

## WORLD CUP IN MEXICO

EVERYONE in Mexico is watching the World Cup. Walking down the street, cheers or moans can be heard emanating from every restaurant or store. The excitement was, of course, the highest when the Mexican team played. All work stopped. At our worksites, televisions were turned on and everyone went to watch the games together. Many employees painted their faces with the colors of the Mexican flag – red, white and green. Every time, the Mexican players got anywhere near the goal, wild cheers could be heard, hoping against hope that a goal would be scored. When a goal was actually scored, the horns and shouts were almost deafening as they celebrated the achievement.

For the game between Mexico and Argentina, six of us Peace Corps Volunteers were together in San Luis Potosí, a city about 5 hours north of Mexico City. Mexico had advanced to the Group of 16 Round, but was facing Argentina, the team that had ended Mexico's chances to advance to the quarterfinals in 2006. While most Mexicans realized the odds of Mexico winning were small, the enthusiasm for the team didn't diminish.

Where would be the best place to watch the game? An Irish pub, of course. We arrived early to stake out our table and get our horns and other noisemakers provided by the Mexican beer company, Corona. As the game started, the excitement in the room was palpable. We all believed that anything was possible. However, by half-time the Argentines had a 2-0 lead. Shortly after returning from half-time, they scored again. The mood was definitely solemn as the Mexican team faced a 3-0 score. Then in the 71<sup>st</sup> minute of the game, Javier Hernández, the star of the Mexican team, scored a goal. The room erupted in shouts, horns and merriment. Even though their chances of winning were slim, for a moment all of Mexico was cheering enthusiastically for its team.

However, it was not to be. Mexico's chances to advance to the next round ended that day, but we Peace Corps volunteers had enjoyed being part of the Mexican excitement for its soccer team.