



The Aldea (village)

Fall/Winter 2023

Issue No. 38

Empowering Guatemalan children through education.

Chair's message



At the property-signing ceremony, from left: Victor Xol, Director of the Educational Center; Marcos Pachan Chocoj, land seller; Christian Brother Welfred Ruíz, of La Salle El Estor; Javier Cap Tiul, legal representative of the Semuy Community Institute and buyer on behalf of the institute; Edvin Sagastume, general administrator of Fe y Alegría Guatemala.

FAITH AND JOY – MAKING THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE

By Shari Zamorra

For 20 years, with *faith* as our base, TEACH has worked with partners and tried to listen to the people we serve in our mission to support education for their children. In 2008, TEACH joined with the Claretian Missionary Fathers of Central America and the community of Semuy to begin a middle school, high in the mountains. San Antonio Maria Claret

Educational Center is named for the Claretian founder. It is sometimes known as the Institute.

For 15 years through many changes, TEACH has invested in the education of hundreds of students and also in infrastructure projects, many of those funded by St. Mary of Sorrows, in Fairfax, Va. Late in 2022, an opportunity for another partner came to our attention through one of our other schools.

See SEMUY, Page 3



MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS LOVE THEIR 15 NEW LAPTOP COMPUTERS

Here is a letter from Pablo Cal Xol, principal of Basico Tameja, in Tameja Village, Livingston Izabal, dated Sept. 10, 2023:

Dear TEACH,

Please receive a fraternal greeting, and I wish you good success in each of your activities.

Yesterday the Tameja middle school students received the computers sent by TEACH. On behalf of the educational community of the NUFED Basico Level of Tameja, students, teachers, and parents, we express our gratitude to TEACH for the donation of 15 laptop computers.

TEACH made this project possible. It is a major benefit for the Tameja students and other students from neighboring communities who are studying at the Tameja Institute.

Thank you from all students who attend daily, with these technological resources we will continue

to improve innovation and knowledge for young students. They can focus a lot on basic computer knowledge. We are imparting meaningful learning for young people. The students were very excited to receive the new computers.

Greetings,
Pablo

OUR MISSION

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



FUN COMING IN 2024 MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

- Family Bingo, Saturday evening, Feb. 4, St. Mary of Sorrows, Fairfax, Va.
- Annual TEACH Trip to Guatemala, Feb. 29 – March 14. Travelers invited.
- Anniversary Party, Saturday evening, April 6, St. Mary of Sorrows, Fairfax, Va.

TEACH's 20th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION, APRIL 6th, NEEDS VOLUNTEERS

Is your 2024 calendar marked for Saturday, April 6 at 6:30 p.m. for TEACH? The TEACH 20th Anniversary Celebration will be in Farrell Hall at St. Mary of Sorrows, 5222 Sideburn Rd., Fairfax, Va. We'll have wonderful food, drink, and music for everyone.

There also will be a silent auction and information about all of the schools TEACH supports. We hope you will make plans to attend, bring a friend, and wear Guatemalan attire if you'd like.



And, would you please consider being on an event

planning committee? If you'd be willing, contact Dianne Blais at 703-830-1998 or e-mail her at DianneBlais@aol.com.

The TEACH Board of Directors would like to have chairs (and members) for the following committees:

- Event Invitations, Communications, Publicity
- Food & Beverages
- Entertainment
- Exhibits/Displays, Information Tables, Photo Screening, Table Centerpieces, Signage, Other Decorations
- Supplies & Equipment
- Raffle or 50/50, Silent Auction
- Volunteers (Set Up, Set Down, Check In, Accept and Provide Receipts for Donations, Food & Beverage Table Oversight) Could need separate set of volunteers to help with Raffle, 50/50, and Silent Auction.
- Program (both the schedule of evening events & speakers and the printed program).

And there are probably more components or major tasks that we need! If you have any ideas/suggestions or can help in any way, contact any member of the TEACH Board, or Dianne Blais at 703-830-1998.

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

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.

U.S. tax deductible EIN 05-0521491

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 _____

SEMUY

Continued from Page 1

Fe y Alegria (Faith and Joy), an international Jesuit organization, works with the Guatemalan government. In 2023, they began some funding for Semuy teachers to provide schools in 57 rural areas, with the enthusiastic support of the community. Soon it was obvious that a new, larger school was needed and some nearby land was available. Negotiations began and continued throughout the school year. TEACH was asked and agreed to donate money to help purchase the use of the land for 25 years.

Fe y Alegria will run the school, and TEACH will continue to support a girls' dormitory and to offer scholarships for Semuy students to attend high school.

It is with great joy and a leap of faith that we announce the agreement signed on Nov. 10, 2023 between Fe y Alegria and the Semuy community. It is with great pride that we release this school, while we remain a solid partner in the community.

"I am grateful for the opportunity to witness this dream come true, for the education of many



children and young people in the rural area of El Estor Izabal," said Brother Welfred Ruiz. "May God's providence continue to strengthen this valuable project. My best wishes for blessings to all TEACH partners who for many years have supported and made a presence with their contributions to the Semuy community."

Perhaps overshadowing this achievement is the sadness we feel for the hundreds of children suffering in areas of war. Guatemala has had its share of this suffering. We are called to make this world a better place in our little corner and are proud to do so with the support of dedicated volunteers and generous sponsors and donors. Indeed the lengthy, complex negotiations for this Faith and Joy project would not have been possible without our translators, Jeff Schneider, Jorge Perez, and Eduardo Padilla. Thank you.



Editor: Toni Maltagiati

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In Memoriam

Mike Abraham,
husband and helpmate
to TEACH Treasurer
Karen Abraham,
passed to Heaven on
July 28, 2023. Mike
stood behind and
supported Karen in
all of her TEACH
work. Please pray
for Karen and her
family.

