



FEBRUARY 2011 UPDATE

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Banner Photo - Kids take a break at San Martín Tots Preschool, a joint project of Xela Aid and SOSEP, the project of the First Lady of Guatemala.

WE'RE PROUD OF OUR NUMBERS

Many charitable organizations spend 30% and more of contributions on office space and administrative overhead. We are proud that Xela Aid is able to apply **98%** of your valued contributions directly to funding projects in Guatemala!

Of Each \$1 You Contribute:

90 Cents • Goes

directly to health, education and the other projects you've elected to support that directly benefit underserved children and families.

8 Cents

• Augments other donations to pay our doctor, medical director and caretaker at Xela Aid's June Russel-Glennon Clinic and Community Center in San Martín Chiquito. These professionals are there daily serving the needs of the

Greetings!

We are pleased to bring you this issue of our newsletter featuring project updates and news of our upcoming Volunteer Vacation.

As always, we appreciate your ongoing interest and support.

Sincerely yours,

The Xela Aid Directors

Carlos de la Rosa · Luis Enrique de León · Mel Dinkel · Colleen Dodds · Karen Edwards · Debi Lyn Esquivel · Sheryl Fontaine · Patricia Maxwell · Leslie Baer Dinkel

Know someone special who wants to make a positive difference through humanitarian service, or who might wish to otherwise support the work of Xela Aid?



SUMMER 2011 VOLUNTEER VACATION: DEADLINE FOR APPLICATION: MARCH 15, 2011

Work, Play and Find New Meaning in the Guatemalan Highlands



Trip Dates: July 29 - August 9, 2011
Orientation: Saturday, May 28 - 9AM to Noon

Looking for an exciting, meaningful adventure this summer? Join Xela Aid **July 29-August 29, 2011** on our Summer 2011 Volunteer Vacation as we venture to the Guatemalan highlands to work and play in partnership with the Mám-speaking people of the San Martín Sacatepequez region.

No need to speak Spanish, or have special training: Volunteers will be trained to augment healthcare services offered year-round in Xela Aid's June Russel-Glennon Clinic, including optometry and other health services that may be added based on volunteer mix. We will be finishing work on the "Tesoros del Corazon" Marketplace, a new building from which weavers from Xela Aid's cooperative will give weaving demonstrations and sell their traditional weavings.

community.

2 Cents ▪ Covers the minimal costs of staying in touch with you and our other supporters (largely, without cutting down trees) including costs of website, email, newsletters, and postage.

ZERO! ▪ What we spend on staffing in the U.S., expense accounts, office space, or telephones. This is possible because **our Xela Aid USA Board and Staff are 100% volunteer and our office is efficiently virtual!**

Thank you for your support



CELEBRATE CLAREMONT FAMILY FESTIVAL

Join us for our Family Festival Wednesdays, June, July, August

To supplement revenues for Clinic operations, Xela Aid teamed with Event Manager Oscar de León to launch the [Celebrate Claremont Family Festival](#). The City of Claremont, California, is home to a number of past and current participants in Xela Aid Volunteer Vacations and on our Board of Directors.

Held Wednesdays during June, July and August, the Festival was created a family event in downtown Claremont in the evenings when the City has plenty of capacity for visitors. Visitors to the event are also introduced to Xela Aid, located in the sponsor's booth.

The event featured artists, interesting products and service businesses, delicious and affordable foods, a petting zoo, pony rides, face painting and great music.

For the first time ever, Xela Aid will support a spay and neuter clinic. And there will be plenty of interaction with children receiving Xela Aid PEX Educational Scholarships and studying in Xela Aid's Study Center, including a field trip to an exciting destination such as the beach or ecological park. AND, a variety of cultural activities are planned (depending on group size and desire). These include a volcano climb (moderate trail), volcanic hot baths, an experience of local music, salsa dancing, and weaving demonstrations.

Additional R&R will include four days and three nights of swimming, kayaking, and exploring various villages at world-class destination Lake Atitlan. If you're interested, **don't wait to inquire as there is limited space which historically fills quickly!** To view the trip's day calendar and application, click [HERE](#). To reserve your space immediately while we review your application due with deposit postmarked **MARCH 15**, click [HERE](#).



NEWEST PEX GRADUATES

Three young men beat the odds with Xela Aid support

Miguel Angel Rivera Lopez who had been in Xela Aid's PEX Educational Scholarship program since primary school, graduated last month with a degree in business administration. This was made possible thanks to the generosity of **Kathy Morales** who supported Miguel all the way through Escuela Nueva Nación, a technical school. Miguel and his family are sincerely grateful for the long-time assistance, which will give Miguel a number of opportunities to find work and improve his family's quality of life.

Other recent graduates include **Marvin Antonio Garcia Alvarado** (College, B.S. Industrial Studies), thanks to the long-time support of **Cynthia Miller**.

Marco de León Xicar, sponsored by **Pine Manor**, has also graduated with a hard-won high school degree. Marco, father of five, has been working in a bank for many years as a janitor and after graduation, has begun work as a teller.

When Xela Aid came to the San Martn area in 1992, the average age at which young men left school was 9, after just three years in school. Xela Aid offers congratulations to these hardworking graduates who beat the odds and graduated from technical school and college. We



Miguel Lopez graduates with his very proud mother at his side, and brother at left

also offer heartfelt thanks to these generous sponsors who gave the gift of education which will keep giving for a lifetime and beyond.

