

SEPA Annual Report
March 5, 2017

Thank you for this opportunity to offer a brief summary of SEPA's efforts during this past year.

It remains the Board's mission to support the educational efforts of the villages of Santa Elena and Copal AA as well as support the mission of NISGUA (Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala) by supporting human rights accompaniers in Guatemala.

In fulfilling our mission we:

- 1) Provided \$18000 in scholarship funds to the community of Copal AA La Esperanza. This money was used to fund the school that served 81 students during 2016. (61 – middle and 20 high school students) 19 of those students graduated making it a very proud year for the community. SEPA remains the sole funding source for the middle school/high school – no government money is received. It was SEPA's goal to find another funding source but so far we have been unsuccessful.
- 2) SEPA did host the director of Copal AA's school when he came to the States last September looking for other funding sources. We can conclude that this process will be a gradual one.
- 3) The Board is supportive of Copal Aa's plans to expand the educational opportunities and facilities at the school. As of now there are no high school students for 2017, but we expect this will change and the school hopes to purchase new computers and employ another teacher once enrollment picks up again.
- 4) Sepa provided \$7350 for 17 students in Santa Elena. 10 students studied at middle schools and 7 at high schools. All had to leave Santa Elena to attend school. There was a higher than normal drop out rate this year due to a variety of reasons. Students who fail or drop out are not eligible to receive a scholarship again for several years.
- 5) We supported Sarah Johnson for six months in her accompaniement position in Guatemala. She has now returned to the Oberlin area and many of you heard her speak at the Guatemalan dinner.
- 6) The Board was supportive of John Gates who traveled to Guatemala in November, 2016. This face to face time he has with the people in Copal AA and Santa Elena is priceless to say the least. He is trusted and respected both here and there, and the relationship he has established makes all of this possible. Thank you John.
- 7) We had many successful fundraising efforts over the past year which of course made possible all of the accomplishments I just listed. Thanks to all of you who helped us exceed our goals at the Farmer's Market, the B&B program, the sale of Guatemalan products, the annual Guatemalan Dinner and of course your annual donations.
- 8) And last but not least, thanks to the Board and to Judy Kruger who coordinates the B&B program. A special thanks to Betsy Bruce who is leaving the Board since she has recently retired and is busy making future plans.

We look forward to this new fiscal year.