

iQue Sepan!

(That you all know, find out!)



Newsletter of the Santa Elena Project of Accompaniment (SEPA)
October 2011

SEPA is pleased to announce here in our first online newsletter that we made a giant leap forward this past February.

1. The Santa Elena Project of Accompaniment aka SEPA, is now registered in the State of Ohio as a tax exempt organization. For this process we formulated bylaws and submitted extensive information proving that all the necessary requirements for the 501C3 status were met, and we came through with flying colors.

2. Our new website is now active, check it out: <http://www.obsepa.org>

3. We are updating contact information so that we can be in much closer contact with you, our valued supporters.

Special Thanks to:

* Judy Kruger, John Gates, David Ashenhurst, Don Illig, and Bill Fuchsman for gathering and submitting the documentation for tax exempt status.

* Marty Buck, our generous past webmaster who now passes his responsibility to our new web mistress, Sue Simonson. In addition, Sue has volunteered to edit our newsletters.

* Judy Riggle, previous keeper of the contact list and coordinator of mailing, and to Mary Ann Trost who typed up and moved the contact list to Google docs, thus giving more persons the ability to keep this list current.

We hope that these changes will enable us to keep you abreast of the way SEPA is affecting the lives of the Guatemalan communities that we all collectively support. It is our plan to send regular e-newsletters. Please spend some time looking over the web site. It has information and links worth exploring.

SEPA sponsors new accompanier!

SEPA is happy to announce that, this October, we will rejoin NISGUA's human rights observer program in Guatemala, financially supporting Oberlin College alumna Viviana Gentry (class of '11) as an accompanier.

SEPA formed in 1997 to support accompaniers whose presence in the indigenous, returned-refugee village of Santa Elena decreased the possibility of violent attacks by Guatemalan military and para-military groups and allowed the villagers to restart their lives with some greater sense of security. When village accompaniment in Santa Elena and Copal AA was no longer needed, SEPA supported accompaniment of individuals and organizations seeking women's rights, labor rights, indigenous rights and environmental rights, but also continued to support education in the villages of



Santa Elena and Copal AA. For the last three years, SEPA has supported the two villages, but hasn't had the resources to continue supporting accompaniment. We are pleased to be able to

support both education and human rights accompaniment once again.

Viviana writes, "I am a recent graduate from Oberlin College with a brand new degree in Environmental Studies and a minor in History. I hail from the Southside of Chicago, but also call Mexico City home. Following graduation, after working on the George Jones farm this summer, I have decided to dedicate my time to accompaniment in Guatemala with the Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala (NISGUA).

Accompaniment with NISGUA entails 'walking with' different organizations, communities, and individuals throughout their struggles for justice in post-armed conflict Guatemala. Accompaniers serve as international witnesses to the work involved in building a more just and peaceful Guatemala. ... Type[s] of communities and organizations that NISGUA accompanies include those organizing the protection of their land from international hydroelectric dam companies and mining companies.

"Though a large portion of my family hails from Mexico, I have chosen to participate in work in Guatemala in recognition of the similar forces that affect and have affected all of Latin America. These include colonization, neoliberal development strategies, migration, and militarization. Additionally, NISGUA continues to need new accompaniers to help support the network that has been in place since the Peace Accords were signed in 1996.

NISGUA requires 6 months from each individual accompanier. As a result there is frequent turnover in accompaniers involved with NISGUA. The process of recovery and sustainable development in Guatemala has been and will continue to be a long and arduous process. I urge you to consider accompaniment with NISGUA if you have the time, ability, and passion to be part of a powerful relationship of solidarity."

2012 Guatemala Arte Maya Calendars A GREAT GIFT

Each calendar costs \$14.95

Contact Barb or Bill Fuchsman to purchase
~440-774-1804 or bafuchsman@oberlin.net~

Beauty for justice, art for peace!

Our bright and brilliant Arte Maya 2012 calendars allow you to support social change while enjoying original works of art by Guatemalan



artists from the Lake Atitlan area.

With your calendar purchase, you support:

- the international solidarity work of NISGUA and SEPA
- the Maya artists who paint the pictures.
- the union workers who print the calendars.

Each calendar, printed in both English and Spanish, features:

- 12 paintings in the distinctive, colorful style developed by the indigenous artists near Lake Atitlan.
- Biographies of each contributing artist and an explanation of each painting.
- U.S. and Guatemalan holidays
- Maya logographs signifying each day's place on the Maya calendar.
- A brief guide to this intricate system is included at the beginning of the calendar.

