



Mary Corral and Evelyn Mercantini visited Guatemala in July 2009 with a TEACH delegation and rode the “pony express” to the elementary school at Las Quineles.

SO YOU THOUGHT THE PONY EXPRESS WAS GONE

By David Megel

No, this isn't a rodeo or a polo game. What you are looking at is a mounted cavalcade of ten setting out to visit one of the newest TEACH schools. This was the last leg of a journey that started out from the Guatemalan town of Puerto Barrios on the shores of the Bay of Honduras on a Saturday morning last summer to visit the village of Quineles.

The last weeks of July 2009, a delegation of the “Friends of TEACH” visited nine of the eleven programs that TEACH supports. Most of the villages we visited could be reached quite simply by van or boat. The trip to Las Quineles, however, requires a bit more determination. It begins by climbing into the back of a truck and traveling for about an hour through banana and palm oil plantations over, at times, some bumpy roads. The truck goes as far as the banks of the Las Quineles (The Canals) river where you scramble down its banks into a canoa (canoe or launch) for a cinco minuto (5 minute) ride. The last 30 minutes you travel a caballo (on horseback) beside arroz (rice) paddies and maiz

(corn) fields. I hope that while reading this article you are learning a little Spanish in preparation for your own trip with a TEACH delegation sometime soon.

You may think that in traveling to Las Quineles, we were pushing our troop through exercises beyond the range of their ages and abilities. But before setting out on this pony ride we voted on which of the villages to visit. Las Quineles won 10 yeas and 0 nays.

Some 20 families live in this village, about 95 men, women and children, working the fields and herding the cattle. This year is the first year the children of Las Quineles have ever had an opportunity to attend school. They greeted us with songs and recitals in Spanish and English. The parents expressed great joy in the skill with which their teacher, Michael Angel, teaches their children. Presently the school is a single thatch-covered, open-air shelter. But plans are afoot to build a new school this fall and have it completed for the school opening in January 2010.

OPENING THE DOORS OF A NEW TEACH SCHOOL

By Anne Larin

The administration of a TEACH school in the mountains of Guatemala is alarmingly simple. There are no receptionists. There are no school bus stops. There are no snow days to worry about — only a deluge of rain from time to time, a torrent that may dampen a student's math assignment. There are few, if any, truancies. There are no principals in the one room primary schools. There are, of course, parents anxious that their children are studying hard and doing their homework assignments. And there are active parent/teacher associations and trained, dedicated teachers. Finally there are enthusiastic, eager young scholars in whom parents place their hopes for a bright future for their community.

How does all of this happen without legislation or programs such as "No Child Left Behind?" It begins with the strong desire of a Mayan community to provide a better life for their children. In the northeast section of Guatemala, along the Rio Dulce River and into the surrounding mountains, things are beginning to change. The news is spreading among small villages: TEACH will struggle to help you build a village school and provide a qualified teacher.

Olger Pop is the representative of TEACH in the region. Visiting villages where no school has ever existed, he meets with the village leaders. He tells them that to have a school they must appoint at least three of their members to form a "local school board." The board addresses the community, "If we want to have a school in our village we need to make a contract with TEACH. We also must dedicate or build an adequate classroom. It can be a simple bamboo structure with a thatched roof, but it must have a desk for each student."

Most of the villages are remote and require the teacher to travel two to three hours on foot, by boat or truck, or perhaps even on horseback. So the villagers must also feed and provide lodging for the teacher while school is in session. School is conducted on a schedule of 22 days on and then 8 days off each month to allow the teacher a week home with his or her family. The students follow a curriculum that includes learning Spanish (the native language of the area is a dialect of Mayan called Q'eqchi' pronounced kek chee). The students are also taught the three R's, reading, writing, and arithmetic, plus cultural appreciation.

Discipline is hardly a problem; the adult community in the village is seldom far from the scene. But perhaps the strongest incentive to study, even among the youngest children in the school, is the respect of the parents and the very special teachers who are dedicated to their task and to the well being of their students.



A typical classroom scene from one of TEACH's new schools.

