

KGAP newsletter

Congratulations, Juvenal!



Pictured here is Juvenal Carillo Funes and his son Brandon. Juvenal just completed his final exams and he is officially a lawyer. Read more on the page six article entitled **K-GAP SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM UPDATE**.

Historic Genocide Trial In Guatemala

By Jeri Pearson, May 7, 2013

**This article was written before the verdict had been handed down (see article on Rios Montt on this page.)*

When Connie Vanderhyden asked me to write a "short" article about the historic genocide case trial happening in Guatemala, I thought it would be impossible because so much has happened since the trial began on March 19. But I tried, and what follows is an abbreviated summary in two parts, first giving some background to the trial based on information from NISGUA, followed by a shorter summary of events that have happened since.

Nearly twelve years have passed since the Association for Justice and Reconciliation (AJR), founded by survivors of Guatemala's internal armed conflict, first filed suit against General Efraín Ríos Montt and members of his military high command in 2001. As a result of years of in-depth investigation, Ríos Montt and his former intelligence chief, General José Mauricio Rodríguez Sánchez, are being tried for genocide and crimes against humanity. They are accused of killing 1,771 Maya Ixil men, women and children, and ordering 15 massacres against the Maya Ixil people during the years of 1982-83. This is the first case in the Americas to try a former head of state for genocide in the country in which it took place. The AJR and the Center for Human Rights Legal Action (CALDH) are the primary plaintiffs in the case, alongside public prosecutors with the Attorney General's office. Through the Guatemalan Accompaniment Project (including KGAP) NISGUA has provided international human rights accompaniment to the AJR and CALDH since 2000. NISGUA recognizes the US's historic role in supporting

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Rios Montt Found Guilty in Genocide Case!

Network in Solidarity with Guatemala, May 10, 2013

Today in Guatemala, Judge Yazmin Barrios found former dictator Efraín Ríos Montt guilty of genocide and crimes against humanity. The court ratified all the elements of genocide described by witness and expert testimony, concluding that Ríos Montt had both command authority and "full knowledge of what was happening and did nothing to stop it." Ríos Montt was sentenced of 80 years in prison and is now in police custody. Former intelligence director Rodríguez Sánchez was acquitted of all charges. The historic sentence was greeted by cries of "Justice!", the singing of hymns, and emotional displays of appreciation by Ixil witnesses and other members of the public. "After so much struggle, we've finally achieved our goal," said a member of the Association for Justice and Reconciliation.

Although the court's ruling is sure to be subjected to ongoing challenges, now is not the moment for doubt. Now is a moment to fill our hearts in celebration of the years of dedication and toil that have led to this victory. It is a time for solemn remembrance of the many who have not lived to see justice, but in whose names this struggle has been carried forward. Today proves that the bonds of solidarity and memory can triumph over violence and forgetting, that the humblest commitment to truth and justice can in time tear down the wall of impunity.

From the bottom of our hearts we thank you for your constant vigilance and accompaniment of the survivors, witnesses, and human rights defenders that have made today possible. We ask you to deepen your support in the coming weeks, months, and years as struggles for justice and self-determination in Guatemala continue in the face of threats both new and old.

Above all, we ask that you join us in celebration, in raising our voices worldwide in a chorus of justice.

Guatemalan Attorney General Claudia Paz y Paz at UC Berkeley responding to NISGUA staffer's question about witness security: "Security of the witnesses is of great concern to the Public Prosecutor. We have been in conversation with the department of the interior and the civil police for how best to address this concern, particularly because the survivors live in such remote areas. We have seen that the most effective way to ensure safety of the witnesses has been through international accompaniment."

The trial has concluded but there is much work to do!

HISTORIC GENOCIDE TRIAL IN GUATEMALA, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the Guatemalan genocide and hopes this case sets a precedent that all people deserve equality before the law. NISGUA is particularly interested in assuring international attention to this case.

