



The Aldea (the village)

Fall/Winter 2016

Issue No. 24

Empowering Guatemalan children through education.

CHAIR'S MESSAGE: HOW DO WE SAY 'THANK YOU' — LET ME COUNT THE WAYS

By Shari Zamarra

In November our thoughts turn naturally to gratitude, especially to you our sponsors, donors, and friends. Without you, there would be no **TEACH**. Many groups call for your donations; you choose **TEACH**. I'd like to tell you about other sources of gratitude.

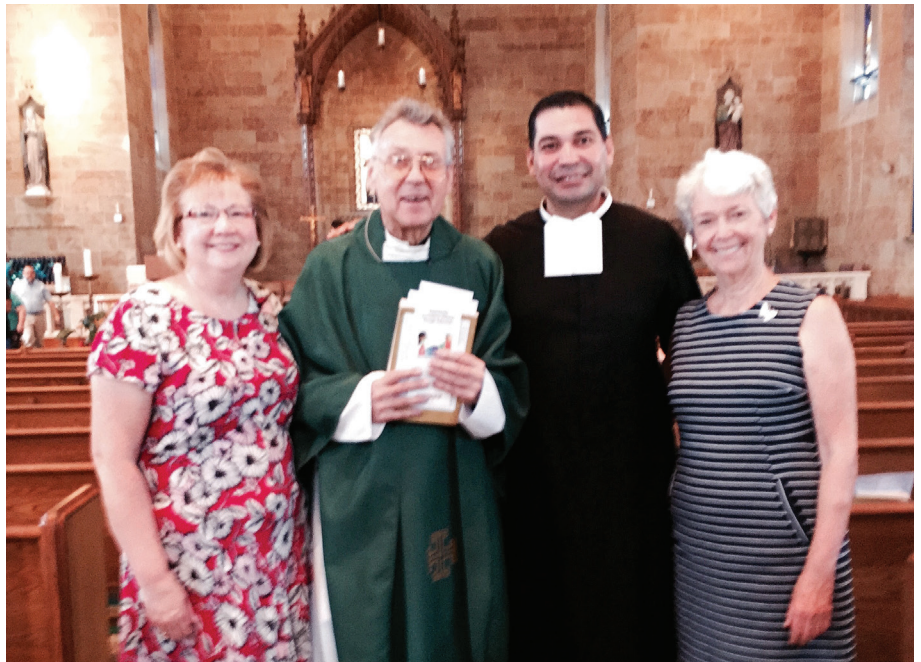
"Thank you for what you do for my country." How many times have I have heard this phrase spoken by Guatemalans? Countless!

Certainly, we hear it from our partners, teachers, children, and key people at all our **TEACH** sites. They express their gratitude in their smiles, small gifts, letters, and warm hospitality.

We find ourselves returning the thanks for their hard work and sacrifice — sometimes in incredible conditions — for our common goal of empowering Guatemalan children through education.

However, I have also heard the phrase spoken over and over in chance encounters with strangers both in-country and in the United States. It could be at an airport, a bus station, a party, a church — anywhere the subject of **TEACH** is raised. It is always spoken simply, softly, and respectfully — in the Guatemalan way.

Also, during the summer of 2016, **TEACH** was privileged to conduct fund-raising appeals in church parishes in New York, Chicago, and Colorado. We had the support of Claretian priests and Christian Brothers from Guatemala, and we were



*During an August fund-raising appeal to parishioners at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, in South Ozone Park, NY, from left to right, **TEACH** Board Member Karen Abraham, Father Berran, Brother Christian, and **TEACH** Board Member Pat White, enjoy some time together.*

graciously received by the people in these parishes.

These experiences remind me that the simple concept that education makes a better world is universally understood. This reflection motivates me to continue the work of **TEACH**. I share these thoughts with you, as **TEACH**ers, to emphasize our gratitude. If you are not yet a **TEACH**er, we invite you to join us!

LET US HELP YOUR GROUP!

Need a speaker for your group? Our Board members are happy to share information about the work **TEACH** does for young students in Guatemala, like the one at right. We can talk from 10 minutes to 2 hours, depending on your needs. Just send an email to us at: board@teacham.org



TEACH SPONSORS 3RD ANNUAL TEACHER WORKSHOP IN JULY

By Shari Zamorra and Shawn Lowe

As **TEACH** carries out its mission of “actively responding to the schooling needs of underserved children in Maya communities in Guatemala,” we realize that our teachers are vital to our success. In July 2016, David Greene organized and conducted our third workshop for teachers. For each workshop our goals are: to create bonds between teachers, to enrich their professional experience, to remind them of their value to **TEACH**, and to get their input on **TEACH** plans and challenges.

