



## ROYAL RESORTS FOUNDATION, CARING FOR THE COMMUNITY

From support for the sick or impoverished members of society to conservation, pioneer Cancun resort group, Royal Resorts has been helping those in need for over 30 years. Through the Royal Resorts Foundation (Fundación Royal Resorts A.C.), it is seeking more ways to give back to society by promoting health and education, contributing to sustainable development in the state of Quintana Roo, and by protecting wildlife.

Throughout its history, Royal Resorts has supported social causes such as the Cancun General Hospital, cancer relief, orphanages, a shelter for the victims of domestic violence, charities for physically and mentally challenged children, and conservation. And since its inception in 2006, the Royal Resorts Foundation has given continuity to this philanthropic work with regular donations to the Red Cross, the Cancún-based conservation NGO Amigos de Sian Ka'an A.C., Grupo Desafío A.C. Cancer Relief and the Ciudad de la Alegría A.C. (City of Joy), a community center on the outskirts of Cancun comprising a hospice, old folks home, school, orphanage, a women's refuge and food distribution center. It has chosen four key issues to be the beneficiaries of its fundraising initiatives: education, the fight against cancer, conservation of the Mayan Jungle and a relief fund for employees to turn to in times of serious illness.

### *Scholarships for Children*

Despite universal access to public primary and secondary education in Mexico, due to poverty many children still miss out on school altogether or are forced to abandon their studies to help support their families. In an attempt to address this problem in Cancun and surrounding areas, the Ciudad de la Alegria opened the Mano Amiga School in 2009 to give marginalized children the opportunity to study and for a better life. It now has over 1,000 eager students on its roll.





The Royal Resorts Foundation provides scholarships for 144 children so that they can continue their studies at the school, fulfill their academic potential and pursue their dreams. This is a way to transform their lives and give them a better future.

### *Campaigning against Cancer*

Unfortunately, cancer awareness is still low in southeast Mexico, particularly in rural communities, and many women do not get the early screening which is routine in other countries. Ignorance, fear, distance from clinics and inability to pay for medical studies all play their part. As a result, when women fall ill and finally seek help, their cancer is often at an advanced stage. Being diagnosed with this terrible disease is devastating, but how much more so when you have no one to turn to and no money to pay for the life-saving treatment you so desperately need?

The Royal Resorts Foundation has made the fight against cancer one of its key causes in alliance with a Cancún-based charity Grupo Desafio de Quintana Roo A.C. Founded in 1999 by a group of women who have all fought their own battles with cancer, Grupo Desafio started life as a support network for breast cancer patients. Its mission is now to help all those living with cancer, regardless of sex, age or type of cancer. Since 2004, it has been the Quintana Roo state representative of the AMLCC (Asociacion Mexicana de la Lucha Contra el Cancer), the Mexican Cancer Association.

The group gives seminars on cancer, risk factors and the importance of early detection in colleges, the workplace and to community groups in Cancun and the Riviera Maya. It aims to discredit taboos about cancer and spread the word that the disease is curable if caught in time. Its message is reinforced with a twice-yearly Crusade against Breast Cancer, which takes place in May to coincide with Mother's Day and in October for World Cancer Day.





Thanks to the support given by the Royal Resorts Foundation and other donors, Grupo Desafío provides cancer screening and treatment for patients from the poorest sectors of society, giving them the weapons they need to combat the disease and a second chance for life. The Foundation's goal this year is to raise \$30,000 US for the fight against cancer; this will help provide 250 mammograms, 300 APE studies for prostate cancer and 250 HPV vaccinations for suspected cases of Human Papillomavirus.

### *Protecting the Mayan Jungle*

Covering vast areas of the Yucatán Peninsula, Chiapas, northern Guatemala and Belize, the Great Mayan Jungle is an ecological treasure house, widely regarded as one of the world's biodiversity hotspots and an important green lung. Yet its riches are under threat from urban sprawl, deforestation, forest fires and pollution. Rare species such as the jaguar, tapir, spider and howler monkey, parrots and toucans face habitat loss and poaching.

The Royal Resorts Foundation is participating in a regional initiative launched by Amigos de Sian Ka'an and the Mexican National Forestry Commission (CONAFOR) to safeguard four million hectares of tropical forest in the state of Quintana Roo not currently protected by reserves. And the goal of this campaign goes far beyond safeguarding the jungle and its inhabitants.

Beneath the forest floor and hidden deep in the rock is a network of underground rivers – the longest and most complex discovered to date anywhere in the world. This vast aquifer is the only source of fresh water in the limestone landscape of the Yucatán Peninsula and is also Mexico's most important water resource for future generations. The jungle must be protected and urban pollution prevented in order to keep the water pure.

The Royal Resorts Foundation is raising money in support of Amigos de Sian Ka'an's work with rural communities and *ejidatarios* or small farmers and





landholders to protect the forest instead of clearing it for development. They receive environmental services payments for leaving the land untouched. In addition to conserving the forest and the creatures that inhabit it, such actions increase carbon capture and help to offset the devastating effects of climate change.

In 2012, with the support of the Royal Resorts Foundation, another local resort chain, CONAFOR and Aguakan, Amigos de Sian Ka'an was able to make the first such environmental services payments to communities and farmers in northern Quintana Roo. The beneficiaries were Ejido Juarez and San Mateo Ake near El Eden, a private reserve en route to Yum Balam Biosphere Reserve and the island of Holbox. They are located in a belt of forest and marshland that follows the course of a natural fault and is associated with the cenotes and underground river systems of the Riviera Maya. As water is plentiful year round, this area attracts a variety of wildlife and the long-term goal is to protect it in order to create a natural corridor linking it to the Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve; this will help rare species such as the jaguar, puma and ocelot.