Since the trial's opening date 120 witnesses, both indigenous Maya and forensic and political experts, have testified to murder of men, women, and children, sexual violence, burning of houses and schools, whole villages destroyed, horrific acts of violence committed by the Guatemalan army. The defense lawyers repeatedly tried tactics to stall or annul the case. Only a few defense witnesses testified. Then on April 19, the trial was supposedly suspended because of legal technicalities. But

Justice Jazmín Barrios, the lead judge in the case, was not deterred. In her words: "No one is above the law. And until a higher court tells us that we can't continue with the trial, we will continue." The trial was resumed and as the day of this writing (May 7) the trial has only to hear six more witnesses for the defense and listen to closing arguments before a verdict is reached. Edwin Canil, one of the CALDH lawyers in the case, himself a massacre victim and a close friend to many in the NISGUA/GAP community, is confident that a conviction of Ríos Montt is still possible and is what Guatemala needs to begin to heal its wounds. "Any victim anywhere in the world, independent of his or her ideology, wants justice," he says. "But we still have a long way to go."

VIROQUA YOUTH DELEGATION

by *Connie Vanderhyden, KGAP coordinator*

The KGAP Student Delegation of 2013 consisted of

Two students from Youth Initiative High School

(a Waldorf High School Initiative):

Grace Hallberg Cain –grade 12

Kate Buche-Pattison – grade 11

Three students from Laurel High School

(a Viroqua Charter School):

Reese Westerhoff – grade 12

Cadan Cummings – grade 12

Clara Zinky – grade 11

One student from Kickapoo High School:

Daniel Shepard -- grade 11.

Chaperones for the 2013 trip were Shawn Lavoie, Emily Colacino, Connie Vanderhyden, Ben and Julee Agar. This was

an outstanding group of young people and we had an excellent time together in Chaculá. Following are two articles to give you a flavor of their experiences. One was written by Shawn LaVoie and the other by Kate Buche-Pattison. ENJOY!



SO, HOW WAS GUATEMALA? by *Kate Buche-Pattison, January 24, 2013*

"So Kate," they will say, "how was Guatemala?" I know they will ask this, just like they asked, "So Kate, how was Germany?" and I will probably say something like: "It was wonderful" or "It was a great experience," because how do you express the force of those three weeks in a couple of sentences? How can I impart even a fraction of what my journey was, how can I communicate something so big in so few words? Some people ask this question because they are really burning to know what I have experienced, and some just need a topic of conversation. Some are content with my one word summaries, and some press for details, in which case I usually summarize what we did: "Well we flew into Guatemala City, and then..." and the places we went and

things we did follow chronologically. But this answer doesn't really cover it either. Because how Guatemala was isn't just encapsulated in what we did. It was the sights, the sounds, the smells, and the feelings, just as much as it was the actions we performed and the places we went.

I suppose it is always like this when communicating an experience to someone who has to imagine everything, since they don't know the place or the atmosphere. It is hard, and I know it can never be the same as what I am trying precisely to convey. But still, the urge to tell the story is strong in me, and I hope that my watery words can paint a scene half as vivid as the vibrant world I glimpsed for three short weeks. I hope you can begin to smell a hint of fresh

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

SO, HOW WAS GUATEMALA?, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

tortillas cooking on an open wood fire; the smoke mingling with the coarse maize dough as it is clapped into discs and baked, the precise aroma that wafted over me, a greeting, as I entered the humble corrugated cooking hut of my host mother, Josefina. Because this is part of how Guatemala smells to me. Maybe your throat will ache a little, as mine did, as I inhaled the diesel exhaust heavy in the air while we navigated through the tangle of honking chicken busses, with bulging backpacks and aching shoulders, searching for the right one to board. If you close your eyes maybe you could see the pattern of luscious green hills folding around and above me, feel the wind buffeting my face a little like when I craned my neck out the window of the microbus, straining to hold the view in sight for as long as possible. Maybe you can taste the coffee, so watery and sugar-loaded, that is somehow the best drink in the world, when topped with an eager, toothless smile from a well-worn face, hoping I will like this, the best they have. Can you hear the gravelly voice of Avelino, as it pauses during the telling of his story of struggle and hardship, pauses, remembering. Can you hear him continue, struggling with the pain made fresh in the retelling, the sadness that re-surfaces in his eyes as the story of injustice is shared with us, openly, though not without effort. Maybe you can imagine the feeling of the speed bump under the packed like sardines chicken bus that knocks my shoulder into the baby sleeping on his mother's back next to me, and then into the man standing in the aisle as the bus barrels on around a curve in the mountain road.

