

Dear Friends,

In 2005, we completed our first social project in Tecpán, Guatemala -- a new school for the children of La Giralda. The success of the first project has helped us to push forward with creating the same opportunity in another area of the country.

This year, together with PAVA, an organization dedicated to the betterment of communities in the highlands, we are beginning the first steps of funding and building a new school for the children of El Mirador Tewjuyú.

El Mirador is located 18 kilometers off the main highway, following a dirt/rock road on rough terrain. The new school reaches an altitude of 2,300 meters.

The community population count is approximately 260 individuals; 77 of them are children attending class at a current, 3-room provisional school constructed by the townsfolk using

materials (steel lamina and cinder blocks) donated by the municipality.

In 2007, El Mirador residents expect to host approximately 110 students between ages 5 to 15,

From you to the mayan people®



The children of grades 4, 5, and 6 attentively work with their shared teacher in one classroom, using cement blocks and wooden planks as their makeshift desks.

and offer grades from kindergarten ('pre-primaria') through 6th grade ('6o grado.'). The school currently employs 3 teachers who travel 23 km daily from the municipality's central city of Tecpán to El Mirador.

The community is fluent and communicates more commonly in the Maya languages of *Kakchiquel* and *Quiché* than in Spanish. Community members explain that their most common form of communication is actually a mix of the two languages.

At school, the children are taught Spanish (often referred to as *Castellano* in Guatemala) and *Kakchiquel*.

77 children are currently attending class at a 3-room provisional school made of lamina and cinderblock.

PHOTO GALLERY



PROVISIONAL SCHOOL

A view of the school constructed by El Mirador's community members in order to save their children a 5 km walk to the nearest fully functional school.



NEW SCHOOL LOCATION

Overlooking the terrain of the new school's location from the provisional school. This terrain was completely purchased by the community and will be prepared for construction by El Mirador's residents, under PAVA's instruction.



CURRENT CONDITIONS

A internal look at the rooms. Each classroom hosts at least two grades and more than 24 students, each of which uses a cinderblock as his/her chair and a wooden plank as a desk.

THE COMMUNITY OF EL MIRADOR TEWJUYÚ & PAVA

by Crystal M. Shafiabady

El Mirador Tewjuyú is so high up on the hilltop that the sun only briefly warms the area, and the clouds feel close enough to touch. PAVA and I met with the residents of El Mirador on 06 July, a usual chilly day, to discuss the necessities and review planning for the construction.

The community welcomed us with a lunch, a brief visit to the school, time to inspect the new school terrain, and several short speeches de-

scribing their necessity for the school and their willingness and strong desire to organize and help in building the school quickly and in the best possible manner, under PAVA's direction.

In 2005, we began a relationship with PAVA and worked directly with the organization to ensure our project was cared for properly.

You can read more about PAVA's initiative at their site: www.pavafoundation.org.

FURTHER NEEDS AT LA GIRALDA

by Crystal M. Shafiabady

On July 15, 2005; the new 4-room school at La Giralda held an inaugural celebration, including dances and skits performed by the school's 130 students.

As of July 2006, the number of students attending La Giralda's school has increased to 188, and at least 90 more students are expected to begin in 2007!

In several visits to La Giralda throughout the past year, I have seen how the students' spirits always seem positive and their personalities outgoing, yet always obedient to their teachers, especially Director Ricarda Ixtamallic, who continues fighting for the betterment of her town.

Apart from the need of more classrooms, a storage room/library, and teacher's meeting area, Ricarda also



asks for help in protecting the school.

She, along with Olga (an extremely supportive and helpful teacher at the school) often administers town meetings to update the community on problems, achievements, and issues at hand.

La Giralda has asked De La Selva for further help in funding further construction, including a water pump (water is often unavailable for weeks at a time) Currently avail-

From you to the mountain people

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able are bathrooms and a washbasin.

Progress at the school shows that students are now attending from grades *pre-primaria* (pre-school) through *6o Grado*. (Most children are 14 or 15 years once they reach this grade, which by Guatemala law is the final obligatory grade.)

School hours are 7:30 to 12:30. Daily snacks are served from 10 to 10:30 to every child at the school, which is usually a hot drink (called *atol* and made from *masa*, corn, plantains, etc.) and sweet bread. This snack helps



The students in grades 2, 3, and the rest of grade 1 crowd into one room and use cinderblocks and woodplanks as desks.

keep the children in better spirits.

Not all are able to eat breakfast in the mornings, Ricarda mentioned to us.

We at De La Selva have much pride to see that our little 4-room school has helped the community to grow and continue to progress.

But the needs at La Giralda are still great, and we would like to continue to give to a community that deserves more for its children and future generations.



Grades pre-primaria, (kindergarten) and 1 grade are now in make-shift rooms due to the rapid increase in number of students.

HOW CAN I HELP?

The new school in El Mirador Tewjuyú is in the plans for the upcoming months, and De La Selva is collecting donations from clients as well as donating from our own earnings. Other plans are to help further at La Giralda, and to offer desks at El Mirador. According to PAVA, the necessary budget *only* for the school at El Mirador is approximately US \$5,839.00. DLS would like to look into what advancements we could plan for these 2 communities in 2007. Please contact us at socialproject@delaselva.com.

You can read more about our past social projects on our webpage (www.delaselva.com) by going directly to www.delaselva.com/social.htm.