



The Aldea (village)

Spring/Summer 2021

Issue No. 33

Empowering Guatemalan children through education.

Chair's message

TOGETHER, WE ARE AN OCEAN

By Shari Zamarra

"Individually, we are one drop. Together, we are an ocean."

I came across this quote by Ryunosuke Satoro recently and realized it applies to **TEACH**. The news from the border can be overwhelming.



Middle schoolers' faces show hope, wonder, excitement, eagerness, and inquisitiveness. I only hope their desired futures come true.

The sight and stories of so many young people wanting to come to the U.S. touches my heart. It seems as though they are our kids. Why do they come? They are hoping for a better life. This hope is what we are giving our students with **TEACH** – hope for a better future for themselves, their families and their country.

But there are so many, how can our efforts matter? Just as in the starfish story, in which the person keeps scooping the dying starfish off the beach – “it matters for this one.” Your support for **TEACH** may seem like just one drop, but you are part of that ocean. Volunteers, partners, students, families, teachers – each does their part. Bishop Domingo Buezo of Izabal, Guatemala reminds us that drops like ours eventually fill the bucket.

I am inspired not to lose hope. Our efforts are more vital than ever. Your commitment and support make a world of difference. Important aspects of **TEACH** are that we are determined, and that we are always learning. Check out news from Semilla de Esperanza (Seeds of Hope) in this issue. To learn more about the typical life of a **TEACH** student, go to our website (www.teacham.org) and see the article from the Sacred Heart boarding facility in Quirigua; I found it interesting to share this with my teen granddaughter.

THANK YOU, MARIAH, SPONSORS, AND DONORS

The **TEACH** Board is in the process of developing a strategic plan, to address long-term goals and objectives. This is an extensive and time-consuming undertaking. As we continue, we must highlight the work of our volunteer facilitator and cheerleader, Mariah Gantz. Without her guidance, persistence and patience we would not be able to pursue this work. So “thank you” so very much, Mariah, for being that inspiration that makes this much-needed endeavor possible.

While this year has been especially challenging for fund-raising activities and outreach, we kept our projects funded during the pandemic. A “Big Thanks” to our faithful sponsors, generous donors, and a special thanks to our anonymous one-time donor. Also, we want to highlight one creative individual who established a “Go Fund Me” page on Facebook in honor of his father’s birthday. Thank you for making it possible for **TEACH** to continue our mission.

Join us on Zoom!

We invite our **TEACH** friends to join our next social gathering and/or Board meeting on Tuesday, June 15. The socializing begins at 6:30 pm, the meeting at 7. To attend, please send an email to us, at Board@teacham.org.

SEMILLA DE ESPERANZA Y AMOR, WITH SOME AID FROM TEACH, HELPS CHILDREN

By Blanca Lys Flores

Semilla de Esperanza y Amor is a nonprofit organization that aims to help the children of Guatemala. The school helps them get ahead, and thus tries to break the poverty and domestic-abuse cycles, and give them a better life.

Our school focuses on five fundamental pillars: education, health, housing, recreation, and food. **TEACH** has helped Semilla in



This pre-pandemic photo shows there is much enthusiasm at Semilla de Esperanza. Nowadays most school lessons are completed at home.

STUDENT PROFILE

Name: **Lucí**

Age: **11 years**

Grade: **4th**

Lucí was born in 2009. She has three brothers and two sisters, all between ages 7 and 24. Lucí is very attentive to her family, since she must care for her sisters and a niece. Her mother works daily from 4 a.m. until 9 p.m. Lucí gets up at 6 a.m. to prepare breakfast for her family. Then she cleans the house, washes the dishes, makes her bed, and sweeps the yard.

Despite all the responsibilities she has at her young age, Lucí wants to get ahead in her studies. She hands in her homework and is serious in her learning. In a short interview, Lucí told us that her dream is to be able to help people, especially women who suffer from abuse; she also wants to become a great nurse.

We, as part of a nongovernmental organization, are very proud of her dedication and love towards her family and her desire to get ahead and be a help to them.

