



NEWSLETTER

FOR A BEAUTIFUL, CLEAN, AND SAFE PLAYA GRANDE

Asociación Playa Grande Sostenible is a nonprofit organization founded to improve, protect, and unite the Playa Grande community

Our mission is to promote a balance between coastal development, human well-being, and environmental conservation.

The initiatives we coordinate range from environmental education to responsible living within a National Park, as well as strategies that help keep our town safe.

The board of directors, the administrative department, and the committees are made up of volunteer community members who, out of their love for Playa Grande, dedicate themselves to coordinating community efforts and demonstrating their commitment to sustainability.

Meet our Board of directors:

<https://www.playagrande.org/en/quienes-somos>

We invite you to take a moment to learn about the nonprofit organizations that support the social and environmental well-being of our town:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1g6Fj8AUQHh3O2LNYYIZsdmEoiz88P2hesxmz1B-vKQs/edit?usp=drivesdk>



If you are not part of the Playa Grande community WhatsApp chat and you own property or live in PG, please write to info@playagrande.org so you can be added and stay informed.

Below, we share an overview of what has taken place through the Asociación Playa Grande Sostenible since December 2025.

2026 SOMOS PG FEST

What a great turn out for us to get together, meet new neighbors and bond. The PG school has been by far the best venue since we started this annual gathering in 2022.

Thanks to all of you who joined in the fun, shared food and live music from our rocking kids at **Good Vibes!**

If you missed it this year, we documented it here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1XS7PdPNFkxGbXSfw0YDH5kXzEpgvC52I/view?usp=drivesdk>



APGS EDUCATION COMMITTEE

We begin by thanking the principal and the school staff who have opened the doors to receive support from the community in such an available and graceful way.

Thank you to the Education Committee (**Jodi Gallant, Bettina del Rio, Paola Ramírez, Stuart Sheldon and Tania Montenegro**) and **CEPIA** for being dedicated and committed advocates for the improvement of the school for the children.

The Playa Grande Public School needs a lot of community support. Since it is in an area so far from the capital, the resources provided by the Ministry of Education are scarce.

Please watch our video:

<https://www.playagrande.org/en/apoyoalaescuelap%C3%BAblica>



We are incredibly grateful for the generosity and support of our community, which made it possible to complete several important improvements to our school. One of the most impactful was a full overhaul of our water system—we replaced the water tanks and built a protective roof over the entire area. This project will make a lasting difference for our students and staff.

We would also like to recognize **JP Serrano**, who kindly donated some of his labor and materials to support these much-needed improvements. His craftsmanship and dedication truly stand out, and we are so appreciative. Thank you as well to **Water Pump Solutions** for their generous contribution toward these efforts.



A special thank you to **Paola Ramirez** for installing a composter generously donated by the Municipality. This is an exciting step forward for our school, as students and teachers begin to actively participate in composting and learn more about sustainability together.

Thank you **Andrea** from **Bahia Bikinis** and **Colegio Vittorino** en Huacas for donating desks for the extra students that enrolled this year!

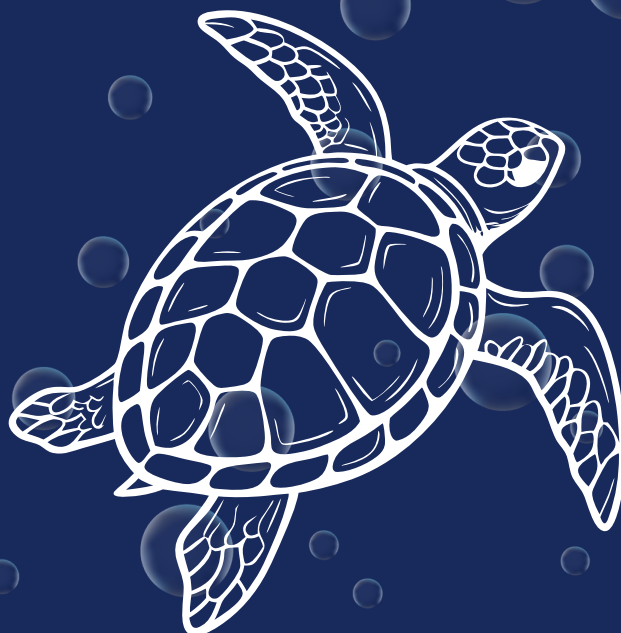
Thank you to **Melanie and Gordon** for the continuous attention to the swim program and generously hosting with their pool. We are grateful to volunteers for the extracurricular activities including **Barretto Jiu Jitsu Academy** and **Javier de Mezerville** with **Hotel El Manglar** for teaching the students how to surf and coaching them in soccer.

