

May 24, 2010

Dear Friends of the Santa María Tzejá education programs,

My family and I send you our greetings and best wishes from Guatemala. We hope that this letter finds all of you in good health and spirits. Many of you know that I was in the USA for a good part of March and April, accompanied by my 11 year old daughter Kristina Lisandra. We enjoyed having the opportunity to visit with many of you and to share pictures and stories about our work in Guatemala. For those of you that we missed on this recent trip, we look forward to seeing you during our next scheduled trip north in 2011.



Please excuse me as it's been a while since I've written a newsletter update regarding some of the advances and achievements in our village education program in Santa María Tzejá. I have a lot of good and exciting news to report on. Rather than try to cover everything in one newsletter, I will focus today on one topic, and then write another mini-update within a couple of weeks.

Construction of a New Village Library: I am part of the leadership team that is overseeing the construction of a new library facility. Two young teachers from the



Basque Country region of Spain did their teaching practicum in our village a few years ago and upon returning home they raised \$15,000 for the construction of a new library. The facility was designed by Nazario Gutiérrez, my former student who got his degree in architecture last year from the University of San Carlos in Guatemala (see photo.) Nazario is also overseeing the construction process. Aurelio Canil, another former student of mine who is close to graduating as a civil engineer, has also been very involved in the project. Both Nazario and Aurelio have been doing excellent work and it is gratifying to see the contributions

they are now making in our community. Work has only just begun on the project, and I am attaching a few of the preliminary photos. Middle school students are contributing to the project by collectively making over a thousand trips to nearby rivers and streams to haul in the water for mixing with the cement. Village men are contributing unpaid labor to advance the project. Their first task was to level off the site where the building is going up, which was a big job given the hilly terrain we have in the village. This work involved moving thousands of wheelbarrows full of dirt. Then they offloaded truckloads of cement and other building materials in the heat of the day and now they are doing other heavy labor like mixing the cement and pouring it, digging foundation ditches, etc. When the project is completed, we will quantify the dollar value of the unpaid labor that village members are contributing, and I am sure their contribution will be significant.

The \$15,000 raised by the Basque Country teachers is not going to be sufficient to complete the facility, so we have divided the work into two phases. Our goal now, in phase one, is to get the building up with walls, floor and a roof. Phase two will involve raising the funds to purchase and install the windows and doors, finishing the electrical wiring, painting the building and doing other finishing touches.



The \$15,000 for the first phase of the construction is being used in its entirety to purchase construction materials and to pay the team of professional builders. I am working to raise about \$3,500 in additional funds so that we can continue to pay Aurelio and Nazario a small stipend for working on the project and for other necessary construction expenses that the Basque Country fund is unable to pay. So I am asking for your support today, for those of

you who are able, to send in a donation of any amount to support the library construction project. If you are able to help, you can make your check out to the Gates Presbyterian Church and mail it in to the following address:

Gates Presbyterian Church
1049 Wegman Road
Rochester, NY 14624-1530

Please attach a note indicating that your donation is for the library construction project in Santa María Tzejá, and please notify me of your donation via an email.

I will continue to send up additional photos as the construction work proceeds.

Thank you as always for your kind and much appreciated support.

Sincerely,

Randall Shea