—*Silvia Méndez, Lucí's teacher*



many ways for several years, such as giving the children psychological support, improvements to the building, and salaries for teachers and the cook.

I was the founder of Semilla de Esperanza y Amor, which began in 2007 in the village of San Mateo Milpas Altas. Thanks to the support of **TEACH**, the school has made significant progress and has helped the lives of many children since then.

For example, Covid-19 has had a major impact on our community, but we continue to help the children and young people and this is thanks to the trust and support of **TEACH**. During 2020 and 2021, while the Ministry of Education closed the schools, we worked with study guides, assigning homework at the beginning of the week and receiving it at week's end. Additional support was given to students online, or in person, for those unable to access the Internet. We also provided academic and psychological orientation.

Unfortunately, this pandemic has changed the lives of many families, including some who are part of our school.

We started the 2021 school year in a different way where parents, children, young people, and teachers work hand-in-hand, so that we can move forward together. We currently have students from 43 families. There are 74 pre-primary and primary-level children and 21 youngsters at the junior high level.

Blanca Lys Flores is the founder, and former principal, of Semilla de Esperanza.

OUR MISSION

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

TEACH: A RARE LOOK BEHIND THE SCENES OF OUR CHILD-FOCUSED CHARITY

By Fred Walker

We all like to think that TEACH is a well-organized, smooth-functioning organization, which it is. The Officers and Board of Directors are the “face” of the organization, but what you may not realize is that it takes a good many folks to manage and operate TEACH smoothly and effectively. Here are some key volunteer members who get little, if any, recognition, but each contributes immensely to our mission.

Pat Parr is our accountant; she works with the treasurer to ensure that our financial records are kept in accordance with accepted practices. Pat has maintained our financial records virtually since we were incorporated in 2002. She records all receipts and expenses on a monthly basis and prepares monthly balance sheets, and profit-and-loss



Pat Parr, our excellent accountant

statements. Then she prepares year-end reports, which are delivered to our professional audit firm for official audits every two years. The audits of our books have always been extremely positive, with no major deficiencies.

Pat and her late-husband, Harry,,

operated a successful garden and landscaping company in Clifton, Va. for many years prior to her retirement and is a vital part of TEACH.

Toni Maltagliati is the editor of this newsletter, “The Aldea.” She has been providing this invaluable assistance for several years, preparing the layout and design of each newsletter in addition to the actual editing. Once the articles have been approved by the marketing director and board chair, they are delivered to a commercial firm to print the final product. Toni has been working in the newspaper and policy-book



Toni Maltagliati, a valued editor

publishing fields for 40 years, and is retiring from her present writer-editor position, with U.S. Army Headquarters, in July.

Jorge Perez is a long-time TEACH translator and a vital volunteer. Jorge translates correspondence from TEACH board members to our various entities in Guatemala, and from Spanish to English correspondence from our Guatemalan colleagues. He also communicates via cell phone

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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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Jorge Perez, premier translator



Jeff Schneider, key translator, guide



Olga Ba Caal fills many key roles well

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with our Guatemalan partners from time to time, to resolve urgent issues when email is too cumbersome. Jorge served as a high-level Spanish language translator for the U.S. Government prior to his retirement.

Jeff Schneider is another of our key translators and provides similar services as Jorge Perez. In addition, he enables the transfer of funds from TEACH to schools and facilities in Guatemala.

Perhaps the most demanding service that he provides is that of a tour guide and translator during the visits TEACH contingents make to each of our supported sites in Guatemala. Jeff served in senior positions in the international banking community prior to his retirement.

Currently, he divides his time between his home in Peachland, B.C., Canada; Miami, Fla.; and Antigua, Guatemala.

Olga Ba Caal serves as a part-time TEACH staff person for sites

in the Rio Dulce River area.

She receives funds from TEACH and distributes the money, as directed by the treasurer, to pay teacher salaries and scholarship students' expenses, as well as managing the TEACH-funded infrastructure projects in her own community.

Olga also provides regular progress reports to TEACH. She is, indeed, a wonderful asset to TEACH.

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 \$ _____

Make all checks payable to TEACH

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

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

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (H) _____ (Other) _____

E-mail address _____

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

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