Wonderful news is that our Reading Club is back! Students are once again enjoying special one-on-one reading time with members of our community—an experience that continues to inspire a love of reading and connection. If you would like to be part of this meaningful program, we would love to have you join us.

A warm thank you to **Keith Clower** with **Grande Vacation** Rentals and his generous team, **Don Mario and Emilio**, for keeping the school's green area clean and beautiful.

Thank you to all our generous donors for your continued support. We are always looking for additional volunteers and funds to help maintain our school and support programs for the children.

To get involved, please contact Jodi Gallant: gallant.jodie@gmail.com.



APGS SECURITY COMMITTEE

We reached our goal to continue with the program for another six months! Thank you Nancy, Shawna, Monica, Stuart, Tim and all of you who advocate for the program to make this happen. If you have not contributed please reach out to info@playagrande.org to do so. The more neighbors we have on board, the more chances we have to hire a third patroller or funds carryover to round #10 to expand the program.

MISSION OF THE APGS SECURITY COMMITTEE

To ensure the safety and well-being of the residents of our community through the implementation and management of a proactive, transparent, and effective security program. We are dedicated to coordinating efforts with security providers, fostering open communication, and collaborating on the creation of strategies that protect the property and integrity of each member, maintaining a safe and reliable residential environment.

GENERAL OBJECTIVES OF THE COMMITTEE

- **Prevention** – We work to make Playa Grande less attractive to crime. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES: Maintenance of public lighting with CoopeGTE, continued patrolling, encouraging community collaboration in spreading messages, and expanding visibility through community cameras.
- **Real-Time Response** – Provide personalized attention within the first 5 minutes of receiving an emergency call. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES: Maintaining the patrol project with the company GRCOE, raising funds among neighbors to sustain the cost of this project, using the map of contributing neighbors to effectively locate their homes, and following protocols for new patrol officers.
- **Reporting** – Create mechanisms to report incidents and spread alerts among neighbors. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES: Enabling the management of incident information between contributing neighbors and GRCOE through a WhatsApp group and SoSafe, facilitating the online reporting process, sending and analyzing incident reports from affected neighbors via Google Forms, and formulating community safety surveys to get neighbors' opinions.

The committee has supported us all with security bulletins, integrated communication with the CR Police Force, protocols and safety tips that we continue to organize. Thanks to our committee of volunteers: **Moises, Maria Paz and Jake!**

COMMUNITY CAMERAS

As some of you may remember, last year, the Playa Grande Security Committee organized an open meeting to present our plan for a community video surveillance program with The Sovereign Techs (cnantes@gmail.com). It has been a challenge to follow up on this to bring it to fruition. We are enormously grateful to Shawna Mullen and neighbors for their support in this project. Thanks to this support, we have been able to get 4 community cameras.

PLEASE NOTE THAT:

- The way we prevent crime through fundraising as a community is by having the presence of patrollers to make it uncomfortable for criminals on the prowl and to have more immediate assistance in case of an incident.
- 911 can answer calls in Spanish and English.
- Please file reports, as they can bring more government resources for Playa Grande's security. The Police Force in Brasilito can come pick you up and take you to their office to file a report if necessary. Phone number: 2600-2086.
- For anonymous reports regarding drugs, dial 1176.
- The APGS Security Committee is continually working to establish an online reporting process with OIJ in Playa Grande.
- Here it is very likely that criminals will not be incarcerated for stealing. For this, practice prevention by applying the suggested security tips that we post.

WE NEED YOUR COLLABORATION WITH:

- **PROPERTY CLEANLINESS:** We kindly ask owners of empty lots to keep their lot clean. Keep the area around the houses as clean as possible of weeds; this allows for a better view for the patroller and prevents the possibility of hiding places for potential criminals.
- **PROPERTY LIGHTING:** As much as possible, install lights with a motion sensor around the properties for a better view of the external part of the properties. (Please use downward-facing lights to avoid light pollution).
- **SPECIFIC INFORMATION:** Report all general information when making an incident report (theft, assault, disturbance, loss of belongings) clarifying the location where the event occurred, as well as the characteristics of the person or people involved, this is an extremely important example: (color of clothing, shoes, physical characteristics, tattoos, type and color of the vehicle).
- **ALARM SYSTEM:** Urge different owners to install an alarm system.
- **CAMERAS:** Keep your property under surveillance.
- **PREVENTION:** Make sure doors, windows and gates are well locked.
- **KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOR:** Invite them to community chats and contribute to the cost of the community patrol service.
- **COMMUNICATE:** Each PG neighborhood has a representative and a WhatsApp group chat. If you don't know your representative or the neighborhood WhatsApp chat, send an email to info@playagrande.org.



