



The Aldea (village)

Spring/Summer 2018

Issue No. 27

Empowering Guatemalan children through education.

CHAIR'S MESSAGE: GIFTS FREELY GIVEN FILL MY HEART

By Shari Zamarra

As I reflect on our relationship with our **TEACH** partners and families, lines from a song come to mind:

*"All that we have and all that we offer,
Comes from a heart both frightened and free.
Take what we bring now and give what we need.
All done in His name."*

I have in my kitchen humble reminders of gifts received on **TEACH** trips – a bamboo pencil holder painted by a child at Los Quineles and a small ceramic turtle given by parents

at Sanabria. These keep our friends in Guatemala close to my heart.

Of course the gifts go in both directions. One could say that our gifts of money and time far outweigh gifts we receive, but think about the student letters, the smiles, the lessons learned, the leaps of faith, and much more. Who's to say that the exchange is unequal?

TEACH is in this time and place as a result of a gift from the Claretian Missionaries and our founders David and Anne. And because of your generous support.

May our hearts be filled with gratitude!

LIFE JACKETS ARRIVE FOR SANABRIA'S 'SCHOOL BOAT'

By Fred Walker

The previous issue of *The Aldea* related the story of the Sanabria Boat Project. To get to, and from, their primary school on the other side of the river, 25 children in Sanabria had to cross the wide and swift-flowing Rio Dulce in small dug-out canoes. They also had to contend with power boat traffic. It was not a safe way for them to get to school and home again.

Responding to a request from Sanabria parents, and with your financial help, **TEACH** sent the village \$5,500 to buy a boat with a 15HP outboard motor, that was large enough to carry 25 to 30 children. Shortly thereafter, we received photos of the children with their new "school boat," along with a detailed plan for the boat's usage. The boat was given the name "Barq Sanabria-**TEACH**."

Concurrent with the photos and utilization plan, we received a request for approximately \$1,200 for the purchase of life jackets. The article in the fall/winter 2017 newsletter featuring the boat project ended with the call: "All we need now are funds to help the village purchase 25 life jackets..." Your generous donations quickly came in and the money was promptly sent to Sanabria to purchase life jackets for the children.

When our **TEACH** travelers visited Guatemala this past February, we made a stop at Sanabria, where we were greeted



by the villagers again expressing their thanks for providing the boat *and* life jackets for the students. We arrived at Sanabria just in time to witness the children returning from school in their new boat "bus" and wearing their new jackets. Each child, with the exception of two new students waiting for the arrival of their jackets, had printed their names on their jackets, many of which hung down to the knees of the youngest children.

We cannot thank our generous donors enough for providing **TEACH** the capability to give these children a safe boat for transportation to and from their school, together with life jackets to further ensure their safety on the river.

*Fred Walker is treasurer for **TEACH**.*

TWO REFLECTIONS FROM A TEACH VISIT

By Ken Santucci

Humanity in Remote Izabal Guatemala

It's time to board the trucks for a long mountain ride to the Semuy School site. The rains have stopped and Luis is our driver. Luis owns a service vehicle shop and rents his four truck fleet. Our journey starts from the local town. Luis is familiar with the windy, narrow, single-lane dirt road, as well as the **TEACH** education program.

As the time passes and we begin to know each other, he tells me this story about one of the local students: A neighborhood girl was walking past his home, crying. She continued this the next day. Her grandmother had been paying her school tuition and then suddenly passed away. Now the girl had no money to continue her education. Luis gave her a little support. He was strict about her responsibility. His support grew as she responded. Soon Luis and his wife were giving this girl life training and other education, as if she was their own daughter.

I am impressed with this act of kindness and generosity in this land. And I realize that **TEACH's** encouragement of education has both direct and indirect benefits.

From Maya to Mars

As we hiked up a steep, wet, and muddy hill to a remote native Mayan village, my thoughts went to the similarity of this place to our planetary explorations. How ironic – the ancient Mayan civilization disappeared 2000 years ago and we don't know how that happened, but now we're exploring Mars to discover the formation of our galaxy.

Arriving in the Maya village of Dos Zapotillos, which benefits from educational support from **TEACH**, we are met by open-eyed, enthusiastic Maya children, happy and curious about our visiting delegation.

The villagers have only basic survival means; by our standards their lifestyle is primitive. External support to the children comes through the Christian Brothers and the USA **TEACH** operation.

When my next visit to this remote Maya village happens, my countrymen and women might be hiking on Mars. Maya to Mars – how magnificent to see God's hand on display!

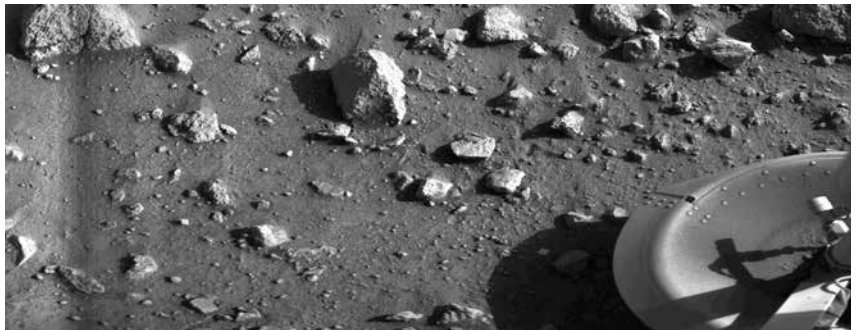
*Ken Santucci teaches video and digital technologies at the college level. This was his first **TEACH** trip.*



The author drives the long mountain ride to the Semuy School site.



The remote Maya countryside reminds the author of exploratory photos of Mars.



