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To Whom it May Concern:

Pennies/Pesos for Shade is an on-going Global Responsibility project at Casorso & KSS Schools in Kelowna, BC, for Schools in Barra de Navidad, Mexico!

When Crystal Zaseybida, a Kelowna Secondary School teacher, was in Mexico (2010) doing some humanitarian work with the DIVA retreat, she met a surf instructor who had two beautiful children with Down’s syndrome. This is almost a genetic impossibility to have more than one “Down’s” child in a family, especially since the parents were in their twenties when they conceived their children. Crystal learned about a high prevalence of Down’s syndrome in Mexico. Specialized facilities, equipment and trained professionals are required to teach these children, as with all children with special needs. Fundraising in Mexico has its challenges and help from other places, countries and individuals are needed to keep up with their costs.

When Crystal visited their school, she met inspiring students who had overcome both poverty and their disability. In particular, she met a young lady in a wheel chair who had Cerebral Palsy. The girl painted the most beautiful, heartfelt art work with her mouth. Her smile could light up a gymnasium.

Hearing about this experience, another teacher, Jody Nelson invited Crystal Zaseybida to speak to her class at École Casorso Elementary School. The images and talk from Crystal’s trip indicated the need to build a shade structure for CAM Cihuatlan School. Soon after, they formed the *Pennies for Shade* foundation to help schools in Mexico. The collection and rolling of pennies began at KSS and Casorso schools. Other donations began to “roll” in. The *Pennies for Shade* foundation then joined forces with the Summerland Rotary, Rotary International, and Costalegre Rotary (Barra, Mexico) to assist with the building of the structures.

Pennies/Pesos for Shade is a fundraising body for schools in need in the Barra de Navidad area. CAM Cihuatlan, or *Centro de Atencion Multiple Cihuatlan* in Barra de Navidad, Mexico was the first school for Pennies/Pesos for Shade. When Crystal was in Barra Mexico in 2010, it was around 36 degrees Celsius during the daytime. The children go to school from 2:00 pm – 6:30 pm. It was so hot during recess time the children typically stood under the awning of the building or went near trees to get shade. So to facilitate more usable space for play, eating, and working, *Pennies/Pesos for Shade's* first goal was to build a shade structure. From this point on, the guiding principle was that money raised would be put into lasting structures that would ensure basic needs were met in the schools.

With the Rotary groups, we have now built the shade structure at CAM Cihuatlan, as well as a complete new bathroom building, and a renovation of the therapeutic hydro pool, playground and kitchen areas. We have also supported the Pinal Villa Migrant School and housing project. In our fourth, fifth and sixth years of fundraising, we will continue providing for Cam Cihuatlan, Pinal Villa, and other Elementary schools such as Jaluco School. These schools have many other educational, building and renovation needs.

Over time, this project has become a significant part of the Global Responsibility learning in our schools. At present, the KSS Dance Fitness program "Pennies for Shade" club, all of Casorso Elementary School, Ms. Abenante’s class at Pearson Road Elementary, the Summerland Rotary, Rotary International, and Costalegre Rotary (Barra, Mexico) are involved in the fundraiser. There has been a significant fundraising component in “Friends of Ron Curle,” a special man who took a special interest in the project before he passed away from pancreatic cancer. Together we are helping proud, kind and amazing children in Mexico.

We have contributed $35,000 to the projects. Of this, $20,000 was matched by Rotary International. Pennies/Pesos for Shade is not a beneficiary of this money. The board of directors consists of three people: Crystal Zaseybida, Jody Nelson and Bruce Walker. All money goes through the Summerland Rotary. All donors receive receipts for their contributions which then go directly to Costalegre Rotary to be spent on school structures.

In December 2013, Crystal Zaseybida, student Georgia Sweet, and Jody Nelson went to Barra Mexico to see the finished renovation of CAM school, place a commemorative plaque at Cam Cihuatlan school in honor of every person and group involved in the recent renovation, and look at other projects in the area. Construction to renovate Jaluco Elementary School in Barra, Mexico has started this March. Pictures of the renovation will be put up on our website as they are sent from Mexico!

If you have any questions about the *Pennies /Pesos for Shade* project please contact [jody.nelson@sd23.bc.ca](mailto:jody.nelson@sd23.bc.ca) or [crystal.zaseybida@sd23.bc.ca](mailto:crystal.zaseybida@sd23.bc.ca).

Most sincerely,

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Co-founders of Pennies/Pesos for Shade