Maybe I can make the image of two-year-old Fabiola, with beans smeared from her grinning cheeks to her elbows, as she bounces on her exhausted mother's knee, as fresh in your mind as it is in mine. Could you picture the exact hue of Fabi's 13 year old sister Angelica's eyes as she tells me she can't come to my graduation, because she has to go work on the coffee plantation that day, could you ever picture the desire in those eyes, the wish that she could come? Could you imagine feeling the tug of an unfamiliar little brown hand on your shirt, as you hang your wash on the barbed-wire fence, and could you imagine the expectant face asking in rapid-fire Spanish what your name is, and if you want to play?

Could you imagine watching your tentative "si" turning into that same grin with a reeling backdrop, as you spin first Lolita, then her sister around and around in a

dizzying game. The echo of the pounding percussion of rain on the typical corrugated metal roof as an accompaniment to the crescendo of the tri-lingual jam session, that echo might reach you. Maybe you can hear the tonal variation between the honk (and accompanying facial expression) that means either: "Get the hell out of my way before I run over you!" or "Hey chica!" or "Hey how's it going? We're driving the same type of vehicle!" Maybe my burning guilt is imaginable, as we pass a crippled man on the street, one of many, begging, and I feel the coins heavy in my pocket. You might smile, as I tell you about the sweet, ancient, Maya woman sitting on the curb with red ribbon braided into her hair, how she blushed and giggled, proud, as I asked to take a picture of her hair. You might smile wryly, as I did, at the irony of the pristine mountain view marred by a sign proclaiming the fact that it is prohibited to throw garbage there, and the accompanying pile of trash at it's feet. The sound might reach you, of the neighborhood dogs, locked in a vicious vocal battle every night. Maybe the feeling of ridiculousness can be imagined; of bouncing in the back of a microbus to help gain traction as Emilio, our driver, gunner it up the detour around the landslide that had wiped out the road. Perhaps you will sweat, imagining the scalding heat of the steaming mountain hot springs, or pucker imagining that the sulfurous water tasted of lemons. If you close your eyes maybe you will glimpse the rainbow spilling from the lakeside tourist markets, and you may gag imagining the sickening odor of the indoor market—warm raw meat mingled with laundry detergent being sold at neighboring shops. Maybe it is possible for me to convey a little of the triumphant smile of understanding, I shared, when I realized I understood, and made my point clear; when communication happened, with or without language.



This is all only a pinch of how Guatemala tasted, smelled, sounded, looked, and felt to me, only a slice of this vibrant culture and land that I was lucky enough to

visit for these three packed weeks. Three weeks that I will always remember. Three weeks I can only tell you about, and not expect you to comprehend fully—how could you without being there? Three weeks that changed me; the girl who got on the plane at O'Hare, excited, was not the same girl who got off the plane, 22 days later, wiser. So, how was Guatemala, you ask? I already told you, it was wonderful.

CONVIVIR: TO LIVE TOGETHER

by *Shawn Lavoie*, , *chaperone for Youth Delegation.*

On our first day in Chaculá, Connie led our group, 2 adult coordinators and 6 high school students, to the *guarderia*, where lately three churches from the community have been organizing weekly get-togethers for the *mayores*, the elder folk. When we entered, everyone was already assembled. The sight made us all smile: 30 or so elderly folks sitting on wooden makeshift benches beaming big-grandparent smiles. Connie started greeting people—*Buenas tardes, mucho gusto*—and we followed suit. Shaking everyone's hand, looking them in the eyes, and saying "*Buenas tardes, mucho gusto.*" Everyone: 30-plus greetings in a long line of salutation and gratitude at the end of which our smiling muscles ached. We certainly felt welcomed.

After further introductions (by us) and proclamations of gratitude (by them), we were led in song and dance by Isaias, one of the church coordinators. The simple lyrics and dance moves reminded me of kindergarten, yet it felt perfect for the crowd—*se mueve se mueve como la palmera*. We could understand the words and they could do the dance moves. Everyone was cracking up, moving in silly ways and singing.

