The beauty, and the very strength of Mexico itself, is the family (FAMILIA). For the most part families stay together here and the ties between family members are very very strong. The support and affection they give each other is a wonderful thing.

Most folks in Mexico live their whole lives, either in the house they were born in, or in another small house built close by on land (TIERRA) owned by the family. They rarely have enough money (DINERO) to both buy land and build their own home somewhere else. Two, three, four, or five houses built on the original family plot is common now. While some seek employment in other cities, or in the United States, the vast majority live, work, and die in the town in which they were born.

Families are large although this is starting to change. Only a generation ago, 8 to 10 kids in a family was common. Most families we know still have three to five kids though we know a few young couples who are choosing to have only two children ((NIÑOS). Generations are close together.
Many choose to marry and start their families as teenagers, but there is almost always a grandmother (ABUELA) or grandfather (ABUELO), if not great-grandmother who lives next door for help and advise.

Most kids grow up with not only their many brothers and sisters but many more cousins. Aunts and uncles often act like second mothers and fathers. The kids play together and work together and eventually raise their families together. Most will marry someone from another family in the same town. Our town is really just a big extended family -- everybody is related to somebody. Your relatives are your friends. Your friends are quite likely to be your relatives, too.

Please let the following pages of photographs speak for themselves since they are about friendship (AMISTAD) and love.