



Friends of FORMA

August 2017 Newsletter

A Shared Interest and Connection by Craig Orr, New President of Friends of FORMA

There is a saying that we are all connected in some manner. My connection with Wayne Brown began over three years ago. Wayne lives in Silver City, NM and I live in Northville, MI, a suburb of Detroit. Although we had never met, we had both traveled to Guatemala and witnessed the work of Gregorio and Candelaria Garcia, assisting students and families with education and nutrition programs. That shared connection and the desire to do more led Wayne and me to begin meeting by phone. A few months later we started Friends of FORMA along with our other founding members, Lynnette Brown and Lucy Potts. Because we are located in different parts of the U.S. we conduct our meetings by Skype. The picture of Wayne and me is our first in person meeting a year ago in Michigan. Wayne had made a 300-mile detour on a cross country trip he was on to enable us to meet in person.

Recently Wayne stepped down as president to attend to other commitments. Fortunately, he remains as a Friends of FORMA board member. As I move from treasurer to board president, I am grateful for Wayne's past leadership. More importantly, I am grateful for our friendship.



Wayne and Craig Meet

Message from the Board

As our students begin the second half of their school year in Guatemala they continue to progress in their studies and their development as future leaders. We see this progress in the improvement in their grades and our interaction with them in our annual visits. This progress is also demonstrated in their matriculation through high school on to college and careers. Another example of their success is the awarding of scholarships for four of our high school students for the second consecutive year to attend a one-month Summer English Institute in California (what an incredible opportunity!).

In just our third year as an organization we've accomplished a lot. However, we are not resting on our laurels. As a board, we are focused on solidifying our funding from year to year and our mission to provide educational and nutritional assistance to children and families in the rural highlands of Guatemala.

On behalf of the board thank you for your continued support of Friends of FORMA. Together we are making a positive impact on the lives of hundreds of families in Guatemala.



Reproductive Health Workshops for Students and Parents

June and July were busy months for FORMA Guatemala. Midterm exams, English classes, and reproductive health workshops for students and parents. The students attended their all-day workshop on June 29th. Twenty-seven students attended. Some of the covered topics were family planning, importance of healthy nutrition for baby development, gender roles in society, and contraception options. The parents of elementary students who participate in Saturday morning tutoring sessions were offered an abbreviated version of the same workshop. These workshops occurred in three communities—Buena Vista, Pacaman and Xejuyu. These were all limited to 33 participants each and were all full. This speaks to the need for this type of service in Guatemala. Thank you for your generosity and help for these people to improve the situation of their families.



Literacy Program at Buena Vista



English Tutoring with Randy



Randy with Oliver's Family

Randy Stephenson's Visit to Panajachel

Friends of FORMA board member Randy Stephenson spent two weeks in Panajachel during the month of July. This enabled him to attend one of the FOF sponsored workshops for women. The focus of the workshop, conducted by ALAS, was to provide information on various forms of birth control. Randy was very impressed by the professionalism and the attention and participation by the women in attendance.

Randy and Candelaria of FORMA Guatemala visited the home of scholarship student Oliver. Randy also had the opportunity to teach English to scholarship students Rodolfo, Manuela and Eimy, who were eager to learn. Randy worked with the non-profit Kaleidoscope Child Foundation to deliver 100 water filters to families served by Friends of FORMA. Kaleidoscope is seeking ways to get involved in Guatemala as well, and we welcome their efforts to be of service in the Panajachel area.

Introducing Two Junior High Scholarship Students:



SILVIA SELENA

Silvia is from Monte Mercedes, Solola and comes from a family where only her mother is the head of the household. Her father disappeared some years ago and his disappearance is a mystery. Due to this her sisters did not have the opportunity to go to school beyond the 6th grade. Her sisters work as domestics in the capital. Although her sisters did not have the opportunity to continue in school, they support Silvia because they believe in her potential and do not want her to have a life like theirs.

Silvia is extraordinarily focused in her studies. She was the best of her class in 6th grade and her big dream is to go to university and support her mother to improve her life condition.



MATERLI ROSIBEL

Mayerli is a 12-year-old who lives in the neighborhood of Xejuyu II in the town of San Andres Semetabaj, Solola. She comes from a large family of 11 children, and most of them have not had the opportunity to advance beyond elementary school. Her father works as a temporary day laborer, and her mother is a stay-at-home housewife. She earns some money as a weaver of traditional Mayan fabrics. Mayerli is excited to study, to become a professional woman, and to avoid marrying very young, as her sisters have done. She says that she very much wants to take advantage of this great opportunity.

When you select Friends of FORMA as you shop at Amazon Smile, 0.5% of your purchases will be donated to us.

<p>Please note our new mailing address. We held elections and our new treasurer lives in Decatur, GA.</p>	<p>Friends of FORMA 1501 Oakridge Court Decatur, GA 30033 www.friendsofforma.org</p>	<p>Board Members Craig Orr Lynnette Brown Tony Rothschild</p>	<p>Randy Stephenson Wayne Brown Lucy Potts</p>
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