Then Isaias asked us to lead something. For this, we'd brought watercolor supplies. We dished out little paint pallets made from ripped cardboard and water in bottles cut in half (by a machete!). Clara gave a painting demonstration and then we started. By this time, lots of curious little *chicos y chicas* had made their way into the room. The kids worked side by side with the *mayores*, sharing brushes, and the paint began to move. For the next hour the room was a buzz with color, laughs, and conversation. Bright red houses with ducks, green rolling hills with birds flying in the sky, a man standing on the brown earth, a rainbow worm, a dog and a chicken. We lined up the paintings, old folks' and young folks', on the shelf for all to admire. Time slowed down. The late afternoon light dappled the color-rich paintings while kids and elders alike lingered in fleeting endless moment.

A word that I heard a lot during our visit with the *mayores* was one that does not have a satisfying English equivalent: *convivir*. *Convivir* shares constituent parts with many English words—*Con* meaning together: connect, confide, concord and *Vivir* meaning to live: vivacious, convivial, vital. Yet despite these deep shared roots, I can't think of one word that means the same as *convivir*. The spirit of this word, at least as I came to understand it in Chaculá, is beautifully simple. It doesn't take a celebration or a lot of fuss to *convivir*, you just have to decide to be together. A thorough greeting, a recognition of shared struggle, an act of collective gratitude, a song and a dance, an act of creation— what we did with the



mayores, though simple and at times silly, was *convivir*. It was a profound and quotidian ritual of interdependence.

That night, our group met to write in our journals and discuss themes that had arisen in the day. Many of the students—these juniors and seniors from Youth Initiative, Laurel, and Kickapoo— commented on how fun working with the *mayores* had been. We agreed that it was “like walking into a room of grandparents.” Reflecting on our afternoon, I thought of how easy it can be to *convivir*. All we had to do was show up and participate. I also realized how this simple work of coming together is perhaps our greatest challenge.

Our daily lives in the US are marked by individualistic ambitions, personal time, power lunches, workout clubs where people run the tread mill, alone. The American Dream is the dream of individual attainment, personal potential realized. One has to work hard to find *convivir* here at home. But I also believe that in Chaculá, or anywhere really, people also have to endeavor to be together. To coexist, in this profound and quotidian way, takes time and energy and vision.

Finding instances of *convivir* in Chaculá inspires me to make it happen in my life here in the States. It inspires me to support it in Guatemala. It inspires me to continue to bring students so many thousands of miles to be a part of this *convivir*.

The last night of our stay it started to rain hard, which put the kibosh on our plans to have a community bon fire. Instead, Nataleo, Isaias and a couple of friends came over with guitars. As the rain fell on the corrugated roof, our group and their group shared songs and laughs back and forth. “*Invierno se va*” and “*La Llorona*” and “*Bella Ciao*” and “*Nohecita*” and “*Ojala*” and “*El Rey*” and “*Wagon Wheel*”...the music rolled for hours, English and Spanish, undaunted by the relentless rain. That night they invited us into their hearts and we took them into ours as well: a mark of true *convivir*.

KGAP RECEIVES ANNUAL RETURNED PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS GRANT

Over the past several years KGAP has applied for a small annual grant from the Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCV) of Wisconsin. This year the community health organization in Chaculá, APROSUVI, wrote a proposal which we submitted to the RPCV group. We received confirmation on April 18th that they have chosen to help fund the project. Here is the proposal:

We are seeking a fund to develop a comprehensive health education program in 7 rural Indigenous (Chuj) communities in the San Mateo Ixtatan municipality, Huehuetenango. The main objectives of this program are: 1) Infant vaccination; 2) Education for young women about sexual reproduction and health; 3) Access to information for the youth about family planning; 4) Increased knowledge of the entire population about the prevention of common illnesses in the zone; and 5) Establishment of an emergency fund to better assist patients who require medical assistance outside of the Nueva Esperanza-Chaculá Community Clinic. (The regional hospital is a 5 hour trip by car from Nueva Esperanza.)

