

KGAP newsletter

Summer Greetings from the KGAP Coordinator

by Connie Vanderhyden, KGAP Coordinator

I hope everyone is enjoying a beautiful summer season wherever you find yourselves! At this time of the year our January journey to Guatemala seems like quite a long time ago but reading the articles and viewing the pictures in this newsletter refresh my memory and hopefully will give you an idea of the continuing solidarity and friendship we are privileged to experience in Chaculá.

THANKS for your on-going support. Because of it we are able to continue to collaborate with education and healthcare efforts in the community. In this newsletter you will read about the January Midwifery Workshop, financially supported by the fundraising efforts of Youth Initiative High School student, Finley McGeorge. Viroqua nurse midwife, Jennifer McGeorge, led the workshop, assisted by Luisa Rivera. I had the privilege of interpreting for Jennifer from English to Spanish which was then interpreted by Petrona Gomez into the indigenous language of the region, Chuj. It was a powerful experience, beautifully documented by photographer Andi Alexander. Many thanks to this wonderful team for helping make this training possible for the attending midwives!

In this KGAP Newsletter you will also see some photos of the new middle school building and the students. The director and teachers of the Institute have given us details regarding the KGAP funding for education and have written a letter of thanks to all the donors.

There is an administrative update to share with you. Over the past many years we have been fortunate to be a project of the 501C3 umbrella organization, Kickapoo Cultural Exchange (KCE). KCE is currently downsizing and KGAP needed to find a new 501C3 to be our umbrella organization. I am happy to announce that the Youth Initiative High School Board voted to take on this role. This allows all donations to continue to be tax deductible. Many thanks to Lamar Janes, accountant and bookkeeper for Kickapoo Cultural Exchange (KCE) and Youth Initiative High School (YIHS), and to the KCE and YIHS boards for their ongoing support for KGAP. All donations will still be directed to:

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

MANY THANKS TO ALL OF YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUING INTEREST AND SUPPORT. JANUARY 2019 WILL BE THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RETURN TO GUATEMALA FOR CHACULA AND, THEREFORE, THE 24TH YEAR FOR KGAP!

From the Teachers in Chacula

translated by Connie Vanderhyden

Dear Connie and KGAP supporters,

Thank you so much for the great work that you do for the education in Chaculá. We appreciate it so much and send a sincere greeting to your organization and all the donors for the educational project in our community of Nueva Esperanza Chaculá, Nentón, Huehuetenango, Guatemala. We are confident in your strength and the gift of your solidarity for us in our struggle to develop as a returned refugee community. Thank you for always being present in our struggle. We hope you are all doing well in your country and want you to send you warm greetings and a hug from Chaculá.

Sincerely,

Juvenal Carrillo Funes and the Instituto Básico teachers

The photo here is from the January Midwifery Workshop, showing a midwife demonstrating neonatal resuscitation. More photos of the workshop are on pages 4, 5 and 6 of this newsletter.





Clase Primero Basico-7th Grade



Clase Segundo Basico-8th Grade



Clase Tercero Basico, 9th Grade

El Paso Extra

by Jennifer McGeorge, Nurse Midwife

El paso extra. The extra step. The value of the extra step. This is what I keep coming back to in reflecting on my recent wonderful journey to Guatemala in January, 2018. Many steps were involved in preparing for the two-day workshop on emergency obstetrical skills management that was held at the clinic in Nueva Esperanza, Chaculá. In addition to local midwives, Mayan midwives came from regional villages to attend the workshop. For his senior project, my nephew, Finley, raised money to fund their attendance, transport, food, and lodging. He also provided each attending midwife with equipment: a fetoscope, tape measure, bulb syringe, and ambu bag for infant resuscitation.

The workshop was everything we could have hoped for and more. Many of the indigenous midwives wore traditional cortes and headscarves. The youngest midwife was only 15 years old and was in attendance with her grandmother who is also her teacher. Many of the midwives have been practicing for decades. All were attentive, connective, and asked excellent questions. Our workshop was held in an open-air hallway that was, at times, quite windy and cold, but we were warmed by mutual respect & the appreciation of shared, multi-directional learning.

Beyond differences in culture and skill level were the very real challenges that many of the midwives were not literate, none of them spoke English, and Spanish was not their first language. These are Mayan midwives and they speak Mayan languages; most of them spoke Q'anjob'al. Our interpreter-midwife, Petrona, speaks Chuj, but assured us that the two languages are mutually comprehensible. I loved listening to the interpretation of the workshop into Chuj, and hearing how animated the midwives would become when information was translated for them. They were quiet when I presented in English, you could see some comprehension when Connie translated into Spanish, but real understanding happened with the interpretation into Chuj and then things could get lively with women responding in Chuj/Q'anjob'al with anecdotes, comments, and questions.

