



The Aldea (village)

Fall/Winter 2022

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Empowering Guatemalan children through education.

Chair's message

THIS LITTLE LIGHT OF MINE (OURS), WE'RE GONNA LET IT SHINE

By Shari Zamarra

In this season of darkness, as I think of TEACH, the lyrics of this song occur to me and swirl around in my head. In our world, there is an abundance of darkness when we hear the news. When I hear of girls denied an education and rights of women trampled on, I am sad.

A priority and a concern of ours in our TEACH work is the education of girls. Even though there is still work to be done, we are happy that this is possible in Guatemala and it is a relatively good situation, compared to some other countries.

Joining our TEACH family is a very new future student, Shari Esmeralda, born Oct. 7, 2022, the daughter of Pablo Cal Xol and his wife Candy Rosalina. Siblings Jean

Alexis, Maybelin, and Darlyn welcomed her enthusiastically. Pablo teaches at our middle school in Tameja. Shari is a light in the darkness, a candle that will shine bright. One candle is lit but when it is joined by many others, they become a unified light, a beacon of hope – stronger, and more beautiful. This is Good News.

Another beacon of light is the community of El Naranjal. We encountered them in February 2020, when they asked for help in paying their primary

TEACH is 20 years old in 2023!

Can you believe it? Plans are underway for an Anniversary Party in the spring. Our new challenge: Add 20 new sponsors to celebrate 20 years. Can you help? Tell a friend!



A future student, Shari Esmeralda, born Oct. 7, is the daughter of Pablo Cal Xol and his wife Candy Rosalina. Siblings are Jean Alexis, Maybelin, and Darlyn. Pablo teaches middle school for TEACH.

school teacher. They had done an excellent job of organizing and furnishing a school and had done everything required for government approval. They just needed one more year of support, which we were able to give with the help of a partner. They have completed a successful year and won't need us next year. We got them over the hump!

This is the work of TEACH, together with our partners here and in Guatemala. The light of education for girls and boys is growing stronger, improving the lives of families, of communities, and of the entire country. It is long, slow work, but we persist. We are most grateful for all the ways you support our work. We wish you and your family the light of grace during the holidays.

INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS FOR TEACH STUDENTS INCLUDE ROOF WORK

By Fred Walker

TEACH's overarching goal is to respond to unmet educational needs in remote and impoverished areas of Guatemala. Providing a good learning environment for the students in our supported schools and facilities is one of our major objectives. This means adequately lit classrooms, clean water, sanitary school kitchens, and WiFi access where possible. Generous donations from individual supporters, religious institutions, and innovative fund-raising activities have made it possible to provide funding for several infrastructure projects that directly impact the lives of our students in rural Guatemala.



Badly needed repairs have been made to student dorms at the Institute of San Pablo.

TEACH has supported the Institute of San Pablo (INSPA) in the community of Tamagas since 2004. This is an internado, or boarding facility, for students who live in remote villages where they have no access to a school. The students board here at INSPA during the week in dormitories and attend schools locally. In February 2022, TEACH received a detailed request for \$7,000 for a host of urgently needed repairs to both the girls' and boys' dorms and a new roof over the laundry area. We appealed to our sponsors and donors for funds, and they responded in a spirit of tremendous generosity. Thus we were able to fully fund these urgently needed repairs. I am pleased to report that the boarding students at INSPA now reside in a greatly improved environment.

We are confident these infrastructure improvements, made possible by your continuing generosity and support, will afford our supported students an enhanced living and learning environment. For this we are very grateful to all of you.

Fred Walker is Treasurer for TEACH.



A new roof was recently built for the laundry area near dormitories in Tamagas.

We have funded numerous infrastructure projects in Guatemala over the years, but I will address only those completed during 2022.

We received a request from the village of Semuy, to fund the installation of solar panels to power the WiFi/internet system and to provide lighting for the computer classroom at the middle school of San Antonio Maria Claret. This project was funded with \$1,040. All systems are up and running to advantage of the entire community.

