



# Mission Teaching Foundation

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Visit [www.missionteachingfoundation.org](http://www.missionteachingfoundation.org)

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Dear Friends,

What better witness to the success of the Chiapas Education Program than the words of its own graduates on its behalf! A new generation has stepped forward to take on the issues facing the world today and to continue to work towards viable solutions.

We hope you enjoy reading their notes. We hope you are as proud of our graduates as their parents and we are. We hope you will keep them, our current students, and all the Mayan indigenous in your prayers. And we hope you will continue to assist them in their efforts in whatever way possible, as much as you can.

Fr. Gary and the volunteers of MTF

## Dear Sponsors and Donors,

I am happy to be able to write this short letter in hopes that you are filled with joy and in good health in your home and at work.

In the name of those who work for Yashalúm and in the name of the Board of Directors, I thank you immensely for your support. Your monthly donations are used directly for the benefit of the students in the educational program.

We are in preparation for the 2010-2011 school year and there is a great demand for scholarships, especially on the university level. There are many more requests for help this year. Our resources are limited and we are concerned that many deserving young people might not receive the help they need to continue their education. We do hope that we can satisfy most of the need, since it is always sad to see the faces of the students left out of the program.

On December 11, our organization will be celebrating 20 years of service to the community. We have planned to include as many students and their families as possible in the commemorations. We have also invited various other nonprofit organizations to the event and the presentations of the education and community development programs. We also have planned an exposition of the history of the past 20 years of Yashalúm.

We invite you to accompany us with your prayers and to please continue to help the young Mayans who share a deep commitment to get a good education.

It is a pleasure to write you and to thank you for your support. My Our Lord Jesus shower blessings on your homes, your families and your work.

## Elmar Hernández Gómez

College Graduate in Business Administration

Administrator of Yashalúm, the civil association in Mexico with which MTF is partnered



Feast of the Holy Cross celebration at RSA

## Dear Padrinos,

Please accept a cordial greeting from the students and staff at the Boys' Ranch, Rancho Santiago Apóstol.

The motive for this note is to thank you for the generous support that you have given our young people in their efforts for a good education. They all come from very poor families who live in the mountain villages. Here at the ranch we hope to provide a secure and healthy setting for them to live in while they continue to go to school. Every attempt is made to respect the culture and customs of our Mayan heritage.

Each month the economic situation worsens in Chiapas. Our students come from families whose fathers are field workers most of whom make about 5 dollars a day in wages. It is only due to our sponsors that the junior high and high school students at the ranch can continue to go to school.

This December we will be celebrating our 20 years of service as the organization of Yashalúm de Santiago Apóstol. The goal of the anniversary is to thank God for past blessings and to ask for added strength and enthusiasm to help even more young people to have a better future.

Again, thank you for your prayers and support. We wish you the best success in all your activities.

Respectfully,

## Aida Antonia Cruz Pérez.

College Graduate in Psychology,  
Administrator of RSA

## Dear Friends,

With this note, we the staff at Casa Santa Maria send sincere greetings hoping that you are in good health and content together with your loved ones.

The reason for writing is to thank you on behalf of the young women at Casa Santa Maria for your continued and generous support. We are all indigenous women from the Ch'ol and Tzeltal Mayan ethnic groups, who traditionally were never given the opportunity for an education. The fact that we all come from very poor families also makes it nearly impossible for our parents to send us to school. Things are changing, thanks to your help.

One of the greatest blessings for our students resulting from their six years at CSM has been the self-confidence they have gained. The great majority of our high school graduates decide to continue on to college and earn a professional degree. Among our graduates, we now have nurses, teachers, executive secretaries, and agronomists, just to name a few.

During the present school year, we have 35 students between the ages of 12 and 20 living at CSM. Six will graduate this July from junior high and six from high school. All want to continue their education. For the coming school year, there have been more applications for scholarships than ever before. Word is getting out and the requests for entrance are coming from greater distances.

At the same time, CSM has been able to offer an ever safer, healthier and more comfortable environment because of improvements to the buildings and surroundings made possible by generous donations from sponsors. We can now provide Internet connection for the students, a library with typewriters, meeting and study spaces, an expanded area for organic vegetable growing, rooms for traditional embroidery, office space for the group of midwives, a house for visitors and, of special importance, a chapel for prayer. We have also been able to construct fencing, repair several dorms and bathrooms, and tile the kitchen. Our staff offers accompaniment, tutoring, nutrition, health care, supervision of work projects and special help with the computers.

The students also offer their service for the support of the program. They make and sell embroidered handicrafts and plant vegetables. Together with their parents, they maintain the cleanliness of the house and grounds.

It is for the above reasons that all of us at CSM give thanks to God for the opportunity of an education and a good place to live. We thank God for our sponsors who make it all possible.

On a personal note, I also want to thank you for my education and for the chance it has given me to serve other Mayan women. I am Ch'ol Mayan from a remote village who received a scholarship for my high school and four years of college. Certified in clinical psychology, I have returned as administrator of CSM.

I say good-bye by thanking you for this opportunity to share my thoughts and feelings along with those of the students and staff. I hope we will stay in contact. It would be a special gift to us if you were able to come for a visit and see the good work you are doing. Thank you and may God bless you.

### **María Ester López Torres**

College Graduate in Psychology, Administrator of CSM



Hermenegildo, giving a workshop on the topic of environmentally safe projects at CSM

## Sincere Greetings,

During our year of service, we have done our best to help with the special projects that Yashalúm has to enhance the education of young Mayans from poor communities. With constant communication and analysis, we have tried to plant new alternatives and strengthen the social awareness in the students. Our goal has been to help them understand that they have an active role as agents of improvement in the midst of an ever more complex social reality.

To this end, we have offered concrete projects, including ones about conservation and care of the environment, with an eye to sustainable agriculture. We worked with the students in programs of ecology, culture, and organic production of edible mushrooms as means to deepen their awareness of planning, proper use of natural resources, respect for the reproductive cycle of nature, and the customs and beliefs of the indigenous communities.

Specific themes included the need to recycle, global warming and its consequences, the extinction of local species, and the harmful results of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. The presentations were done with the participation of the students and always taking into account the social, economic and political context in Mexico.

The edible Organic Mushroom Project was one example of our efforts to widen the awareness of the students and their parents. We worked together to build the installations at the Boys' Ranch, using natural materials. The students learned to plant and care for the mushrooms by recycling the waste from the corn, bean and coffee fields into organic compost. The mushrooms were consumed at the Ranch and at the Girls' Residence, CSM, and the leftovers were used in the red worm project to produce castings that went back into the fields.

We also want to take this opportunity to thank our sponsors for giving us the opportunity of an education so that we could return and encourage the rest of the students. Comments can be sent to us at: [Yashalum@aol.com.mx](mailto:Yashalum@aol.com.mx)

Respectfully,

### **Hermenegildo Méndez Gutiérrez**

College graduate in Social Anthropology

### **Oscar Antonio Sánchez González**

College graduate in Sociology.

Note: Both graduates have asked to continue to work with Yashalúm after their year of service is over in July, 2010 to help organize the other college graduates and to encourage them to participate more actively in the program. Oscar and Gildo would also learn to write grants seeking further projects to benefit the indigenous communities. Funds that would permit their future involvement are pending.