GET TO KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOR

Please take 10 minutes of your day to introduce yourself to your next door neighbor. If there is an empty lot, find out who owns it. Invite them into ❤️ PlayaGrande & your neighborhood group chats.

WHY?

- Because we need to get everyone involved to make the PG private security program stronger.
- Because we want our neighbors to stay, establish roots here and continue building community for all.
- Because we want Playa Grande to be a united, participative community where we all support and help each other out. Where we know everyone in town allowing more freedom and safety for our families.

Thank you for your cooperation & support!



SAFETY TIPS

- Keep your doors and windows locked.
- Place bars or rods inside the tracks of sliding glass doors.
- Install cameras, motion-sensor lights, and an alarm system on your property.
- Store valuables in a safe.
- Do not leave valuable items visible.
- Do not allow strangers to enter the property.
- Store ladders or tools that could be useful to thieves.
- Leave your house under the supervision of someone you trust when you are traveling.
- Enter and leave your house at random times so criminals cannot predict your routine – most incidents happen at sunset.
- Keep a copy of your passport/ID (not the original).
- Park your car in safe areas with security guards and do not leave valuables inside.
- Avoid wearing jewelry or carrying large amounts of cash.
- Do not walk alone at night, especially in isolated areas.
- If you wish to contribute to our community security program, your help not only supports the entire community but also allows us to cover more areas where residents cannot afford to contribute financially.



SECURITY PROTOCOL

- Call the GRCOE patrol (5pm-5am) at +506 8821-5775
- Call 911 to officially report the incident to the authorities
- Report it in your neighborhood chat to alert your neighbors
- Report it on the SoSafe App to alert the wider community
- File a report at the Brasilito Police Station - Tel: 2600-2086
- Drug trafficking - Report anonymously by calling 1176

Please share what is posted in the community chat with other PG neighbors and invite them to join by sending their contact to **info@playagrande.org**.

– Instruct all the people in charge of caring for the different houses, businesses, and premises to report any suspicious person or vehicle as soon as possible through SoSafe, neighborhood chats or the **GRCOE patrol emergency number: +506 8821-5775**.

GET THE SOSAFE APP:

<https://links.sosafeapp.com/eBY8> Then join our community group:

<https://links.sosafeapp.com/Fs19EV8bRR1Xt4s8> And send an email to

info@playagrande.org to get a code. We need to make more use of this SoSafe application. Thanks to those of you who do! Use it for lost items (pets), for road problems, environmental situations, anything the community needs to be alerted about.

THIS REQUIRES A UNITED FORCE. PLEASE BE AN ADVOCATE FOR THE SAFETY OF OUR COMMUNITY. THANK YOU!



APGS CHILDREN'S PARK COMMITTEE

Ya Casi, The Story of the Playa Grande Kid's Park

Here's the key milestone progression:

- **November 2019** – Idea conceived after family trip to Tortuguero; approached Municipality of Santa Cruz about a designated lot
- **2019-2020** – Formed kids' park committee; submitted first proposal to the municipality
- **End of 2020** – Approval received, but municipality said they'd build it in 5-10 years with no current funding
- **2020-2022** – Pivoted to self-build model; submitted new 50-page proposal; faced repeated rejections over minor wording issues and bureaucratic delays
- **End of 2022** – Project nearly abandoned after the municipality made us feel we couldn't advance
- **Late 2022** – Chance meeting with the mayor at an event; he promised permission within a week
- **Late 2023** – Official permission to build finally granted; project transitioned from small committee to full community association effort
- **2024** – Secured water access; held fundraiser; brought in backhoe to clear land; added fill for rancho and bathroom pads
- **2024** – Volunteer engineer revealed existing plans were too basic to build from; construction paused
- **End of 2024** – Hired first professional architect
- **End of 2025** – Twelve months of design work completed; plans finalized
- **Early 2026** – Quotes received from seven contractors: \$336K-\$650K; redesign underway to bring cost to under \$250K
- **Now** – \$32K in donations banked, \$8,300 spent on earthwork and plans; third round of redesigns in progress

In November 2019, after a family trip to Tortuguero, I came back to Playa Grande with a simple idea: a kids park. Nothing extravagant, just a place for families, for laughter, for community.