Micro-teaching presentations — an opportunity for one teacher to present a hands-on lesson to the other participants — are followed by questions and feedback. Topics included: healthy foods, alternative energy and renewable resources, formula to calculate overtime, Maya cultural ceremonies, and a math puzzle to solve.

This year, we were fortunate to have two teachers and a social worker from the United States with us. Their professional observations were of great benefit (read one observation below). Also for the first time, we had teachers and personnel from schools outside the **TEACH** group. One topic of discussion was how to solve the problem of primary school students not being prepared for their move to middle school, especially the issue of weak skills in Spanish.

The 12 participants reported that micro-teaching helped them learn new ideas for teaching, got them to think in a new way about the process of teaching and learning, helped them see obstacles that prevent some students from learning, and helped them see things from the students’ point of view.

Here’s what Shawn Lowe, a visiting high school physics teacher from Arlington, Va. had to say:

“A good teacher is continually improving, seeking new ideas to better reach the students that they teach. The teacher workshop provided a rare opportunity for teachers in isolated communities to discuss teaching with their peers. Each teacher prepared a brief lesson to present, with the participant teachers filling in as students. After the lesson, teachers discussed the strengths of the lesson and student challenges. The conversations moved beyond lecture technique to discussing fundamental concerns of teaching students in the Q’eqchi language and about Maya culture, as well as teaching them Spanish and the Guatemalan curriculum. The workshop was invaluable as a way to share teaching knowledge and validate the teachers as professionals.



Two teachers conduct a micro-teaching presentation, which is a hands-on lesson, to other teachers. The 12 teachers who participated in the workshop said it helps them learn new ideas for their classes.

“Personally, my favorite lesson was the abacus. The beads are set up similar to the way numbers are written in the Maya system, reinforcing the written numbers in a concrete way. The abacus made addition of large numbers visible and tangible, while teaching Maya culture and language, and improving numeracy. If students are learning and using the base 20 Maya system, in addition to the Arabic base 10 system, their mathematical reasoning skills will be far above those of their peers who only use the base 10 system that we are familiar with. The teacher had brought enough sets of materials that each of the participants was able to take one back to their classroom to use as a model.”

DID YOU KNOW?

TEACH has a new partnership with GSSG - Guatemalan Student Support Group. GSSG works in a similar area of Guatemala, supports educational success for Maya students and promotes pride in Maya culture. **TEACH** will cooperate with GSSG on scholarships for high school and university students, and for educational enrichment such as the 2016 Teacher Workshop. We are stronger together!



Donate your useful treasures!

St. Mary of Sorrows Council 8600 Knights of Columbus is going to hold a second annual BINGO and Silent Auction fundraiser to support **TEACH** next May 13. It will be in Farrell Hall at St. Mary's, at 5222 Sideburn Road, Fairfax, Va. 22032.

Donations of items for the Silent Auction (each valued at more than \$75), corporate table sponsors, and restaurant or business certificates for prizes are greatly appreciated. Watch for more details in the spring, or for more information please contact Karen Abraham at 703-978-1147 or send an email to her at board@teacham.org.



GET INVOLVED!

- Consider matching a grandchild with a **TEACH** student, as a sponsor. A win-win example! Just send an email to Board@teacham.org to get started.
- Or, be inspired when you travel to Guatemala with **TEACH**, in early February 2017. Contact Shari at Shari.zamarra@gmail.com or 703-323-9367. Mariana Lopez, a visitor on the July 2016 trip, reported "I was truly enriched by visiting the schools sponsored by **TEACH**. It was moving to see the sacrifices that parents make to ensure that their children receive an education. It was encouraging to see their desires to have their children go to school. I appreciate the work that **TEACH** is doing. I hope that **TEACH** can continue to facilitate the education of Guatemalan children and continue to promote the professional development of the teachers."



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About **TEACH**

The vision of **TEACH** is to help empower Maya communities in Guatemala to achieve greater social and economic self-sufficiency, through opportunities for education, while respecting their cultural norms.

Our mission is to actively respond to the schooling needs of underserved Maya children who would otherwise not have the opportunity to attend school because of poverty, a lack of schools or remote distances. In hard-to-reach villages, **TEACH** helps open schools by providing teacher salaries and school supplies. **TEACH** is committed to equal education for both girls and boys in communities where literacy rates are extremely low, especially among women.



SOCCER UNIFORMS BRING SMILES

Girls and boys at Esperanza (Hope) Middle School are thrilled with their new soccer jerseys and athletic shoes. Now they can compete in intramural games. These moments of happiness are sponsored by Bill Larme's "Uniforms for Hope" project, which was inspired by his encounter with the children during the February 2016 trip. Thank you for answering our call with your generosity!



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

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) _____

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

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