#### *Employee Relief in Times of Need*

The Royal Resorts Foundation also gives a helping hand to employees in times of need. It supports the Royal Resorts Employee Relief Fund, which helps staff cope with grave illnesses such as cancer, major surgery or accidents and to provide care for the terminally ill. Aid is given on a case-by-case basis and alleviates the burden on the household at a time when problems seem insurmountable. In 2013, the Royal Resorts Foundation was able to help nine employees with life-threatening health problems.





### *Royal Resorts Foundation Fundraising & Activities*

Through a combination of donations and fundraising activities, the Royal Resorts Foundation has raised US\$121,798 to date and the goal is to reach US\$165,000 by the end of 2014.

In addition to donations, Royal Resorts employees support the Royal Resorts Foundation by organizing raffles, croissant and cupcake sales and clothing drives for the cause. With the help of staff from the Spa and Landscaping departments the Foundation has even been able to offer yoga and gardening classes to raise money.

Royal Resorts members and guests are also enthusiastically supporting the Royal Resorts Foundation. They can donate online at [www.royalresortsfoundation.org](http://www.royalresortsfoundation.org) add a contribution to their club bill at the end of their stay or use the collection boxes in Reception and resort stores. In 2013, the collection box campaign raised more than \$150,000 pesos for the cause. In 2012 one couple made a personal donation of USD\$1,000 and other members have donated scholastic materials, cribs, toys and even computers.

Souvenir Royal Resorts Foundation t-shirts are available in the resort gift shops and a percentage of the proceeds from their sale goes to the Foundation's causes. The resort mini markets sell cookies and reading glasses and launched a rounding up campaign at the tills in support of the Royal Resorts Foundation.

Guests can also participate in special activities during their stay such as Recycling Art and Finger Painting and support the Royal Resorts Foundation. A local company called Magic Finger coordinates the Finger Painting sessions and its artists have generously supported the cause, donating US\$5 for each painting that they sell at the resorts. In 2013, they contributed \$113,000.00 pesos.

Some recent events organized at the resorts have included fundraising activities for the Foundation such as auctions, raffles, concerts and the sale of cookies and cakes.





### *Spreading Happiness*

The Royal Resorts Foundation also has a Spreading Happiness campaign with the local community. Its goal is to help those in need and bring a smile to their faces. To date, it has organized three special Spreading Happiness events and more activities are planned in the future. These events have brought together Royal Resorts employees, members and guests who have volunteered to help or donated time, money or gifts.

The first Spreading Happiness event took place in December 2013. The residents of El Milagro, a poor neighborhood on the outskirts of Cancún, received a Christmas Surprise of grocery boxes, homemade pasta, cookies and candies. In total, Royal Resorts staff and member volunteers distributed 150 grocery boxes, 225 portions of spaghetti bolognese, 600 cookies and five kilos of candies!

In February, volunteers paid a Spreading Happiness Valentine's Day visit to the Old Folks Home in Ciudad del la Alegría to give flowers to the residents and spend time with them.

On May 3, as part of the third Spreading Happiness event, a group of Royal Resorts Foundation volunteers comprising employees and guests helped out at a huge party for 300 children and donated toys collected at the resorts. Organized by Dr. Sonrisas A.C., a Mexican charity that works with seriously ill and poor children, the event was in honor of Children's Day. The children were invited by three local groups: Aitana Foundation (children with cancer), Manos de Apoyo y Vida (support network for vulnerable homeless street children) and La Escuelita (children's education), and may have otherwise missed out on Children's Day activities due to poverty or illness.

Prior to the Children's Day Party, the Royal Resorts Foundation organized a Toy Drive at the resorts to collect new dolls, soft toys, cars, games and other gifts for the children. The response was tremendous and it was able to donate around 100 toys, which were added to the pile of toys distributed at the event.





### *Turtle Conservation*

Since 1985, Royal Resorts has been protecting the sea turtles that emerge from the sea during the summer to lay their eggs on the beaches of Cancun. It was among the first resort groups to sign up when municipal authorities subsequently launched a conservation campaign and now participates in the annual statewide turtle program coordinated by SEMARNAT, the Mexican Department of the Environment.

Record keeping began in 1998 and, since then, Royal Resorts has protected 6,264 nests and released 522,394 turtles. The 2013 season was record-breaking, 820 turtle nests with 99,280 eggs were protected, and staff and guests released 89,314 baby turtles to begin life at sea.

Members and guests can purchase a “Save the Sea Turtles” souvenir t-shirt from the resort gift shop and by doing so will be supporting conservation causes, as a percentage of the proceeds from the sale of the t-shirts is donated to the Royal Resorts Foundation.

For more information about the Royal Resorts Foundation and its causes visit: [www.royalresortsfoundation.org](http://www.royalresortsfoundation.org); Email: [contact@royalresortsfoundation.org](mailto:contact@royalresortsfoundation.org)

### *About Royal Resorts*

Founded in 1975, Royal Resorts is a pioneer in the Mexican tourism industry and now has four beachfront resorts in Cancún: The Royal Cancun®, The Royal Caribbean®, The Royal Islander® and The Royal Sands® and one in Playa del Carmen, The Royal Haciendas®, located at the heart of the Riviera Maya. The latest member of the Royal Resorts collection is Grand Residences Riviera Cancun®, a luxury beachfront resort affiliated with The Leading Hotels of the World®. Nestled on a beautiful white-sand beach just to the south of the traditional Mexican fishing village of to the south of Puerto Morelos, the resort opened on December 7, 2013.

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