In addition to the RPCV grant, the project will be funded by KGAP supporters. We are very grateful for the ongoing support we have received from RPCV and our KGAP supporters for healthcare in Chaculá and the surrounding area.

4TH ANNUAL MIDWIFERY TRAINING by *Connie Vanderhyden, KGAP coordinator*

During our January visit to Chaculá, Viroqua area nurse-midwife, Kim Dowat, facilitated the 4th annual midwifery training. The relationship that has developed between Kim and the local midwives is a beautiful thing to witness. Kim



coordinates the sessions with two midwives from Chaculá and two from Yalambajoch, a nearby village. They invite women from area villages and every year we meet new participants and welcome women who have come before. The trainings cover many issues including postpartum hemorrhage and neonatal resuscitation.

The women share experiences and practice techniques, taking turns being the birthing mom and the midwife. Kim donates her time and energy, as well as tools of the trade. KGAP covers the housing, food and transportation for the midwives who attend the trainings. We hope to continue developing this relationship in future years.

Photo by Andi Alexander

ABOUT THE KICKAPOO/GUATEMALA ACCOMPANIMENT PROJECT (KGAP)

KGAP is a project of the Kickapoo Cultural Exchange, Gays Mills, WI, a 501c3 nonprofit organization registered in the state of Wisconsin and Minnesota. Contributions are tax deductible. In addition, KGAP is affiliated with the Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala (NISGUA) a national non-profit organization that supports many projects and efforts in Guatemala.



January Youth Delegation High School students pictured here are visiting the Mayan ruins that are located at the site of the former village San Francisco, near Chaculá. There was a massacre there in 1982 and 350 people were killed. Angel Diaz is explaining what happened the day of the massacre as well as the story of the massacre in his village of Limonar when he was 17 years old.

KGAP SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM UPDATE by *Connie Vanderhyden, KGAP coordinator*

KGAP continues to fund high school scholarships for 10 students from Chaculá annually. We are committed to supporting each student throughout their 3 year program of study. Because of many graduations last fall, this year 8 new students received scholarships to begin studying various career paths such as accounting, mechanics, teaching, and nursing. Following is a letter from Eduardo Díaz Díaz who had begun studying to be a teacher and was going to have to discontinue without graduating. The scholarship committee in the village selected Eduardo as one of our 2013 recipients and we hope you enjoy his letter of appreciation (see below).

Also, we are happy to announce that Juvenal Carillo Funes, one of the first students to receive a scholarship for high school from KGAP back in 1996 has passed his final exam and is now a lawyer! Thank you the KGAP donors, especially David and Diane Banner, who helped Juvenal with his further studies. He is now the director of the Basico Institute in Chaculá, as well as an elementary school teacher. We are so happy to have been a part of his educational journey!

From: Eduardo Díaz Díaz , Colonia Nueva Esperanza Chaculá, January 10, 2013

To: KGAP SUPPORTERS

I address you cordially, hoping that you find success in all your daily activities. I, Jesús Eduardo Díaz Díaz, am a young man of the Poptí ethnicity. My parents are: Jesús Leocadio Díaz Montejo and Juana Alicia Díaz Díaz. We are a humble but very united family that works in agriculture, cultivating beans and corn. When we found out that we had the possibility of receiving a scholarship so I could continue studying, my family and I were very happy and grateful. If it weren't for this assistance, my parents would not have had sufficient resources to help me continue. Upon receiving the aid, I set a goal for myself to continue my studies and to receive the very best grades so that my parents will be proud of me and so that I will become a man of good standing in my community and in my country.

Attentively, Jesús Eduardo Díaz Díaz

THANKS TO YOU, KGAP CAN CONTINUE TO SUPPORT STUDENTS LIKE EDUARDO and JUVENAL!!

MANY THANKS TO OUR RECENT DONORS!