Guatemalan School Year Ends

The school year in Guatemala comes to a close at the end of October. Letters from the students will be arriving shortly telling about their experiences this year, describing plans for those graduating and expressing their hopes for a future that is made possible because of your generosity. Congratulations for the successes of this year to all of the students, their teachers, and of course, to all of you.

1st Annual Open TEACH Meeting

The Board of Directors held an open meeting Friday evening, August 28. Special thanks to Lena and John Restivo for hosting the gathering. More than 50 "Friends of TEACH" attended the meeting. It was an opportunity to thank contributors and sponsors for their continuous support and to present a brief financial report on our progress over the last few years. TEACH plans to continue holding such meetings annually.

The Aldea Editor: Linda Kullman

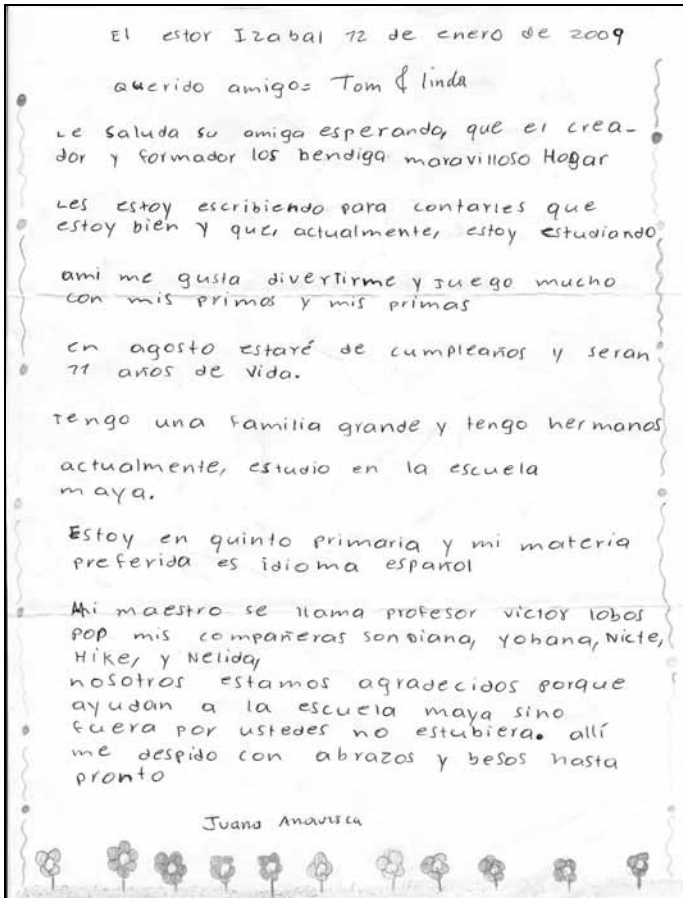
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Tom Kullman



El Estor, Izabal

July 13, 2009

Dear friends Tom and Linda Kullman,

I hope you and your family are well. I am writing because I want to know how you are.

I like to go to the lake, watch television, and go to school. I play with my classmates, whose names are Diana, Yohana, Hike, Nichte, Marcela, and Gisell. My teacher is Victor Lobos Pop. My favorite colors are pink, red, and sky blue. I like math.

We thank you for supporting the La Salle Maya School; it needs your help so much.

I say goodbye with kisses and hugs for you. God bless you! I hope you will come visit me some day.

Love,
Juana A.C.



SEND A CARD, SUPPORT TEACH

There are many reasons to send greeting cards: birthdays, anniversaries, weddings, holidays, and in memory of a relative or friend. Now, we have a wonderful way to send a very special card while making a donation to **TEACH** and spreading the word about our work. Use the form at the bottom of the page or the one at www.teacham.org to place your order.

FRONT OF CARD: An original photo taken on one of the **TEACH** trips to Guatemala will be affixed to the front of the card.

BACK OF CARD: Information about the vision, mission, and accomplishments of **TEACH**.