I walked into the Municipality of Santa Cruz and asked about a piece of land. They showed me the lot designated for the park. With the help of a few people in town, the kid's park committee, we submitted our first proposal to have the park built.

That's when the journey really began.

Entering COVID obviously slowed the process down a bit, but by the end of 2020, the kid's park committee of Playa Grande finally got approval. But not the kind we hoped for. They told us they'd build it... eventually. Five to ten years, maybe. "No funds," they told us.

So we pivoted from trying to get the municipality to build us a park to asking: ***"What if we build it ourselves?"***

The municipality said yes, but we would have to submit a new proposal for the project. And this time, everything got more complicated and difficult because we were taking responsibility to build a municipal park on a municipal lot with private donations. Here is a brief glimpse into the locura. (I could write 10,000 words on the hoops they made me jump through).

We submitted the 50 page document with everything asked for. Papers submitted, ya casi.

2 months later, they returned it because we used "drenaje" instead of "sangha." So we fixed it and sent it back the next day.

Ya casi.

2 months later, they need clarity on a couple different words 2 pages later. This time we had a lawyer friend look at it and give a response. We felt very confident to have a lawyer helping us speak. For sure now, ***Ya casi.***

After the next gut wrenching rejection, I personally went with my son to the municipality where it was insinuated that the project would move much faster if there was some money involved, which we were not going to take part in, so I felt that inescapable feeling of maybe never realizing the goal of building a kids park here. We thought about maybe just returning to the original plan of having the muni build the park.

But we weren't close at all. This was the end of 2022. Then the universe intervened with a chance meeting.

Some members of the association met the mayor at an event and called me. I ran over, introduced myself, and explained what we were trying to do. He looked at me and said, "You'll have permission next week."

Back in the game.



Ya casi.

The Association kept the project afloat and the dream alive. This was the tangible moment when the park became of dream of a small committee, to a community project of the Association. Without the Association, the project would have died.

I am also happy to report that the mayor is a man of his word. While we still had to go through the tedious process getting all necessary signatures and approvals, 11 months later, we finally had permission to build.

The committee celebrated! The Association celebrated and we all said, "***Ya casi.***"

Then things started moving. We secured water. We held a fundraiser. We brought in a backhoe and began clearing the land. We redirected the rain runoff until the backhoe literally got stuck in the mud. So we shifted focus and brought in 4 trucks of fill and created the pads for the rancho and bathroom.

There was this feeling of relief, "finally."
When I went to sleep at night, I could envision the park.

As we went to build the first retaining wall, we hit a very hard wall.

Our volunteer engineer dropped a truth bomb that the plans we used to get approval were nowhere near detailed enough to actually build from. His solution? Design as we go.

We decided that was not a good idea. We needed the actual plans.

I take 100% responsibility for this obstacle because I knew that the plans were ridiculously basic, but I wasn't focusing on anything but getting the project through the permission process. This was another setback but at least we had the permission to build.

Learning more from this error, we decided to stop relying on volunteers to do professional jobs and so at the end of 2024, we hired our first architect.

Twelve months of design work later, meeting every month or two to tweak the design, we had something incredible.

Ya casi.

We took the plans to seven contractors.

After 4-5 months waiting to get the quotes, they came back: \$336K to \$650K.

That is where we are now. We are working on redesigning and simplifying it to cut costs without losing the heart of the project. We are trying to get the final cost to a maximum of \$250,000

Ya casi.



We still have over \$31,000 in the bank from all the donations large and small over the past 2 years. We have spent about \$8300 earth moving and architectural plans over the past 2 years as well. All the money is being used responsibly. Every dollar is accounted for and I would be happy to go over the entire budget with anyone who wants precise details.

This started as a passion project.

Now it feels more like an endurance project that I didn't fully understand when I started.

There have been moments where I've wondered if I should keep going or pass it on. Maybe I've taken it as far as I can.

Because the truth is, this has been one of the most challenging things I've ever done.

Not the work, but the unknowns, the delays, the constant shifting, and the reliance on people who mean well but don't always follow through.