Al Gedicks
Ruth Agar
Jack and Barbara Wolf
Jane Keeley
Sarah Gibbs
Trish Dougherty
David and Diane Banner
Susan Pope
Patrick and Lucille Basler
Gretchen Furber and Walter White
Vicky Eiben
Melanie and Augusto Bordelois
Harriet Behar
David Ware and Tamsen Morgan
Maggie Jones
Emily Pfitsch
Marjorie Dick
Jack and Patty Pfitsch
Martha Pierce
Bonnie Morris
Kay Berkson and Sidney Hollander
Jon and Peggy Traver
Trish and David Swasko
John and Sharon Samuelson
Roger Bertsch
Bette Barnes
Al and Roseanne Schulz
Bill and Marsha Bateman
Bud and Marjorie Roegge
Roberta Ducharme
Bruce Bland
Laura Berger
Lamar Janes
Ben and Julee Agar
Bill Pfitsch and Andi Alexander
Marty and Jeri Pearson
Peter and Polly Edmunds
Fred Dick

Lyla Elofson
Alberta Marana and Michael McDonnell
Jen Shepard
James Pattison and Martha Buche
Jenny Cain
Barbara Danner
Clara Zinky
Emily Colacino
Barbara Gerlach
John and Susan Miller
Don and Mary Stirling
John and Maureen Karlstad
Katherine Bergan-Porter
Cele Wolf
Chana Puig
Mark Taylor
Alan and Dorothy Boesger
Mark Kastel
Lars and Corina Bergan
Marcia Halligan
Jane Furchgott
Jerry and Natalie McIntyre
Bill Calkins and Yanni Liang
Jane Milliken
Deborah Cooter
Ellen Brooks and Dave Hackett
Judd Steinback and Joy Hinman
Returned Peace Corps Volunteers
of Wisconsin

*ALL DONATIONS TO KGAP ARE TAX
DEDUCTIBLE AND WILL HELP FUND OUR
ACCOMPANIMENT, HEALTHCARE AND
EDUCATION INITIATIVES IN GUATEMALA.*

*Please send donations to:
KGAP c/o Connie Vanderhyden
E9048 PIERCE HILL RD
VIROQUA, WI 54665*

MORE ABOUT THE TRIAL IN GUATEMALA

by Connie Vanderhyden

"We feel the legacy of all that the sponsoring communities and accompaniers have done since the beginning of GAP (Guatemalan Accompaniment Project) leading up to this historic moment as we are accompanying witnesses and victims during the trial against former dictator Efraín Ríos Montt for genocide and crimes against humanity. You are all PRESENTE!" (paraphrased from Bridget Behrens, current GAP coordinator).

It is a very emotional time in Guatemala and for those of us who have been involved with human rights accompaniment over all these years. GAP began in 1994 as a response to the request from Guatemalan refugees, survivors of genocide, as they returned to their country and began to construct their lives once again. The project has evolved over the years to continue to respond where the need for accompaniment is most urgent. Since the year 2000, we have provided a presence for AJR members (Association for Justice and Reconciliation), many of whom have been giving testimonies in the current trial against the dictator. All

of the communities where we have accompanied as well as all of the accompaniers (former and present) and sponsoring community members are riveted by this current process, hopeful that justice will prevail despite the tradition of impunity and violence in Guatemala. It is an exciting but also dangerous time and the need for accompaniment is still very urgent.

KGAP has recently been taking a break from sponsoring an individual accompanier but we would like to join with other sponsoring communities to raise a general fund to continue supporting the work of accompaniers and the GAP coordination.

PLEASE CONSIDER DONATING TODAY TO SHOW YOUR SUPPORT FOR THIS HISTORIC TRIAL AND OUR INVOLVEMENT OVER THE YEARS, PROVIDING A HUMAN RIGHTS PRESENCE IN GUATEMALA!

All donations are tax deductible and can be mailed to:

KGAP

c/o Connie Vanderhyden
E9048 Pierce Hill Road
Viroqua, WI 54665

For lots more information about the genocide trial you can consult the NISGUA website at www.nisgua.org, follow the NISGUA blog with daily trial updates at www.nisgua.blogspot.com or watch live streaming from the courtroom when in session at: <http://www.paraqueseconozca.blogspot.com>.

Non-Profit Organization
US POSTAGE PAID
Permit No. 16
Gays Mills, WI 54631

KGAP
c/o Connie Vanderhyden
E9048 Pierce Hill Road
Viroqua, WI 54665