



Friends of FORMA

April 2018 Newsletter

Message from the Board by Craig Orr, Board President

Last month, while I was in Guatemala, I met with the middle and high school scholarship students we support and their parents. My message to the parents was that the greatest gift we can give to students is the opportunity for a quality education. Your Friends of FORMA board remains focused on providing quality education and nutrition programs for students and families in the Lake Atitlan region of Guatemala.

With our core programs we are providing educational scholarships to 24 middle and high school students, daily lunch and hygiene programs for 300 students at three elementary schools, and staff two library/learning centers. In addition to the afore-mentioned programs, this year we are also providing 5 hours per week of English instruction to each scholarship student, two Saturday morning tutoring programs for 25 elementary school students in two communities and two literacy education programs for 25 women in two communities.

None of these programs would be possible without your financial support. On behalf of your Friends of FORMA board of directors, thank you for your generosity and commitment to our mission.



Craig meets with parents and scholarship students in Panaiaachel.



A Day in the Life of Friends of FORMA Scholarship Student Mayra by Renee Franklin

When you first meet Mayra, you are struck by how quiet and shy she is, especially in a group. Her reserved nature compels you to ask questions in a more private setting and find out more. At that point, she readily answers questions about her life.

As the second oldest of six children, 15-year old Mayra awakens between 5am and 6am to help her mother with her younger siblings. Mayra's mother tried to earn money by knitting items like belts and women's tops to sell, but many days she sells very little or nothing at all. After helping her mother, Mayra begins her hour-long trip to school, which entails taking two buses and extensive walking. She usually returns home after dark. At this point, she often knits items for her mother to sell before attempting to study. The conditions are difficult and there is precious little light by which to knit or read, and there is little quiet in their one room home. Nevertheless, Mayra set the goal of attending a private high school, which accepts only the best students, and she did it!

Mayra's hard work coupled with the support of her mother, FORMA Guatemala and Friends of FORMA, allowed her to accomplish her goal. Mayra is not done, however. Mayra speaks Kaqchikel and Spanish, and she has a talent for learning languages. She is interested in continuing her English studies as well as learning French and Mandarin. She excels in math and she could see herself exploring careers in business administration, teaching and nursing.

Meet New Friends of FORMA Board Member, Charley Hoffman

Friends of FORMA is proud to announce that Charley Hoffman has joined its Board of Directors. Charley worked most of his career for the American Bankers Association, first as an economist and then as an executive in its professional development business. He has also taught for most of that time as an adjunct professor in the Economics Department at George Mason University. He has been active in a church-affiliated group responsible for providing meals to the homeless in Fairfax County, Virginia where he lives. He and his wife, Barbara, have made a number of trips to South and Central America, including a visit to the programs sponsored by Friends of FORMA.



New English Language Program and Instructor, Zelda

This year Friends of FORMA is sponsoring English classes for our scholarship students. It was our collective desire to create a more structured English language program, so we purchased textbooks and workbooks and called upon Candelaria and Gregorio, owners of the Jabel Tinamit Language School, to look for someone qualified to work with the students. They were able to secure the services of Zelda Tuoni, who is originally from Panajachel but has studied both in China and at Arizona State University. She is fluent in Spanish and English and is at an intermediate level in Mandarin Chinese. She has a variety of credentials that include volunteer work and employment. For example, she has worked with the Mayan Families organization in Panajachel and has served both as an English tutor and English teacher to adults and teenagers prior to her beginning work with our students. Classes are held at the Jabel Tinamit School and Candelaria reports that Zelda is doing a great job with the students.



ANA ISABEL
 Ana, 15, is from Santa Catarina Palopo. Her father, Juan Alberto, 51, sells fruit. Her mother, Maria Lopez, 55, is a domestic worker. Both parents are from Santa Catarina and are illiterate. Ana is the 6th of 8 children. She started school at the age of 10, instead of 6 because resources were scarce in her family. She is now in the first year of basico, equivalent to 7th grade in the US, and with good study habits is doing quite well. She likes math and her goal is to graduate as an accountant. Ana Isabel is very intelligent, respectful and has a fun personality. She hopes to be able to help her family economically.

Introducing Two Middle School Scholarship Students

DANIEL SALOMON
 Daniel, 12, is from Panajachel and is an enthusiastic student in his first year of basico (7th grade). His mother, Damariz Amanda, 35, is a domestic worker. His father, Valero Matzar, 42, is a day laborer. Daniel is the younger of 3 brothers. His plan is to dedicate himself to his studies and graduate a professional in a field to be chosen later.



Buena Vista Elementary School children and their tutors, the Friends of FORMA scholarship students. These children are tutored two Saturdays a month and really enjoy learning with the help of their tutors. This extra help can make the difference in how successful and motivated these youngsters are. The scholarship students become important role models for them.

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

Please note our new mailing address. We held elections and our new treasurer lives in Decatur, GA.

Friends of FORMA 1501 Oakridge Court Decatur, GA 30033 www.friendsofforma.org	Board Members Craig Orr Lynnette Brown Tony Rothschild	Charley Hoffman Randy Stephenson Wayne Brown Lucy Potts
--	--	--