This extra step of translation was the most challenging part of the workshop for me, even though I knew it was valuable and essential. It was the first time I had taught with an interpreter, and after I spoke I had no trouble waiting for Connie to translate, but in the space she would leave for Petrona to then translate from Spanish to Chuj, I kept jumping in. Waiting for the second translation into the third language was a whole new rhythm that was very challenging for me to adjust to. Despite the fact that I wanted to wait, that I needed to wait, I kept jumping in and found myself unable to fully adapt to this new rhythm. And then it hit me that that extra step of translation from Spanish to Chuj was the whole point. That extra step is why we were having the workshop in the first place. That extra step and the patience required, allowing it to happen, was the key to learning, connecting, and sharing knowledge and skills. I humbly realized in my first-world mind that the translation of the material so that it

was comprehensible to the attendees was more important than what I had to say. Having that realization allowed me to become more than the workshop instructor, it allowed me to take the extra step and become a true participant, fortunate to be part of the vibrant, multi-lingual flow of the workshop experience.

And so began my contemplation of the significance and value of the extra step, *el paso extra*. Many extra steps were taken to create the conditions for the refugees to return to their homeland in 1994. The creation, building, and maintenance of the community of Chaculá is the manifestation of countless extra steps taken by so many; not just focusing on the good of themselves and their own families, but working for the greater good of the community, and somehow knowing that in working for the good of their village they are making the world a better place.

The work of KGAP and Connie Vanderhyden's dedication and commitment are all about the extra step. All those years ago, Connie knew it was worth it to take the extra step away from her young family and work as an accompanier, because she knew her presence could make a difference for many families, and she knew in her mother's heart that it was the thing to do. KGAP supporters have since taken many extra steps to go to Chaculá to connect and work with the people, and through donations to facilitate educational, medical, and social projects. These 'extra' steps allow us to step out of our daily lives and connect with humanity, on a practical level, but also on a heart level, and this may be the most important extra step of all.

It was amazing how much content we were able to cover in the 2-day workshop: postpartum hemorrhage, infections, placental and cord problems, prolonged labor, malpresentation, infant resuscitation, shoulder dystocia, hypertension and related disorders, and fetal demise. We discussed transport and the importance of having a transport/emergency plan in general and specifically for each mother. This presents the greatest challenge for these Mayan midwives. When complications arise, it takes many extra steps on the part of many people to get mother-babies transported safely to a higher level of care when the need arises.

Additionally, we discussed the reality that despite our best efforts, sometimes babies and mothers die. Maternal mortality is a significant problem in this area of the world. The leading causes of maternal mortality are hemorrhage and hypertensive disorders, yet typically the statistics are under-reported and unreliable. It is a problem that is multi-factorial, but many factors can be related to issues of social injustice, such as poverty being related to poor nutrition, which is related to higher rates of anemia, which increases a woman's risk for postpartum hemorrhage. Many extra steps, small and large, local and national, can be taken to protect mothers, babies, and families by decreasing maternal mortality and its many causes.

El Paso Extra, continued on page 6

All photos of the midwifery workshop were taken by Andi Alexander, photographer (c) 2018 andialexander.com

Jennifer & Finley demonstrating shoulder dystocia



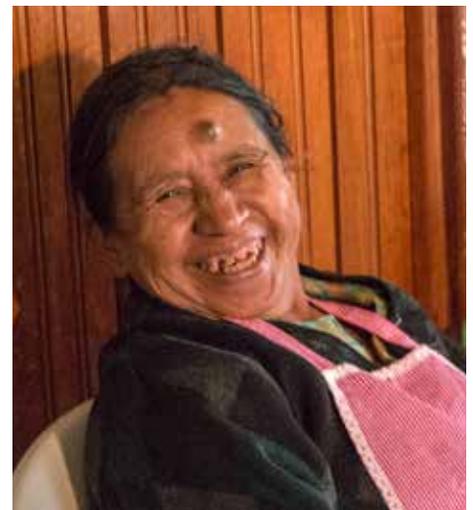
Midwife demonstrating birthing technique



Midwife workshop participants



More midwife workshop participants



Dona Ana-midwife from Chacula

Donating midwifery supplies to Chepe Díaz at the Chacula clinic



Jennifer and Finley demonstrating neonatal resuscitation



Midwifery supplies ready for distribution



GuatEver

Careening up & down the mountain from Huehuetenango to Panajachel,
 Alt-j versioning House of the Rising Sun.
 Bus driver uses all the road.
 "Poder de Dios," says the cross-
 May all the dioses & diosas have their time
 Of honor
 Of peace
 Of hunger
 Of fill
 Of blood that runs like a river of life & death,
 Lies & truth,
 Force & ease