My lesson from working with volunteers is they say yes, you give them space because they're busy, you check in a week later, they promise it's coming...then another week goes by, and silence.

I am grateful for all the lessons that I have learned along this journey, all the mistakes I've made, and all the celebrations and disappointments.

After every step forward, we would say,

Ya casi...

And every time, another obstacle appeared.

But here we are.

We are finishing the third round of designs. We are closer than we've ever been. And soon we'll be ready to invite you to help us bring this to life.

This next phase is going to take all of us.

We are going to need to raise over \$200,000 to bring this park to life.

So if you've read this story and felt something...

If you've ever said, "This would be amazing for Playa Grande" ...

If you want your kids to have a place to play, connect, and grow...



Get ready to be part of this.

We are going to be calling on this community in a big way.
Donations. Connections. Fundraising ideas. Sponsors. Energy.

Whatever you have to give, there is a place for you in this.

Because this park will not be built by a committee or an association.
It will be built by a community that decides to show up.

We're almost there.

Ya casi,

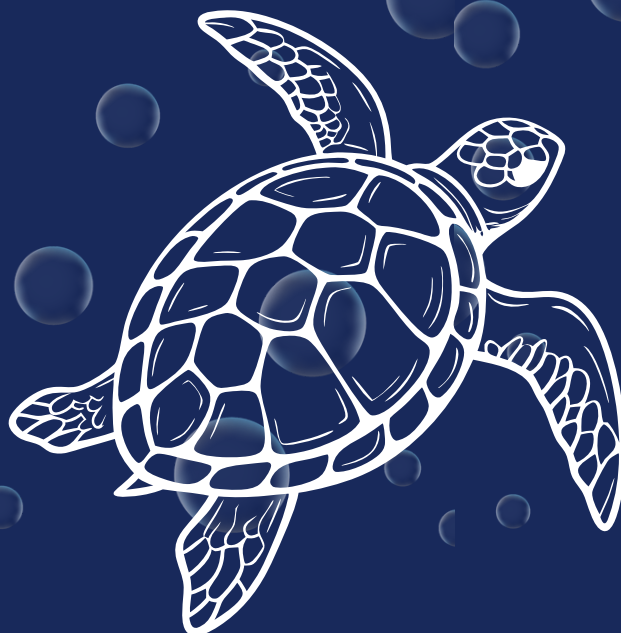
Matthew



This committee is integrated by **Mathew Laskowski, Felipe Volio, Alex Bidorini, and Federico de Mezerville.**

Fundraising efforts will be in junction with the Sidewalk Committee under the campaign **JUNTOS SOMOS GRANDE!** Pedestrian mobility and a place for our kids to play and gather as a community are both projects that resonate as one to keep our community united and safe.

If you have any questions regarding the Children's Park, please contact: matthewlaskowski@gmail.com



APGS ROAD SAFETY COMMITTEE

PAVING THE WAY TO A SAFER PLAYA GRANDE WITH SIDEWALKS!

Our most urgent and impactful current project is the construction of sidewalks throughout Playa Grande – along with the construction of The Children’s Park.. For too long, our beautiful community has lacked safe pedestrian pathways, forcing residents, children, pets, and visitors to navigate busy roads shared precariously with vehicles and speedy construction machinery.

WHY SIDEWALKS NOW?

- **Unrivaled Safety:** Protects our children, families, pets, and all pedestrians from traffic hazards.
- **Enhanced Accessibility:** Creates an inclusive environment for strollers, wheelchairs, and everyone to move freely.
- **Reduced Dust & Mud:** Improves air quality and cleanliness, especially during dry and rainy seasons.
- **Increased Property Value:** Enhances the desirability and livability of our neighborhoods.
- **Fosters Community Connection:** Encourages walking, biking, and outdoor interaction, strengthening our community bonds.



JOIN US IN BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE!

This committee (**Oscar Venegas, Fernando Ortuño, Anne Roberts, Sebastian Artiñano, Steven Molina, and Leandro Fernandez**) has been in talks with politicians, public officials, and government entities to secure allies who will support us with the legal sidewalk construction project in Playa Grande. **MOPT** made their way to Playa Grande last week of March to work on the inspection. The agreement draft is in final stages and it is a collaboration as follows:

*The PG community (**APGS**) raises the funds for the construction.

