

KGAP *newsletter*

Dear Friends of KGAP

from Connie Vanderhyden, KGAP Coordinator

I hope this newsletter finds you enjoying a warm holiday season with your family and friends. In these chaotic times I think it is important to take time to appreciate our blessings and revitalize in order to meet our commitments and responsibilities in the upcoming year with energy and optimism. Considering all of the dramatic situations in the world, we are extremely grateful for your continuing interest in and support for KGAP and our solidarity with the Guatemalan people.

Since our last newsletter, KGAP has received many donations for new projects in Chaculá. The family of our beloved Jeri Pearson, who passed away this past June, requested that friends and family members donate to the KGAP education fund in her memory. In 1997 Jeri was an accompanier in Chaculá and stayed very involved over the years, helping to organize and coordinate the scholarship program and other KGAP educational initiatives. Once all the donations were gathered, we were able to offer \$5,000 to the community in her memory!

In addition to Jeri's fund, KGAP has received many donations to add to a very generous donation from a long-time KGAP supporter for new education and healthcare initiatives. As you know, we are committed to supporting the community in their decision-making process as to how any funding is put to use. Chaculá is organized as a cooperative with an active committee structure. The health and education committees met and then consulted with an assembly of all the voting members of the cooperative about how this new funding would best serve the entire village.

In this newsletter you will read a summary translation of letters from Miriam Carrillo and Jubinal Carrillo Funes about the two new education projects. In addition, there is a translation of the description of how the community health organization decided to implement its KGAP fund this fall. My job as KGAP coordinator is to communicate with our friends in Chaculá about the funding, discuss their needs and visions, and support them in their democratic, transparent decision-making process. Then, of



Carrying Rocks for the new Cancha!

course, I have to make the bank-to-bank transfer - a much easier process than it was 20 years ago when we had to physically carry the money to the village!

We are also happy to include a translation of a letter from one of our scholarship students, a good example of the many letters we receive every year. Thanks to all of your support we also recently made our annual transfer of funding to continue to support 25 high school students and all the students who attend the middle school (Basico Institute) in the village of Chaculá.

In October, KGAP was pleased to sponsor the visit of Llan Carlos Dávila, the 2015 NISGUA speaker, to this area. Llan Carlos gave presentations in La Crosse at Viterbo University and UW-La Crosse. He was able to speak to a small group in Viroqua before moving on to the next tour destination. We have included a short description of his important presentation on anti-mining resistance in Guatemala.

Once again, I want to thank everyone for your generous support for KGAP! We are honored to continue to collaborate with Chaculá and stay connected to NISGUA's important accompaniment and solidarity work as well. This is important work and it would not be possible without you! Every donation goes directly to benefit education and health initiatives in Chaculá or to support human rights accompaniment in collaboration with NISGUA.

¡Con mucha gratitud siempre!
Connie

Education Projects: Letters from Miriam Carrillo and Jubinal Carrillo Funes

Construction of the new cancha in honor of Jeri Pearson

Dear Connie and KGAP friends,

The community is very excited about the project in memory of our dear friend, Jeri Pearson. It has been decided to construct a paved playground/basketball court (cancha) in the school-yard for the use of all ages of children attending school in Chaculá from elementary through high school. At the general assembly with all cooperative members and other family members in attendance, Jubinal gave a brief history about the significance of KGAP support for the development of Chaculá. He spoke about the beginning of the scholarship program and also the support that has come to the Básico Institute over the years. Then he talked about the upcoming project in memory of Jeri and of the tragic news of her death. The community is very sad because of this loss and also very grateful for the fund in her memory. Jubinal also spoke about the decision to construct a secure fence around the entire school area with the additional KGAP fund directed to educational needs this year.

The work on Jeri's project was coordinated by the teachers and the parent education committee. Everything has been very well organized because the goal was to complete the project by November so that it can be inaugurated when the KGAP delegation is present for the Chaculá anniversary in January. Everyone in the community has participated in working on this project in memory of our great friend, Jeri. We have done this with the purpose in mind that she will always be present in the education of the children and youth of Chaculá since she was always involved with the scholarship project. This is one way we can feel her presence close to us forever. We hope you enjoy the pictures of the construction process! We are so thankful to Jeri's family for making this possible and grateful to KGAP for the upcoming secure fence project as well! The fence is intended to protect the schools from unwanted visitors as well as to keep the buildings and grounds in better condition over the years. The teachers and parents have always wanted to do both of these projects but haven't been able due to the lack of resources. Now with your support, we are so happy to finally be able to accomplish these goals for the schools in Chaculá.





Healthcare Project

There are two functioning health clinics in the northern region of Nentón municipality, one in the returned refugee village of Nueva Esperanza-Chaculá and the other in Yalambojoch, a village where 100% of the population is of Chuj (Maya) ethnicity. These clinics have been functioning through community support and the hard work of non-medical personnel in administrative roles. The local health association, APROSUVI, has supported the clinics by providing medicines and supplies and health promoter training and assistance. Because the government Ministry of Health is basically absent in this region, these two clinics have been the population's only hope for healthcare services. Because of the conditions of poverty that exist, many people are not able to pay for services. Therefore it is necessary to refurbish supplies and medicines to keep the clinics functioning.

APROSUVI is also aware that there are 5 communities near the border with Mexico who come to the Chaculá and Yalambojoch clinics for healthcare services. Due to the distance involved, many patients arrive with health complications because no one has implemented any primary care and preventative healthcare programs in their communities.