That we might find the balance we seek...
 A balance--
 Far from the skew of the stew that we brew in.
 A balance of growth & decay,
 Hope & dismay
 Where at the heart we find love,
 Of abundance & loss,
 Where we might toss our indifference & discomfort
 And see the bloody, windy dawn that promises nothing,
 But holds everything our hearts crave...
 The space,
 The love,
 The load lightening relief of unrealized potential...
 Of reparation.
 Of today, tonight, tomorrow, & the Ever that joins us
 --in the darkest night

—Jennifer McGeorge

Finley distributing midwifery supplies



El Paso Extra, continued from page 3

We take so many steps in our busy lives, but what happens when we take that extra step and extend out of ourselves and our routines? No, it's not mission work. Historically, many people have gone out of their way to exploit and take from the people of Guatemala. So we can choose to take the extra steps and go out of our way to share what we know and have with them, as they share what they know and have with us. No, it isn't about comfort. It's about working hard and reaching out to hopefully build a sustainable bridge to our future. We all know there is so much to be done and maybe the solutions to the complex problems we face can be found in taking many extra steps.

The workshop was about a lot of extra steps on the part of many individuals and I am so grateful to so many. Connie, for her organization (KGAP and otherwise!), presence, and interpretation. Luisa, for her willingness to simulate birth many times, her knowledge, and language skills. Andi, for her attention to detail, photos, and excellent humor. Finley, for his presence, assistance, and generosity. I am also grateful to the clinic staff and people of Chaculá for their hard work, food, support, and generosity. And of course, much appreciation and gratitude for the midwives who took steps away from their full family lives and midwife responsibilities to attend the workshop to learn, to teach, and to share, united in our commitment to women, babies, and families in our communities.

Connie interpreting during Midwifery workshop



Accompaniers Luisa Rivera, Jennifer McGeorge, Finley McGeorge, Connie Vanderhyden

Midwives and Accompaniers



2018-2019 EDUCATION FUND FOR CHACULA

by Connie Vanderhyden, KGAP Coordinator

Every year your support enables KGAP to transfer funding for high school scholarships and other educational needs in Chaculá. The elementary and middle school teachers in the community have formed an official association to receive the funds and a democratic process to determine how they will be distributed each year to best benefit students and their families at all levels of education. This is the breakdown for the current school year (2018-2019).

- 12 high school scholarships
- 6 complete scholarships to the Instituto Básico for families who cannot afford any of the tuition and fees
- Payment for 10 months of tuition plus computer fees for 65 students in the Instituto Básico (students from Chaculá and surrounding communities)
- Continuing education scholarships for 2 Instituto Básico teachers
- Scholarship for deaf student from Chaculá to attend a special education school in Comitán, Mexico
- Pay for the Instituto Básico band instructor
- Administrative expenses for Instituto Básico
- Bell for the Instituto Básico
- Secure door for the Instituto Básico
- Construction of 4 bathrooms for the Instituto Básico

You may remember that Chaculá was able to construct a new facility for the middle school (Instituto Básico) that opened its doors in January 2018. The support for this new building came from the municipal government and the community. The Guatemalan government does support elementary education with funding for school supplies, teachers' salaries, snacks and other items, but does not provide funding for the middle school level. Director of the Instituto Básico, Juvenal Carrillo Funes, writes: "The middle school students benefit a great deal from having their tuition and registration fees covered by KGAP funding because if their parents had to pay, many wouldn't be able to continue studying. At this level it is necessary to purchase all the school supplies they need to complete their work throughout the year. This is the reason that we focus on the support of the students in the Instituto Básico as well as scholarships for students pursuing high school education thereafter."



*Alumnos Becados
de Escasos Recursos*

LETTER FROM HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

by Ana Patricia Pérez Carrillo, translated by Connie Vanderhyden

Dear Connie and KGAP supporters,

With great respect I am writing to you with the hope that you are enjoying good health and success in your daily endeavors! I am a student that applied for one of the scholarships given to enable the youth in our community to continue their studies. I am writing to let you know that I have received the economic support and also to thank you for this enormous assistance. Thank you, not only for the financial help, but also for giving us the benefit of a better future. Thank you for taking me into account and for the confidence you have placed in me. This gives me the enthusiasm to continue ahead with my studies and to try to achieve my goals! Upon receiving the scholarship I committed myself to obtaining good grades because of the confidence that you have invested in me. In the first quarter of my Accounting and Computer program I have achieved a 90.1% average with plans to improve next quarter. Once again, thank you so much for your support!

Sincerely, Ana Patricia Pérez Carrillo

MANY THANKS TO OUR DONORS!

Kathleen Crittenden and Kelvin Rodolfo
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Ursula Cejpek
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Amanda Wright-Polson
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Maureen and John Karlstad
Bill Seyfarth

In memory of Jeri Pearson
Susan Pope and Paul Heinrich

KICKAPOO/GUATEMALA ACCOMPANIMENT PROJECT (KGAP)

KGAP is a project of Youth Initiative High School, a 501c3 nonprofit organization registered in the state of Wisconsin. 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.