



Jorge and Oscar Ibarra Mendoza

Owners, IB Furniture 4Less, Furniture and Accessories

Graduates of The Lake Chapala Society ESL (English as Second Language) Program

"You never know when a helping hand will change another person's entire life." ...Zig Ziglar, American author, salesman and motivational speaker.

The Lake Chapala Society was such a hand for brothers Oscar and Jorge Ibarra Mendoza, owners of IB (Ibarra Brothers) Furniture 4Less Furniture and Accessories in San Antonio Tlyacapan since 2010. The Ibarra Brothers have been giving back to the community ever since.

Born in Guadalajara in the 1970's, Oscar and Jorge spent their early childhoods in Tlaquepaque. In the city acclaimed for families of ceramic artists, the Ibarra family specialized in barro bruñido or burnished clay ceramics, pottery with a highly polished, richly colored finish.

The family moved to Chapala with their business when the brothers were teens. After 15 years of successfully supporting the growing family, which now consisted of the brothers' wives and children, an influx of pottery shops opened in Chapala. Competition grew, their sales went down, and they had to close the shop.

One day, Oscar's brother-in-law called him. The popular furniture store he worked in, C&D Furniture, needed a mattress delivery driver to help out. Oscar filled in for a few months until the regular driver left. He liked the company and the owners, Cassandra and David, originally from Texas. David offered Oscar the job. That was 16 years ago.

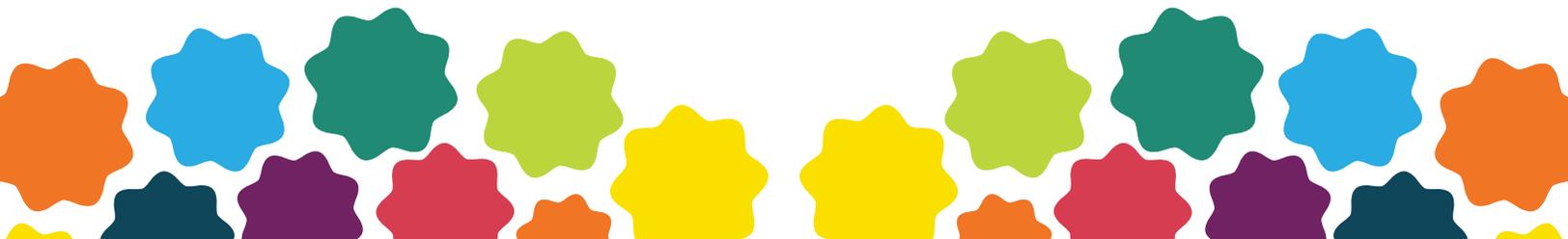
"This was the only good quality furniture store around. I saw the possibility to grow my life here. But I needed to learn English to do the job," said Oscar.

He started to look for English classes but could not afford monthly tuition at the school in Chapala. Then he learned about English as a Second Language classes (ESL) at LCS's Wilkes Education Center (WEC). The classes were free with a small fee for books. The program is open to students between the ages of 15 to 85 and attracts over 300 students each year.

Oscar studied English for four years at Wilkes, persevering when other students who started with him dropped out. He credits the good teachers at LCS for his success. Oscar quickly started to learn English, reinforced by hearing it spoken at the store. The WEC also houses the Neill James Biblioteca de Ajijic, a Spanish language library with more than 4,000 books. Oscar's favorite class was the Conversation course.

"The Conversation class opened my mind. We'd learn about different cultures and countries. The people at the Lake Chapala Society were amazing, I had very nice teachers," he said.

His employer David was very impressed with Oscar's drive and determination. He supported Oscar's education, even letting him leave early on the days he had class. When C&D's salesman left for the US, David offered Oscar the salesman position. Oscar accepted but first made an important phone call. It was time for the Ibarra Brothers to work together again.



A few years earlier, when the family's store closed, Jorge went to work in the construction and landscaping industry, earning promotions within two years to a managerial position and spent a year in the United States. Then Oscar called him to come home.

With Oscar as salesman, Jorge was needed to assist and run the delivery for the store. When Oscar was promoted to manager, Jorge took on the sales position and enrolled in the ESL classes at LCS.

After a few years, David and Cassandra decided to return to the United States for schooling for their young son. David asked Oscar if he wanted to oversee the store for them. Oscar thought about it.

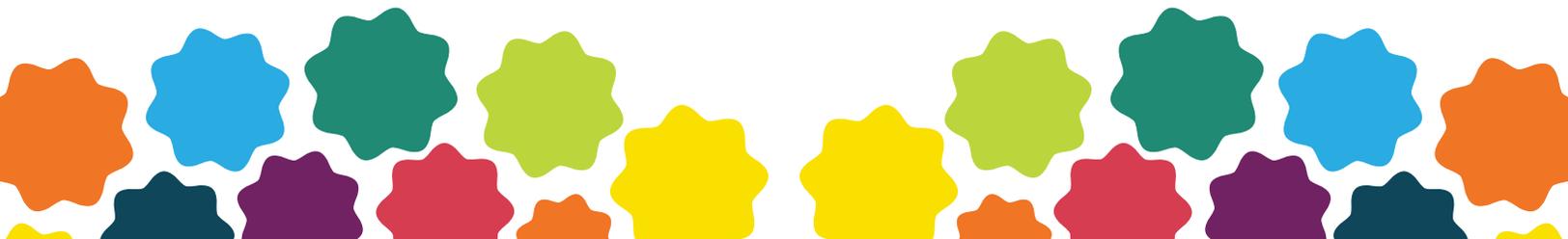
"No, I want to buy the store," he told David.

Oscar and Jorge bought C&D Furniture and changed the name to IB Furniture 4Less. Oscar said it was a day of mixed emotions when they drove David and Cassandra to the border and said good-bye.

"I was sad when I came back to the store without them. Cassandra and David were like family to us. They stayed in touch and gave us support so we would continue to be successful. They came back for a visit two years after they left. Cassandra told us that David felt very comfortable when he saw the store. He told her that he did a good job with us, that the place looked perfect," he said.

Oscar credits The Lake Chapala Society for providing them with the English language skills they needed to become business owners.

"95 percent of our clients are American and Canadian. I would like to thank The Lake Chapala Society for changing my life with the English classes," he said.



Oscar and Jorge's children have also participated in the Children's Art Classes at LCS and the families like to give back by going to the campus and helping out with the programs. Jorge said that giving back to the Lakeside community in need is also very important to the brothers.

"Oscar has a good heart," said Jorge, "He gives mattresses to families who could not afford one. For example, he gave a mattress to a family with a child who has cancer, also for a child who had a kidney transfusion and for many families in San Juan Cosala after the flooding years ago."

Oscar nodded and added, *"When you give something, you receive double."*

We invite you to join in the mission of the Lake Chapala Society: bringing our communities together through communication and collaboration.

Through your donation to Annual Giving 2018, you directly contribute to Spanish language classes for expats and English classes for the Mexican community. We feel that our programs for the Mexican community serve our members and expats.

As Oscar said - when we give, we receive double!