Taken by the Viking 1 lander shortly after it touched down on Mars, this image is the first photograph ever taken from the surface of Mars. It was taken on July 20, 1976. The primary objectives of the Viking mission, which was composed of two spacecraft, were to obtain high-resolution images of the Martian surface, characterize the structure and composition of the atmosphere and surface and search for evidence of life on Mars. (NASA image)

THANK YOU, AND SAVE THE DATE!



On April 7, 2018, **TEACH** board members and members of the Knights of Columbus Council 8600 hosted our third annual bingo event at St. Mary of Sorrows Church, in Fairfax, Virginia. This is a fundraiser for our organization, but more importantly it is an evening of games, comfort food, and fun.

The prizes for Bingo and the silent auction were donated by local restaurants and businesses. Again this year, we were very fortunate to fill Farrell Hall with friends of **TEACH** and avid Bingo fans! The games were accompanied by a silent auction with varied items to include art work, household items, and Guatemalan treasures, just to name a few.

This evening would not have been possible without the dedication of Don Mailki the Bingo coordinator, Carolyn LaRosa and her kitchen crew, and volunteers from **TEACH** and Knights of Columbus. Thank you, Gracias, and Bantiox go out to these remarkable and dedicated folks!

SAVE THE DATE: The next bingo fundraiser for **TEACH** will be held at St. Mary of Sorrows Church on Sat., March 23, 2019. Please plan on joining us to support **TEACH** while having a good time with friends and family.



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VIDEOS FROM OUR PROJECTS

Videos from **TEACH**'s February 2018 visit to Guatemala will soon be available for viewing on the **TEACH** website teacham.org. Recorded by Ken Santucci, who was a member of this year's visiting group, Ken's videos capture the group's strenuous and sometimes harrowing treks to **TEACH** villages. They also document the very heartwarming celebrations by villagers as they show their appreciation for the educational opportunities that **TEACH** is making available to them.

Ken has been editing his videos into brief segments that introduce viewers to **TEACH**'s mission and the beautiful people that **TEACH** supports in Guatemala. Ken is a **TEACH** volunteer and college professor of digital technologies. Ken's mission was to video-record **TEACH** supported communities and document **TEACH**'s oversight of its many projects.

These segments will soon be on display at teacham.org. The videos will enhance the website, which has recently been totally redesigned by Pat Vandersluis, **TEACH** volunteer and newest Board Member.

COMPUTER FUND REQUEST

Computers are vital part of our **TEACH** students' education. We have an excellent opportunity through our partner GSSG (Guatemalan Student Support Group) to provide our schools with refurbished laptop computers: \$150.00 will purchase one of these computers loaded with Spanish software. Can you help? You can do so by making a donation in any amount. Send a check to **TEACH**, P.O. Box 188, Burke, VA 22009, or contact us through our newly updated website: teacham.org. Your willingness to help is greatly appreciated.

OUR MISSION

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

THE 2018 TEACH VISIT TO GUATEMALA *By Shari Zamorra*

Nine people made the annual **TEACH** visit to Guatemala from February 2nd through the 16th. Travelers included Board Members Fred and Mary Walker, supporters Mary Jo Johnson, Vicki Rybicki, Gerry Strickland, Allison Walker, myself, and Jeff Schneider, who was our interpreter. Completing the group was volunteer Ken Santucci, whose mission was to create a video record of the visit. Jeff was recruited by David Greene to take on the visit tasks that David had previously handled. Board Vice-Chair Don Gantz recruited Ken, a college professor of video and digital technologies.



Three of these folks were making their first trip to Guatemala. Though averaging 69.5 years of age, the group mustered the energy to hike muddy roads, cross makeshift bridges and navigate challenging waters to visit 15 **TEACH**-sponsored sites and programs. These included schools, residences, an orphanage and three scholarship groups. You will be able to see the incredible and sometimes impossible situations that were faced and conquered by this resilient and brave group via videos which Ken is editing for the **TEACH** Web site. The group once again was assisted in Guatemala by friend José Gonzalez, who drove our van and photographed the trip.

One of the visit highlights for us was presenting our sponsored teachers and partners with polo shirts bearing our **TEACH** logo to “spread the **TEACH** brand.” We also got to see the young students from Sanabria arriving home from their school across the river. They were traveling in a **TEACH**-supplied boat, powered by a **TEACH**-supplied motor, and they wore bright orange life jackets paid for by supporters’

special donations.

We also saw the progress being made on school construction in Los Zapotillos funded by the St. Mary of Sorrows Parish Tithing Fund. We observed the operation of the very productive kitchen facility in San Pablo (formerly INSPA) which was also funded by St. Mary’s Tithing Fund. And we visited with two groups of high school scholars who are supported by GSSG (Guatemalan Student Support Group), a non-denominational charity incorporated in the State of North Carolina, and a **TEACH** partner. **TEACH** is, indeed, very versatile in meeting students’ educational needs – we listen for needs, and we manage and audit our efforts to meet those needs through our visits and our partners in Guatemala.

Through our annual visit we reconnected with old friends and excellent partners including the Christian Brothers of Central America and Bishop Buezo of Izabal, who invited me to speak at his Mass. I am very happy to report that the state of **TEACH** in Guatemala is very good – we are blessed! I invite our **TEACH** sponsors and supporters to consider joining us in a future visit.

*Shari Zamorra is Chair of **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
- 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 _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone(H) _____ (Other) _____

E-mail Address _____

*Make all checks payable to **TEACH***

*Mail to: Toward Educating America’s CHildren
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TEACH will never share your name or personal information with other organizations.

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