

# 50 years education in paradise

## Vacation camp (OREA-GUADALAJARA)

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### Origin

The municipality of OREA gives its name to the school camp house located in the Abundance forest and the head of the Alto Tajo Natural Park. In this part of the Iberian System are the *Montes Universales*, the Alto Tajo, the Sierra de Albarracín and the Serranía de Cuenca. It is a landscape with the least light, acoustic and atmospheric pollution in the Iberian Peninsula.

Gumersindo Rodríguez, who was looking for a natural place to complement the education of the students with a different dynamic to that of the classrooms away from the desks and surrounded by nature with other young volunteers who devote themselves to the children and infect them with the joy of living.

This year, we are celebrating the 50th anniversary of the foundation. As responsible for the project, I thank the people who, with their work and effort, have given their time to the camp: the Piarists Víctor Martínez, José Ramón Pérez, Vicente Escuder, Francisco Montesinos, Pepe Albors and Manel Camp for their way of spreading the Piarist charism. The work of the first monitors Javier Arrufat, Juan Antonio González, Francisco Mula or Miguel Ángel Belenguer has also been essential, as well as the cooks: the Arroyo family and Jesús Salvador, the collaborating doctors, the Llop family, and so many other monitors and collaborators close to Orea.

### Our educational offer

About 1000 children and young people come to Orea every summer, divided into 5 shifts (6 and 8 nights). They are distributed by ages ranging from 5 to 12 years old and a specific shift with high school students.

We want to transmit to the children the joy of living in nature through games, adventure, sports, excursions, nature, friendship, coexistence... We help children and young people to become autonomous and committed people. We strive to help them value personal relationships and respect for others through responsibility and without exclusions.

The campers also participate in the celebrations, morning prayers, and the atmosphere of a Christian educational community. We care for spirituality, interiorization, silence, contemplation, and Christian values, understood as a path of openness and commitment to others.

### Those in charge

There is a Coordinating Team for Orea, whose provincial leader is Father Paco Molina. In addition, there are the camp leaders and those responsible for the School of Monitors Carlos Garcia and Javier Aguillo and those responsible for the administrative and economic management Juan Cuesta and Salvador Domenech.

### Volunteer educators

The Betania-Escolapios Youth Animation School offers official complementary and/or specialization training, where the monitors acquire the necessary knowledge to develop safe leisure and school tourism pedagogy techniques. The course consists of 100 theoretical and practical hours, including three-weekend training sessions and a module of 150 practice hours that can be carried out in our camp shifts or other centers with collaboration agreements.

Subsequently, many of these monitors volunteer with us, acquiring an enormous responsibility towards our young people. The monitors care for the children and offer them the warmth they need while away from home. They are real educators with good social skills and good animators who energize, sensitize and motivate the children.

With this course, they can enter the labor market, learning and developing many life skills, such as time management, organization, or the acquisition of responsibilities.

### **Impact**

We work on education in free time to help grow responsible people, committed to improving the environment, making it more democratic, participatory, and sustainable, and promoting equity in rights, duties, and opportunities. In short, to awaken the capacity to overcome challenges, increase the capacity to work with enthusiasm, and arouse curiosity to promote self-esteem.

### **Challenges for the future**

We have the elements to make our Camp grow even more. To do so, we must improve communication, dissemination, and infrastructure.

We wish to continue offering our young people a camp full of enriching experiences in each of our proposed shifts.

For the families who come to the lodge every weekend of the year, we want to continue offering them the comfort of our lodge and the greatness of our environment.

And for the schools to offer didactic activities such as Nature Classrooms and Environmental Workshops enjoying our outdoor activities.

Acquire 100% sustainability of the Camp through the expansion of the photovoltaic installation of solar panels.

### **Valuation**

When I took over the center's management in Orea, I found some infrastructures needing improvement. We undertook a vital investment plan thanks to the effort and trust of Fr. Provincial Iván Ruíz Cortizo and the Provincial Bursar, Fr. Enrique Rodríguez Varas, and the Congregation. Proof of this is the improvements in the swimming pool, the supply of drinking water, the baths of Cabrillas and its accumulators of 1200 liters of hot water for the comfort of our campers, the reform of the rooms and their furniture, as well as the increase in the number of outdoor activities, creating more bridges, walkways, zip lines with varying degrees of difficulty for children and young people, are other of the challenges proposed and achieved in recent years.

For me, it is a satisfaction to see how our infrastructures are improving so that the people we welcome, enjoy and feel comfortable. And I only have words of gratitude for the trust placed in me for this project.





