



AN OLDER STUDENT REFLECTS ON HER MANY EDUCATIONAL GIFTS

The following essay was written by a student at Maya Los Amates school. Her name is Berta, and she was asked to write about how **TEACH** has helped her.

How has my life been transformed by the assistance provided by **TEACH**?

It has been a very nice experience for me. I managed to enter the training center because I have a sister who also studies there. I come from a humble and Christian family; my father has a beautiful friendship with the sisters. Through that, my father managed to get me a **TEACH** scholarship, to study.

I entered the training center in 2018 when I was 13 years old. I almost wasn't able to study when I finished my sixth grade, because my parents did not have sufficient financial resources. Since my older sister was studying, resources were limited.

When I started I was very scared, but then I got used to it. I began to live very beautifully with my companions and also with the sisters, since they teach us many beautiful things — such as responsibility and respect. We also never lack Christian training.

I studied three years and my favorite subjects in class were mathematics, language and accounting even though these subjects were challenging. In computer science, it was my "spark" and I was the first to finish. In 2018-2019, typing was also studied. This helped me learn to use and write fast on the computer.



Older students continue to learn values and skills, even if they cannot pay for classes.

From there I discovered my talents.

A thousand thanks to the **TEACH** project, for its financial support. I am who I am now because of your help. My life has changed a lot.

Now I dream of growing up; I want to be a fulfilled person and work to help my family and be useful in society. At the moment I am studying the career of accountant/management at the Maya Los Amates school, thanks to the sisters who have won me another scholarship. I am always grateful to **TEACH**, because they have prepared me and opened doors for my future. I am happy, because **TEACH** helped me a lot.

There are many girls like me with a lack of financial resources. Thanks to **TEACH** and the sisters, some of us managed to fulfill our dreams, and I am very grateful to you. God bless you!

With love, from Berta.



SAVE THE DATE! BINGO, SILENT AUCTION SET FOR APRIL 2, 2022

The St. Mary of Sorrows Council 8600 Knights of Columbus will hold its 5th Bingo and Silent Auction Fundraiser to support **TEACH** on Saturday, April 2, 2022. It will be held in Farrell Hall at St. Mary's, at 5222 Sideburn Road, Fairfax, Va.

Doors open at 6 pm, and play is from 6:30 until 9 pm. The cost is \$10 for two cards. Food items and baked goods will be available for purchase. Donations of items for the silent auction, corporate table sponsors, and restaurant and business gift certificates for bingo prizes are greatly appreciated. For more information, please contact Karen Abraham at 703-978-1147, or send an email to her at board@teach.org.

Chair's message

GOD IS GOOD – ALL THE TIME!

By Shari Zamarra

A friend who is a wise woman recently reminded me of this truth. But sometimes it is so hard to see when our world has so many challenges. As our minds and hearts turn to gratitude during this season, our **TEACH** world shows much evidence that God is good – all the time. The state of **TEACH** is good, and we are grateful.

We are happy to share news with you, the people who make our work possible. Our big news, which you can see on this page – Sydenstricker United Methodist Church joins our **TEACH** family – brings so much joy! But at the same time, our hearts break for Ernesto Coc Xol, and his wife Imelda, as they grieve the passing of their young son David. Ernesto and Imelda are teachers at our Semuy school. Please pray for them.

Teachers Imelda and Ernesto Coc Xol, shown here in a wedding photo, mourn the loss of son David, who had health troubles since birth.



Our teachers have been able to complete the school year in some fashion with study guides and video conferencing, but it has not been easy. There are many hopes for a better situation in 2022. Bonds and connections with our partners stay strong. Julieta Xol Cuz is now our coordinator in the Rio Dulce region, replacing Olga Ba Caal. We hope to visit our sites again in February 2022. Travelers are welcome.

Mission appeals were conducted remotely in the Diocese of Erie, Penn. and the Archdiocese of Hartford, Conn. Generous people contributed to **TEACH**, even though we could give them only a small sense of our work.

Through scholarships, we are able to continue support for **TEACH** students as they advance to high school and to the university. This year, we celebrate Evelyn Johanna Chocoj Shiol's completion of three years of study for a nursing technician degree. This accomplishment has been possible because of a generous donor.

I continue to believe, as I hope you can see: God is good – all the time!



From left, **TEACH** Treasurer Fred Walker, Pastor Don Jamison, Board Chair Shari Zamarra, and Board Member Mary Walker gather at Sydenstricker United Methodist Church, in Springfield, Va.

