



October 2011

Dear Friends,

The Indigenous association of Yashalum is living its 20th anniversary year and enjoying God's blessings on all those years of effort. Over 180 Mayan students have graduated from college with professional degrees. Several have continued to share the gift of education by participating in the formation of other non-profit groups to help the communities: "Tzoblej Chichil Nich Romero" working with over 80 midwives; "Nichmal K'ak'alel K'inal" traditional embroidery co-op; "Yax Winic" organic coffee coop; "Skolta'el Yu'un jLumaltic SYJAC" working with poor children and women; "Christian Foundation for Children and Aging" sponsoring children and the elderly; and "Comité Digna Ochoa" promoting legal support and human rights.

At the present time, Yashalum is offering scholarships to 245 students; 122 in college and 123 in junior high and high school including those living in town and those at the Girls' and Boys' residences. It has been a busy time over the last two months getting ready for the 2011-2012 school year with the registration of students, reception of letters to sponsors, school documents and recommendations from civil and religious leaders in the communities. Our Council of Directors had really hoped to increase the number of scholarships this year since there were 80 new applications for junior high and high school and 108 for college. We give thanks for our achievements and limitations, energized by the results of the program, by the commitment of our sponsors and by the dreams of our young the students.

Additional goals for this year are to strengthen the participation of the parents in the various committees that oversee the program and to invite more of the graduates to sponsor new students so as to share their resources with the next generation.

We also realize the need to increase the number of members of the organization and strengthen our links with other grass root groups in the area of health, conservation and community development.

Supported by the achievements of the past 20 year, encouraged by the sacrifice of our sponsors and challenged by the needs of our communities, we are dedicated, with God's help, to make this year the best yet.

Hermenegildo (Gildo) Méndez Gutiérrez  
Administrator of the Education Program of Yashalum