



*Jess Goddard changing lives-during her stay in Mexico, senior Jess Goddard, volunteered as a teacher at El Rincon de Maria. Goddard founded an organization, Soaring on Wings, to raise funds to help the children that touched her heart during her stay.*

## Student starts one woman organization

By Kate Fassett News Editor

One Adrian College student has found a way to service her community. The catch is, her community several thousands of miles away in Cuernavaca, Mexico.

Senior Jess Goddard is raising money for public school systems in Cuernavaca through a one woman organization she founded, called **Soaring on Wings**. "For me, it's just about loving these little kids for the simple fact that they are human beings," Goddard said.

Last August, Goddard studied abroad in Mexico. According to her Web site

[www.rivertree.net/Wings](http://www.rivertree.net/Wings), Goddard is studying communications, Spanish and religion.

In Cuernavaca, she began to volunteer as a teacher for a school called El Rincon de Maria. Although the school is considered public, it is funded entirely by money that the parents pay to send their children there.

"A lot of kids don't even go to school, Goddard said. "This school has no resources whatsoever."

In the area where the school is located, there is no running water or legal electricity.

"Kids eat chips and. Drink Coca-Cola," Goddard writes on her Web site. "They have no teeth and holey clothes. Houses are constructed from scrap metal and electric-blue tarps. Streets hardly exist

and if they do, they're not what we consider streets; they are pathways worn down into the dirt from years of use.

Goddard felt that she was being called to stay in Mexico and help the situation. While the other students returned home at the end of the semester, Goddard stayed behind.

After a while, she realized that she needed funds to make a difference. Upon returning to the states, Goddard made a presentation at her grandmother's church in Amherst, Ohio.

From the 35 people present in the church, Goddard received nearly \$500 in donations.

"After that, I just had to keep going," she said. She looks for monetary donations by doing presentations at churches and also at Rotary clubs, School supplies have been donated to her by students and professors as well.

To date, Soaring on Wings has raised about \$2,500 which has purchased a copy machine, copy paper and toner, material to buy book shelves for a library, books for the library, classroom supplies and teacher supplies and clothing, among other things.

Goddard's favorite project so far is one that was one of her first. She and senior Lucas Isley realized that the children in the area couldn't afford toothbrushes. After raising money, the pair bought 200 toothbrushes and gave them out in the school, teaching the children how to properly use them.

"That was, like, the first thing we did, and it's still my favorite," Goddard said

In December, senior Sharon Parks plans to accompany Goddard to Cuernavaca.

"We're going to do some stuff with education, health and orphanages," Parks said. "They need health education for the elderly because they don't have health insurance,"

Parks plans on going in to the Peace Corps soon.

"It's definitely going to be something I can take back to the Peace Corps with me," she said.

When Goddard finishes school, she'd like to continue to do missions work in third world countries.

"Think social service," Goddard said. "That's totally what it's about. It's about being a servant,"