In mid-2022, Semilla de Esperanza y Amor, one of our supported schools in a rural area near Antigua, suffered a catastrophic collapse of their well. This meant no potable water for the students. TEACH responded rapidly and provided \$1,300 to repair the well. The students now have potable water to drink and for washing, and the kitchen has clean water for preparing meals for the children.

OUR MISSION

The mission of **TEACH** is to actively respond to the schooling needs of underserved children, in Mayan communities in Guatemala.

CRITICAL MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS OF STUDENTS, ADULTS ADDRESSED

By Blanca Lysmenia Flores Cortes
and Christine Chen Zinner

Recognizing that mental health is just as critical as physical health, Semilla de Esperanza y Amor recently implemented a mental health program. The program is for students (from early childhood, through adolescence) along with caregivers and parents. The school hopes that incorporating the mental health program into the curriculum will help students learn and tend to their emotional needs through a range of services, including preventive measures and intervention where needed.

The mental health program includes having a school psychologist review and assess the learning processes in the school setting. These specialists know what can enhance a learning environment, and when intervention efforts might be needed with individual students. Psychologists can offer a range of helpful recommendations, from preventive care ideas, to suggested interventions for students who might have been flagged for learning difficulties. Applying their knowledge of various developmental



A student holds up flash cards to learn about taste, sight, and touch senses. The mental health program at Semilla includes having a school psychologist review and assess the learning processes in the school setting.

stages and educational milestones, psychologists can identify ways a child can manage their learning difficulties appropriately and effectively. They can also sensitively and carefully assess whether modifications may be needed to address learning challenges.

All of these functions are done collaboratively with teachers through ongoing dialogue, to identify a student's strengths and weaknesses. In addition to interventions and preventive care, psychologists can also help students plan and develop activities that optimize their vocational choices and facilitate sound decision-making.

Semilla de Esperanza y Amor staff are excited about the new mental health program and are hopeful that improving the mental health of families will also have multiplying effects of improving living conditions and their overall quality of life.

Blanca Lysmenia Flores Cortes is the founder and former principal of Semilla de Esperanza y Amor. Christine Chen Zinner is a TEACH sponsor and volunteer.



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LET'S GET THE WORD OUT ON SOCIAL MEDIA

We are thrilled to welcome a new volunteer to the TEACH family, Chris Zinner. Among other activities, Chris has offered to help us reinvigorate our Facebook page as well as get TEACH involved in other social media outlets, such as LinkedIn, Twitter, and Instagram. The goal is to get the word out to more people about the important work TEACH is doing through these social channels.

How can you help?

1. Go to the existing TEACH Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn pages and "like" and "follow" them.
2. As you see postings in your feeds, reach out to your friends/connections. The more engagement we get on our postings, the Facebook algorithm will show our content to a broader audience.
3. Write a review on the Facebook page. If you are a sponsor or a donor, write a positive review on the work TEACH does and how all of the sponsor funding goes directly to the children's schools and institutions. This will give potential sponsors/donors confidence in contributing to TEACH.
4. We are also busy building out a team of people who will manage all of this by creating content and managing the posting of that content. If you know of anyone who has interest and availability and who enjoys writing, making videos, or who is social media savvy, please ask them to be in touch.

For any questions or ideas about our social media presence, contact Chris at 415-225-8104 or chris_zinner@yahoo.com.

STEP UP FOR 20

Sometimes we all need a step up in life. For the last 20 years, TEACH has been stepping up to give underserved Maya children of Guatemala a step up through education. In celebration of TEACH's 20th anniversary in 2023, will you step up to sponsor a child and give them a step up?

Help us share hope through:

- 20 more sponsored children
- 20 computers
- 20 scholarships
- 20 new volunteers
- 2,000 followers on Facebook
- \$20,000 for special projects

20 more years of helping kids get a step up through education. How many more lives could we change through education?

To find links to TEACH's social media properties, visit our website <http://www.teacham.org> and click on the icons at the bottom of any page.

Help TEACH to #StepUpFor20

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

Make all checks payable to **TEACH**

Mail to: Toward Educating America's Children
P.O. Box 188
Burke, VA 22009



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

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

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

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (H) _____ (Other) _____

E-mail address _____

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