METHODIST CHURCH PARTNERS WITH **TEACH** FOR SPONSORSHIPS

By Shari Zamarra

TEACH is happy to announce a new partnership in Northern Virginia. For three years, Sydenstricker United Methodist Church (SUMC) in Springfield, Va., had been looking for a mission in Central America to support education. Through an inspired friend, the connection was made with **TEACH**, and seems a perfect fit. **TEACH** Board members spoke to the SUMC congregation on Oct. 24. Congregation members were asked if they would approve the sponsorship of a school and would consider sponsoring individual children. They said **yes!**

SUMC will sponsor a school in a poor neighborhood outside Antigua – Semilla de Esperanza y Amor (Seeds of Hope and Love). You may recall the feature article on Semilla from our spring/summer newsletter. Jeff Schneider will serve as the translator and contact with the SUMC Mission Committee Chair Tim Mertsoc. The many programs at Semilla will inform and inspire SUMC members. Prayer will connect the two communities.

More than 20 SUMC members will sponsor individual children and hopefully share all the news they receive with others. Letters will go back and forth between sponsors and children.

More evidence: God is good – all the time!

*Shari Zamarra is Board Chair for **TEACH**.*

LET THERE BE LIGHT—AND RUNNING WATER

INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS IMPROVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR STUDENTS, TEACHERS

By Fred Walker

Imagine your children or grandchildren trying to learn in a classroom with no electricity for lighting, or having their noon meal prepared in a kitchen with no running water. The classroom is bright only when the sun is shining. Water for preparing food, washing the dishes, or for washing one's hands must be drawn from a well and carried a quarter of a mile to the school.

Now picture classrooms with electric lighting and the adjacent kitchen and washing facilities with running water. Needless to say, the latter presents a much more favorable learning environment. TEACH's 2020-2021 infrastructure projects have helped make this possible.

The TEACH team that travels to Guatemala annually visits each of our supported projects, meets with the community leaders, and listens to their needs. After our last visit in 2019 — no visit in 2020 or 2021 due to Covid-19 — we received several requests. The ones which we were able to support were the installation of solar panels in the village of Lagunita Salvador, and installation of a water system and kitchen renovation for the primary school in the village of Creek de Cuatro Cayos.



This year the community of Lagunita Salvador received \$1,025 from TEACH to install a solar panel. This provides lighting within the school facilities and in the kitchen.

Both villages are located on tributaries of the Rio Dulce River in eastern Guatemala, where subsistence farming and fishing are the main sources of living.

Lagunita classroom lighting

TEACH has supported the community of Lagunita Salvador since 2003. We help pay a teacher's salary, provide three scholarships to deserving students, and provided funding for a toilet facility for the school. This year the community of Lagunita Salvador received \$1,025 from TEACH to install a solar panel. This provides lighting within the school facilities and in the kitchen. The teachers, students, and those preparing the student's meals now have proper lighting. The community coordinator writes that the Lagunita community, and the children, appreciate the contribution received and that the new lighting has been very useful for the school.

The community of Creek de Cuatro Cayos is another site which TEACH has supported for more than three years, providing funds to pay for a teacher and a nutrition package for the primary school children. In 2021, TEACH provided \$2,235 to repair and upgrade the school's kitchen, and \$1,000 for a water project.

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Editor: Toni Maltagliati

This newsletter is published two times a year by **TEACH** (Toward Educating America's Children) a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. EIN 05-0521491

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OUR MISSION

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

CREATIVE WAYS TO HELP TEACH, INSPIRE YOUR CHILDREN FOR CHRISTMAS

Many charities get a boost this time of year from generous people like you. Here are some ideas:

Matching funds. Please consider reaching out to companies to see what is possible. This could be relevant for your company, or those of your children and grandchildren. Many companies have these policies and connecting with them could be valuable for **TEACH**. We continue to appreciate your commitment to **TEACH**, and thank you in advance for

this assistance. Send contacts to us via email, at board@teacham.org.

Match a child or grandchild. For \$30 per month, Board Member Mary Walker would be happy to connect you with a child to sponsor who is similar in age for this learning opportunity. Email: walkermrb@aol.com.

Alternative gifts. For Christmas, birthdays, or in memory of a loved one. Email: board@teacham.org.

— **TEACH** Board of Directors



PROJECTS, From page 3

Both projects are complete. A new water storage tank and piping were installed, which furnishes clean running water to the school's kitchen and wash tubs, and the kitchen has been upgraded and refurbished.

This significantly upgrades the sanitary conditions in the kitchen, and enables the food preparers and servers to work in a much more favorable environment.

The local community contributed the labor to complete these worthwhile projects. All of these projects were made possible thanks to a tithing fund grant and the generosity of the



At left, a tank at Creek de Cuatro Cayos brings water, above, to the school, for cooking and cleaning.

parishioners of St. Mary of Sorrows, in Fairfax, Va.

Fred Walker is Treasurer for TEACH.

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

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 _____

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.

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