Here's How You Can Order Cards

EITHER - Place your order on the **TEACH** website (www.TEACHAM.org).
Payment will be by PayPal.

OR - Mail this form with your donation of \$25 or more per card to:
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Please make check payable to **TEACH**.

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Occasion: birthday wedding anniversary
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Send a gift card to:

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Address _____

A SPECIAL INSIDE MESSAGE:

In thanksgiving for the life of

_____ a donation has been sent to **TEACH**
(Toward Educating America's Children)

By _____

If you would like to learn more about TEACH visit teacham.org

OTHER SPECIAL MESSAGES:

In honor of your _____
(birthday, anniversary, wedding, etc.)

- OR -

As a special Christmas gift in your honor,
a donation has been sent to **TEACH**
(Toward Educating America's Children)

By _____

If you would like to learn more about TEACH visit teacham.org

A SUCCESS STORY

By Shari Zamorra

Why do we continue our TEACH work? Rossi Florinda Xol Chub, a 23 year-old teacher at a primary school in eastern Guatemala, is part of the story. Lagunita Salvador is a small community of forty families along the Rio Dulce River. Rossi and fellow teacher Enrique have 39 students, preschool through 6th grade. The school day is 7:00 am until 2:00 pm, five days a week, January through October.



Rossi, one of seven children, grew up in nearby Livingston and attended primary school there. Fr. Tom Moran, whose missionary work in the area has inspired our TEACH efforts, was an early friend and encouragement to Rossi. Rossi's father died when she was eleven and times were hard for her family, but education was a priority. She received a scholarship for middle school in Guatemala City. During her high school years in Puerto Barrios, as she prepared to be a teacher, she worked on weekends at a restaurant from early morning to 10:00pm.

Rossi has been teaching for five years, four of those at Lagunita. In addition to the primary children, on weekday afternoons she teaches village women to read and write. On Saturdays, she attends classes all day at the University of San Carlos, pursuing her goal of becoming a university professor of education. She has finished two years and has five and a half more to go.

Rossi is an incredibly creative teacher, as evidenced by the musical programs, poetry, paper doll chains, and cornhusk dolls in her classroom. She cares deeply for the children she teaches and is constantly advocating and searching for opportunities for them to continue their education. Determined to be educated, she is an inspiration and role model for her pupils. Her example of hard work shows them the way forward.

Rossi has come this far because people believed in her and encouraged her, especially in her early years. This is our TEACH work. We support the Guatemalan families and their children in their strong desire for education. Many more children like Rossi are waiting.

DID YOU KNOW???

- If you purchase Verizon internet, cable or phone service and mention your favorite charity, Verizon will make a \$25 or \$50 donation to that charity on your behalf. Please remember TEACH if you are changing your telephone, television or internet provider.
- TEACH has available a variety of special occasion "alternative giving cards." On occasions such as birthdays, anniversaries, or weddings, the card tells the recipient that you have made a gift to TEACH in their honor or in memory of a friend or family member. Full information is in this issue of *The Aldea*.
- Twice a year a group of sponsors and other friends visit TEACH programs in Guatemala, usually in January and July. Traveling in a group of ten or twelve, they experience a mission organization in action, visit TEACH schools, see the beauty of Guatemala, and learn about Mayan culture. The 12 day trips include airfare, local transportation, and lodging for about \$1,000. Plan to join us on a future trip for a special journey of discovery.

The vision of TEACH is to help empower Maya communities to achieve greater social and economic self-sufficiency through opportunities for education while respecting their cultural norms.

Yes, I would like to be a TEACH Sponsor

Please Ask a Friend To Be a Sponsor of TEACH. \$30 a Month (\$360 a Year) Will Keep a Child in School.

I'll sponsor:

- Boy Girl in primary grades
 Boy Girl in middle school
 The Semuy Basico Middle School

I have enclosed a check in the amount of \$ _____.

I cannot be a sponsor now, but I am enclosing a donation of \$ _____.

Name _____

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E-mail Address _____

Make all checks payable to TEACH

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TEACH will never share your name or personal information with other organizations.

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