General objectives of the proposed project: Improve access to basic healthcare services through the purchase of medical supplies to replenish the Chaculá and Yalambojoch clinics. Implement a program to address preventative and primary healthcare needs in 5 remote communities in the Nentón Municipality, Department of Huehuetenango, Guatemala.



Here are two photos of the clinic in Nueva Esperanza-Chaculá, both exterior and interior. The top if the page is a photo of the exterior of the clinic in Yalambojoch, taken by Andi Alexander.

MANY THANKS TO OUR RECENT DONORS!

Your contributions make a big difference in the health and educational activities of the people of Chacula!

David and Diane Banner

Sarah Gibbs

Lisa Rock and James Schulze

Maggie Jones

Sandy Stroo

Roberta Ducharme

Trish Dougherty

Marjorie Koons

Paul Bergquist and Carole Austin

Jim Oakley and Anne Chartier

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Kathy and Jim Vanderlinden

Dr. Michael Swartz

Ellen Brooks and Dave Hackett

Meghan Meeker

Don and Mary Stirling

David Ware and Tamsen Morgan

Peg Morton

In honor of Jeri Pearson:

Mary Bjorgaard and Steve Pearson

Geraldine C. Dibelka

M.W. and Ann Kelly

Lyla and Robert Elofson

Kirsten N. Danis

Jason W. Earle and Louise Feld

Jonathan Lemire and Carolyn Melago

Molly Bennett

Bob Carls and Amy Sharpe

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Richard and Nancy Nelson

Dale and Janel Lietha

Cynthia and Lee Theorin

John and Mary Onkka

Susan Pope

Susan Dailey

Marty Pearson

Christine Cavallomagno

Seth and Diane Montgomery

Jeffrey and Lydia Lewis

Judith Witt-Cros

Marta Engel

Roberta Ducharme

Alberta Marana and Michael McDonnell

Michael Olson and Maryann Wolters

If we have misspelled your name or forgotten to acknowledge you, please, please, let us know! We are so grateful to everyone who donates to KGAP and want to make sure that all are acknowledged (correctly!) for their help and support.

News From NISQUA: ‘Tahoe on Trial’

NISQUA’s 2015 speaking tour “Tahoe On Trial: Guatemalan Communities Rise up to Defend Land and Life” set out to raise awareness about Tahoe Resources, a joint US-Canadian silver mining company, and its contribution to human rights violations around its Escobal silver project in southeastern Guatemala.

We were joined by the Diocesan Committee in Defense of Nature (CODIDENA), a faith-based grassroots organization that is leading local efforts to educate and organize communities to protect land and water against transnational mining activities.

The tour kicked off in Tahoe’s own backyard at their Reno headquarters, where the Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada (PLAN) organized a series of events to denounce the company’s abuses abroad. Following a pattern of aggression that is known well by impacted communities in opposition to the mine, Tahoe called the police to evict peaceful protesters looking to bring their concerns right to the source.

From Nevada, the tour traveled to the Midwest, making stops to connect with several universities and many local NISQUA activists and grassroots organizations including the Chicago Religious Leadership Network,

the Lakes Area Group Organizing in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala (LAGOS) in Minnesota, and the Kickapoo Guatemala Accompaniment Project in southwestern Wisconsin. A visit to the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa located in northern Wisconsin provided the space for cross-cultural exchanges between two groups impacted by mining. Over the past five years, the Bad River band actively opposed the imposition of a massive iron ore mine by US company GTAC. Tribal members and leaders shared the strategies for resilience and success – including stories of a big win last February when GTAC abandoned mine development. CODIDENA representative Llan Carlos Dávila was moved by the similarities between the Bad River struggle and those that campesino and indigenous communities face in Guatemala and he reflected that he would share the message of hope for the international struggle to protect natural resources with CODIDENA members back home.

The tour wrapped up with stops on the east coast, collaborating with Skylight Pictures and local activists in New York, connecting with the Guatemalan community in Providence, RI, and reuniting with long-term NISQUA supporters in Needham and Boston, MA.



Pictured here (left to right) are KGAP supporters Steve Christenson, Mary Christenson and Jennifer McGeorge, member of the NISQUA 2015 speaking tour Llan Carlos Davila, KGAP supporters Tom Vanderhyden and Liz Franklin, and Ellen Moore, Llan’s accompanier/translator

STUDENT THANK YOU LETTER

Estimada Señora Connie,
I would like to extend my sincere gratitude for the economic assistance your organization has given me since the beginning of 2015. It was a great blessing for me to receive this scholarship because it helps me dedicate more time to my studies. The little bit that I earn at my humble job wasn't enough to cover my school expenses and that was the main reason I wasn't able to continue my education. Truthfully, I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the help you have given me!
I would like to tell you that I have done very well in my courses. Most of my grades have been favorable which makes me very happy. I have included my report card so you can see the grades in each of the courses included in my career path. Thank you so much for supporting me, Connie and friends! I am so happy to be able to continue studying and thanks to you and the marvelous people who work with you, I have finished the first year of my career (my objective).
I would like to close by wishing you all the best in your personal, work, and spiritual lives. ¡May God shower you and your families with many blessings always!

From BALTAZAR RICARDO CARDONA GASPAS, CHACULÁ.



Graduating class - Instituto Básico, 2015

As always, your tax-deductible donations are much appreciated. They can be sent to:

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c/o Connie Vanderhyden
E9048 Pierce Hill Road
Viroqua, WI 54664

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.

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