

Friendly Confines January 2004 Update

Izabal Guatemala Aid project



The above photo of our 42 ft. sailboat, Friendly Confines, currently located on the Rio Dulce in Guatemala, serves as a reminder to us that we have so much, while others have so little.

Background

Instead of our usual holiday newsletter, we decided to take this opportunity to inform our friends of the support we have been able to provide to the indigent Guatemala natives who are, for the most part, Mayan Indians.

The expenditures described below were made possible by the response to our fund raising last summer; our thanks to those who gave. The Guatemala Night sponsored by the Map Room, owned by our generous friends, Laura and Mark Blasingame, raised a little over \$2000. The response to our mail solicitation brought the total to nearly \$4000, plus medical supplies.

Esmeralda

This rural town, in the state of Izabal, near marinas catering to the sailing cruising community, is accessible only by boat. JoAnn and Brian Soland, co-owners of Mario's Marino, were invaluable in helping to identify worthy projects and potential recipients for financial aid.

The town of about 750 has a small clinic and a school built with the support of sailors like ourselves.

The typical house is made of small poles lashed together with a thatched roof of fronds and a dirt floor. There is no running water. The children, though shoeless, are happy, friendly, and polite.

Committed Financial aid

1. School supplies.....\$130
2. School Scholarship.....\$600
3. College scholarship.....\$1200
4. Pre-school Spanish.....\$300
5. In-kind supplies
 - a. medical supplies
 - b. used shoes
 - c. eyeglasses



School Support

The grade school located in Esmeralda has a student population of approximately 250. One of the three teachers is Cilda. She also acts as the school administrator.

When asked, she reported three needs. First, the state provides no school supplies. A bus trip to the town of Morales with Cilda allowed us to purchase a years supply as shown below.

Second, many children don't speak spanish. They speak Q'eqche, and can't learn in school. With your help, we established a Saturday school to teach pre-schoolers rudimentary Spanish.

Third, the children must wear shoes to school, a government rule. We are returning to Guatemala this month with suitcases full of used shoes, but we could use a lot more. Also, old eyeglasses are valuable.



Educational Scholarships

Although grade school costs only 30 Quetzales (\$3.75) a month, high school is beyond the means of most. Sorayda Lopez Perez is a fourteen year old who wishes to attend the three-year high school. Her twenty-nine year old father works at Mario's Marina, and supports her mother and four younger brothers.

Sorayda has been



Avelino and parents

volunteering at the local clinic, and wants to become a nurse or a secretary .

The assistance to Sorayda will be 350 Q. (\$43.75) a month tuition and 250 Q. (\$31.25) for books, transportation, uniform and incidentals.

Avelino Rax Zacul is a sixteen year old Mayan. He is shown above with his 79 year old father and 49 year old mother. His scholarship will provide room and board at the school in Morales.



Barbara and Sorayda

Avelino is the only child of his mother, although he has a widowed step-sister who has seven children. The extended family lives in a two room house. Avelino is the only one who speaks spanish; the others speak only Q'eqche.

After graduating from the three year technical college, Avelino will be certified to teach in Esmeralda's grade school. Avelino was suffering from a debilitating case of chicken pox when we left in December.

We are thankful for the generous help of our friends. Should you wish to support our endeavors, you can send your tax deductible donation to:

**LifeNets
Izabal Project
3707 Turfway Court
Indianapolis, In 46228-2095.**

Our best to you,

Jon and Barb Brightman