



United by Friendship

News



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“At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within.

-Albert Schweitzer



I am always inspired by the value placed on education by the people of Guatemala. As one impoverished Mayan woman told me “without an education, it is hard to earn

money for food.”

Parents willingly sacrifice so that their children will learn to read and write. I’ve watched communities labor together to clear the ground and lay the foundation for their new school. I’ve seen students help build their own schools. Education is understood to be a precious thing. I want to recognize the many dedicated teachers who walk for miles each day to reach the isolated schools. The teacher at Loma la Cal rides his motor cycle for 1 hour to the end of the road and then hikes for several miles each day to teach 1st through 4th grade at Loma la Cal. The teacher at Xejuyub teaches her young students in both Spanish and the Quiche Mayan language. The passion for building a better future for the next generation is shared by United by Friendship and we are honored to assist them in their educational goals.

-Deborah Simon, President UbF

School House for Xejuyub

The hamlet of Xejuyub, located in central Guatemala understands that education is a key to reducing poverty and increasing opportunity. Some years ago the parents of Xejuyub built a windowless, one room, corrugated tin, school house with a dirt floor for their children in grades 1-4. Imagine trying to write and do math in a giant tin can! The community wanted their children to have a more comfortable and functional space in which to learn so last year Xejuyub asked UbF to partner with them in constructing a new two-room school house. They offered to provide the labor if UbF would provide the construction materials. UbF gladly honored their request, appealed to our generous donors and raised \$12,000 for the project. In the spring of 2008, a team of UbF volunteers visited Xejuyub to celebrate the completion of this beautifully designed new school. The interior is divided by two large metal doors, creating two separate classrooms. When

the doors are open the two classrooms are transformed into one large room for use for assemblies and/or community events. We were pleased to see that the community had the foresight to modernize their new school by adding flush toilets and a septic system, rare amenities in this region. They also planted a lovely herb garden that the children tend at recess. The community of Xejuyub greeted the team with a big “welcome” banner and firecrackers. The colorful cement block school house was adorned with crepe paper and balloons. A United by Friendship plaque rests over the entryway. Along the front outside wall are commemorative tiles of those individuals that contributed \$500 or more toward this project. During the official inauguration ceremony the team sat at the new student desks provided by several Rotary clubs. The floors were strewn with fragrant pine

needles. The program opened with the students marching in behind the Guatemalan flag. This was followed by speeches and folkloric dances along with the presentation of gifts of appreciation from the community. Afterward, the parents served everyone a special meal of turkey soup. Deborah Simon, President of UbF, addressed the community and explained that it was the donations of many people that made it possible for UbF to build the school. She encouraged the people to view the tiles that adorn the front wall of the school as a daily reminder that “they are not alone”. She reminded them that many people in the United States value the education of and care about their precious Guatemalan children. The people were moved by her words, and repeated softly “We are not alone.” In reply, the community of Xejuyub conveys their profound gratitude to you and says “Mil Gracias.” — A Thousand Thanks.





YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

United by Friendship depends on the generous gifts of people and organizations who have an interest in community development in Latin America and promoting goodwill with our neighboring countries. We invite you to help make a lasting difference in the lives of hard working people.

For those who donate \$500 or more, a special recognition marble tile with your name, or the name of whoever you would like to designate, will be placed in the wall of the Xejuyub School.

Please know that all donations are welcomed and deeply appreciated.

Please complete and mail back the enclosed donation card and "relight the flame" for a very worthy community!



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Contact Us

www.unitedbyfriendship.org
email: sprky309@aol.com
phone 505-753-5841

336 Camino Santa Cruz
Española, New Mexico 87532 USA

UBF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Loma la Cal Irrigation system, our 2009 project.

Visiting the small village of Loma la Cal, Guatemala, has never been easy, as there is no road to it. One either hikes or rides on horseback. The geographic isolation makes it difficult for children to learn, in their modest community school, beyond the 1st- 4th grade levels. The village has no outside markets to rely on, so the families grow beans and corn for their own use during the rainy season to sustain them during the 6 month dry season.



This year, however, something very exciting is happening that has the potential to completely transform Loma la Cal. A dirt road is being built to their village. Francisco Urizar, the leader of Loma La Cal, succinctly explained the implications of this new road when he said, "With a road we have new opportunities. Our children can be transported to schools where they can continue their education,

and we will have a way to get our produce out to markets." His vision is to build an irrigation system for the local farmers, enabling them to expand their crops to include squash, melons, peanuts, chili and tomatoes. Loma la Cal is, also, making plans to join a

co-op with the hope of exporting their produce. United by Friendship believes in partnering with small communities to stimulate economic development and has selected the Loma la Cal irrigation project for 2009. With your help, Ubf will purchase the materials needed for channeling the water from a spring located six kilometers away. The cost is projected to be \$22,128. The community will provide the manual labor and will be supervised by the Usphantan county engineer.

I invite you to join us in assisting Loma la Cal in actively working toward their vision for a secure and abundant future. Your financial assistance will enable Loma la Cal to take an important next step up the ladder to improved education, self sufficiency and quality of life. In advance, thank you all so much for generously supporting this worthy project!

CROSSING BORDERS

United by Friendship is a small nonprofit 501C(3) organization composed of volunteers whose mission is to strengthen communities in Central America by partnering with them on projects related to water, education, health and economic development. UBF visits the communities and with them determines which projects to support. Friendships, understanding, trust and goodwill are built as we work together.

