



# *The Dream Makers*

BY SUZANNE KOCH

KKIS' donation  
drop-off location  
is on the corner  
of 32nd St.  
and 35th Ave.  
in Playa del  
Carmen.

*The average person in Mexico is only educated to the 9th grade level and sometimes even less. With school supplies costing nearly a week's worth of wages for many families, economic reasons often make attending school a challenge. Founded in Playa del Carmen in 2012, Keeping Kids In School (KKIS) is working to change that, providing the tools and resources to graduate as many students as they can from high school.*

KKIS aims to engage and motivate students, as well as teachers, parents and administrators. They are able to provide financial assistance and support through their five programs including school supplies, advocacy, scholarships and advisors, connections and English Conversation Club.

Each year, donors and volunteers provide a year's worth of school supplies to students in need and educate them on the importance of staying in school. In 2018 alone, they provided 2,402 students with needed supplies. Throughout the year, KKIS teams up with other organizations like Educativa, a teacher-led education-focused group, to provide basic supplies in classrooms that often don't even have trash cans, clocks or copy machines. They also host academic activities like spelling bees and math contests to keep learning fun and inspiring.

For promising students KKIS takes it a step further by offering high school and university scholarships based on grade point average and financial need. By teaming up with the Secretary of Education, KKIS receives recommendations for communities in need. Scholarship students then receive a Spanish-speaking advisor who helps them to discover who they are and what they want to accomplish today and in the future. For the 2019-2020 year, there are 78 high school and 13 university scholars.

To further enhance students' chances at succeeding, KKIS provides ways to connect to the community by bringing in inspirational speakers and advisors, along with negotiating contracts with select universities in order to receive discounts on tuition. They also offer help with applications and interview coaching and provide valuable introductions to business owners and job opportunities. On top of all that, the English Conversation Club is a way for high school students to utilize and practice their English, a skill that can greatly increase their income-earning potential in the future. The program is led by native English-speaking volunteers and focuses on conversation, pronunciation and building confidence in speaking. The program takes place at two public high schools Monday through Thursday.

While simply attending school can seem like an impossible task for many, KKIS is there to make it achievable, both in the classroom and beyond.

## How You Can Help

Visit their Playa del Carmen drop-off location to donate school supplies in person or volunteer your time during English Conversation Club, taking place September through December and January through May at public high schools.

**TO MAKE A DONATION OR FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [KKISPROJECT.ORG](http://KKISPROJECT.ORG)**



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