

From you to the mayan people[®]

OUR SOCIAL COMMITMENT

Dear Friends,

In this small newsletter, we would like to share the progress we have made on our our social commitment in Guatemala, which we will call "From you to the Mayan people."

In La Giralda, Tecpán, we recently finished a new 4 classroom school which opened on July 15. Thank so much to all of you who have donated to our project. We appreciate any amount that was given. Our donors are clients of ours from several countries, friends and neighbors of Jostein and Gunhild, and a local school (Flakkebjerg efterskole, Denmark). The students has been working hard to make money for a larger, future donation.

When we visited La Giralda's new school, the children were smiling and proud to say they attend this new school. The school is complete with 4 classrooms and a future soccer field. The new school makes room for 130 students that attend daily and will use the old school for sanitary and kitchen. For us, it is a great feeling to see so many



The community celebrated the opening of the school with festivities. Organizations in attendance: PAVA, De La Selva, and a group of visiting US teens who have built schools inside the country. The town residents also gathered to enjoy the activities.

kids with the possibility of receiving basic education.

"We hope to continue providing more opportunities for this community."

~Irma Zuleta, General Manager

Based in the highlands of Guatemala, Tecpan is an area which is colder than most other parts of the country. In the old school of La Giralda, the chilly breeze often snuck through the cracks of the wooden walls.

On the land of a former plantation, the old school in La Giralda was built 3 years ago and was made of wood sliced from a tree and placed directly on to the ground without foundation.

La Giralda, a small village, contains approximately 2000 residents, according

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In May 2005, the teachers and students gathered with anticipation in front of the construction taking place for the new school. The school contains approx. 130 students.

PHOTO GALLERY



EVERILDA RAQUEL GUARCAX

Age: 12

Grade: 3o Basico

Quote: *(translated)* [The new school] is beautiful and is a gift to us. We have to take care of it and tell others to take care of it, too.



DIRECTOR RICARDA IXTAMALIC

Grades teaching: 3o Basico

Years teaching: 40 years teaching.

3 years as director at La Giralda.

Quote: *(translated)* [In the old school] I felt very sad and worried for the children because the rain always entered and the wind caused a lot of dust. Now, the children are going to be in a more humane and dignified place. They deserve this. The new school will motivate them to work harder and do better because now they won't be suffering.



Irma Zuleta cuts the ribbon and opens one of the school's new doors.



The new school includes this structure for washing hands that has its own water supply.

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to Aracely Martinez, employee of PAVA, Aid Program for Highland Communities. Surrounding schools contain 1200 of primary education and approximately 330 in upper level classes.

Our money has specifically helped in purchasing the raw materials for the school. Other costs were covered by the Guatemalan government (i.e. the teacher's salaries) and by the Tecpán municipality (i.e. the construction workers' salaries). The new school is equipped with four teachers and includes a cook, whose salary is paid by the children's parents.

After building the recent school in La Giralda, we also plan to provide children with scholarships and to help further the teachers' educational courses.

When we decided to build the school, we found PAVA to be our best option, as they have a good reputation for school-building projects. One of PAVAS great advantages is their ability to get commitment from the community (especially the parents), local authorities, and the government.

La Giralda's new school teaches grades first through third. Each year, as students advance, the teachers will also advance what level is taught to the children. We have plans to evaluate the need for student scholarships and courses for teachers. Based on the outcome of this project, we hope to continue supporting more PAVA projects.

Currently, according to Martinez, supplies needed at the new school include: student desks, organizer files, bookshelves, and of course more educational teaching materials (such as reading books, workbooks, notebooks, etc). For more information on how to donate to De La Selva's social projects, please contact socialproject@delaselva.com.

HOW WE FOUND THE OPPORTUNITY TO HELP

In 2004 we began our search for a reputable organization which could assist in using donated money to help the people of Guatemala. The interest in donating time and money to such a cause came from the collaboration of De La Selva's owners, Jostein Haugum & Gunhild Michelsen, and our client, Bob Jones (in England).

The search ended when the we decided to team up with PAVA in October 2004, based on it's long-standing reputation and long record in helping Guatemalan communities.

In 1983, PAVA was developed to offer aid to those communities who suffered from the ongoing civil violence within Guatemala. As PAVA became well-known among communities of the Highlands (those areas that were the most desperately in need of aid), these communities began proposing projects to PAVA.

Thus, PAVA was reborn as an organization who aides communities who first realize



Director Ricarda Ixtamal and De La Selva receive a new set of keys to the school from PAVA's director Mike Shaw-Cross.

their own needs and then come to PAVA for help. It is because of this key concept that PAVA's efforts work so well – as each community involves its own members in the changing/ replacing of/ or constructing of

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something new, the community is more involved in maintaining each project.

Apart from realizing the necessity for new schools and taking action in these projects, PAVA also has a full-time staff who provide technical expertise in planning for development of: drinking water, reforestation, scholarship donation, bridge construction, and women's education.

As mentioned above, PAVA is run by a full-time management staff based in Chimaltenango, Guatemala. Only 3% of funds raised go to the operational costs of PAVA. Most involved with PAVA are experts in a certain area who volunteer their time.

Thanks to our donors and PAVA'S Assistance, we have seen success come true as the first school was built and opened on July 15, 2005. Based on these results, De La Selva pledges to build another school in 2006.



Three female students begin the first skit of the afternoon -- a traditional tale about the marketplace and the people who visit.



Student Reina Guarcax cites a poem she wrote, dedicated to Tecpan, Guatemala, the site of her town and school.

GET INVOLVED

Specific future social projects of De La Selva and other donors include developing children's scholarships and more educational classes for the teachers. Currently, we are updating our website, with intentions to open our new site in October. These changes will also include information on social projects, with updates as events take place.

Any questions you may have or if you would like to make a donation please contact us at socialproject@delaselva.com.

Also, please note that we are interested in your thoughts. If you have specific information you would like to receive about the social projects in which you're involved, or if you simply would like to suggest an interest for a future social project, please do contact us.

We would be happy to receive any comments, ideas, or suggestions.