michoacan to see the butterflies don't know is that there is so much more to see and do.

Our new community center in Crescencio Morales – the Casa de Cultura Mazahua – will be opening soon and will give visitors a sample of the area's deep culture and traditions.

Visitors can experience traditional music and dance; weaving displays by local artists

creating traditional textiles and basketware and visit the artisans' homes; traditional cooking classes; locally cooked traditional food; the making and tasting of a traditional pulque drink; a demonstration of a patsari stove which reduces deforestation while promoting community health; a botanical and medicinal garden tour; hiking and biking with community guides to nearby waterfalls through dense forest full of orchids, hummingbirds and fireflies; and even participation in a Mazahua language class with local students.

Few tourists have ever visited Crescencio and one of the purposes of our new Casa de Cultura is to be a draw for people bringing not only their cultural curiosity but also much needed income to support this community. Please come to visit it if you can and spread the word.

And, in the meantime, if you are interested in supporting the Casa de Cultura or our work in general, please let us know. We are actively fundraising at the moment.

Finally, a shout out to our incredible community partners in Crescencio and, in particular, to Cristian, Paola and Mario, to our architect dream team of Teresa and Daniel for their work in designing and creating the Casa de Cultura, and to the wonderful generosity of our benefactors. Thank you all.