***MOPT** signs the permits and supports with providing most of the materials.

***CONAVI** grants the maintenance.

We are joining forces with The Children's Park Committee to fundraise as one through the **JUNTOS SOMOS GRANDE** campaign. A special thanks to **Eugenia Barth** who has been donating all the proceeds of **Alma Pilates** Studio and Jiu Jitsu to this project, believing in its importance from the start.

The success of the sidewalk project and all our initiatives hinges on the collective support of our neighbors. Your involvement, no matter how big or small, makes a profound difference. Let's collaborate to transform Playa Grande into an even safer, more walkable, and sustainable paradise for generations to come.

Asociación Playa Grande Sostenible Email: info@playagrande.org

More Information & Get Involved: <https://www.playagrande.org>



PG GREEN CURTAIN PROTECTION COLLABORATION

The green curtain is one of the phenotypes responsible for the scenic beauty of Playa Grande, characterizing its wide desolate and green coastline. It is of great ecological importance due to:

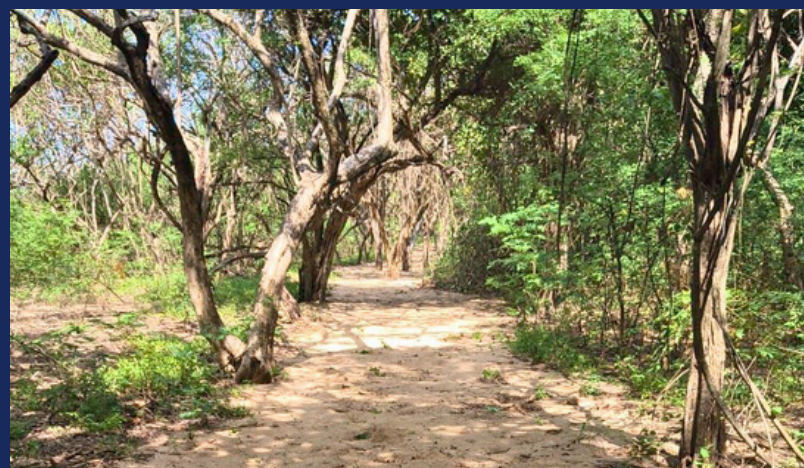
- **It protects the dune as a nesting site for sea turtles.**
- **It is a biological corridor of coastal species such as birds, iguanas, crabs, among others.**
- **It reduces sonic and light pollution directed towards the beach.**
- **It mitigates erosion and the effects of climate change (high tides, strong winds).**

The coastal vegetation system is part of the Las Baulas Marine National Park, but it requires the control of everyone to protect it from potential deforestation due to forest fires and future development in seek of personalized beach access trails.

In support of the coastal reforestation and restoration plan of the ADE Ambiente de Playa Grande, SINAC, Mi Bosque and Costas Verdes we protect the "green curtain" with a firebreak that runs parallel to the beach along the 50-75 meter line between The Taco Star to Casa Verde, Palm Beach Estates (2.5km).

This project requires everyone's commitment to maintain it if we want to continue enjoying it. We appreciate your support and collaboration in keeping the trail clear. For more information, visit:

<https://www.playagrande.org/proteccion%20de%20la%20cortina%20verde>



1% COMMUNITY FUND

FONDO COMUNITARIO

ASOCIACIÓN
PLAYA GRANDE
SOSTENIBLE

The main idea behind 1% is to minimize local donor fatigue by giving clients and visitors the opportunity to contribute through their purchase of goods and services. This fund is open to businesses abroad and can serve as a source of responsible marketing as well. It consists of adding a 1% "tax" to the market price of your product or service and transferring that amount to APGS for community initiatives.

Thanks to our valued members of 1% Community Fund for their support and belief it: **Onda, Villas Kalei, Señorita Casitas, La Caracola Experience, Festoon Salon and Eco Art.**

Join the fund or for more information email info@playagrande.org or visit: <https://www.playagrande.org/en/negocios>



RELEVANT LINKS

APGS – Our story: who we are, what we do, and why we do it.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/123p-Bqw0mamTqVoSusqAwiQHjicBz4ecNAyPX1r7-7g/edit>

IMPORTANT CONTACTS:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1-D4Xk3jMd8qzj7kdHozq48uLvgtNcTdBlt3n27ZZyw/edit?usp=drivesdk>

PG GROUP CHATS:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/10aE_sa1cZgh39sZnGYyw9ZmQ78Chgrupwu7URlxpRFO/edit?usp=drivesdk

Thank
you

www.playagrande.org