Learn more about Xela Aid's PEX Program by clicking [here](#).

Learn more [here](#), and plan to join us at Xela Aid's Sponsor's booth!

ONGOING PROJECTS

June Russel-Glennon Clinic

The June Russel-Glennon Clinic is open weekdays from 8 AM - 2 PM. The clinic sees people from miles around, many of whom otherwise would not have been able to see a doctor. The land on which to build the sorely needed facility was funded by Xela Aid Director **Karen Edwards**.

An ultrasound kindly provided through **Direct Relief International (DRI)** was delivered mid-2007 and is now serving patients weekly. We welcome your support as a KCO Club member (for "Keep the Clinic Open") to help us continue to provide health services to those who need them most.

All contributions are wisely administered and greatly appreciated. Learn more about the [Clinic](#) and [KCO](#).

Children & Young Adults Educational Scholarship Program (PEX)

Nearly 70 children and young adults are currently sponsored for school through Xela Aid's PEX program (Proyecto Educativo de Xela Aid, PEX). Sponsor support makes it possible for these students to register in school and to buy books, supplies and clothing required to attend.

Children sponsored also receive a yearly medical exam and parasite treatment paid for with sponsor contributions.

Learn more about the PEX Program, or email PEX Director [Patricia Maxwell](#) for additional information or to sponsor a child.

STUDY CENTER STUDENTS RECEIVE DIPLOMAS

Kids dedicated to their education are showing up daily

Last month, 26 students who are regular users of Xela Aid's Study Center were honored with diplomas for their work during the year. The diplomas help to motive the students to continue in school, says Xela Aid Director, Guatemala, **Luis Enrique de León**.

Each week day, the Study Center is open from 2 to 5 p.m., welcoming boys and girls who want to improve their grades through supervised study and tutoring. Many of the local school children have learning challenges, "because the public schools teach in Spanish, while most of the children speak the Mayan dialect Mám at home," explains Luis.

Juana Lopez who teaches in the Study Center is fluent in both Spanish and Mám.

"Juana can teach in either language, and translate between the two," Luis continues. "The help these children receive improves the children's grades and also helps them to become more integrated into the broader community by improving their Spanish speaking and comprehension."



Congratulations to these 26 students, and appreciation to the Xela Aid Directors **Sheryl Fontaine** and **Debi Lyn Esquivel** who established the Study Center and who's ongoing dedication makes this project possible.

Study Center teacher Juana Lopez is also a graduate of Xela Aid's PEX program.

Learn more about Xela Aid's Study Center by clicking [here](#).

New Teacher Joins Xela Aid Ranks

Expansion of duties being explored.

Alicia Lucia de Leon Lopez has joined Xela Aid as a teacher in San Martín Tots Preschool, a joint project with SOSEP, the humanitarian project of the First Lady of Guatemala.

Alicia is a student at a local university, and a certified teacher who demonstrates an exceptional talent for tutoring. She is studying for a second level of teaching credential to become the equivalent of a high school teacher. Alicia lives in San Martín Chiquito, and says she loves to work with young people.



"El Centro de Estudios" (Xela Aid Study Center)

The "Centro de Estudios" welcomes children from the PEX program and all others who wish to participate in peer tutoring and afterschool activities.

Xela Aid is proud that the tutor employed is a graduate of our own PEX program.

To learn more, visit [Centro de Estudios](#).

San Martín Tots Preschool

The preschool, or "guardaria," a joint project with SOSEP, a project of the First Lady of Guatemala, opened in 2007 serving an average of 34 children aged 3 to 6 each school day. The facility was built through the generosity of **June Russel-Glennon**, and the kitchen facilities built with contributions by Xela Aid Director **Mel Dinkel**.

A teacher and several assistants tutor the mostly mām-speaking children in Spanish, reading, writing and local history, and serve breakfast foods and a hot meal for lunch. The preschool is a joint effort with the Guatemalan government.

Thanks to several generous donors, Xela Aid has been able to augment the salaries of teachers and provide for hot meals, learning materials, and repairs to keep the facility safe and comfortable.

For additional information, see [San Martín Tots](#) or write us.

Support one of these Projects [Now](#)

Based on Alicia's qualifications, Xela Aid may seize the opportunity to resume literacy classes for women that would be taught by Alicia, and to harness her skills to tutor advanced students in the PEX program.

Welcome Alicia, and special thanks to **Marisa Grimes** for her generosity that has made possible over the past two years focused teaching in the San Martín Tots Preschool.

Learn more about [San Martín Tots Preschool](#).

Basketball Court Replaces Trash Cans

Volunteers see the need, and inspire kids to team.

At San Martín Chiquito Elementary School, for years, children have been playing basketball using trash cans as make-shift hoops. Xela Aid Volunteer **Katherine Sanchez** donates her time teaching English at the school each week, and saw the need for something more fun than that.

Katherine and husband **David Booker** asked friends to contribute funds for the purchase and installation of basketball backboards and hoops, and this month, saw the project come to fruition.



Basketball hoops and backboards mean more fun!

Xela Aid Director **Luis Enrique de León** reports that the children are thrilled. "They have now formed teams and are constantly using the new court."

This month, Xela Aid augmented Katherine and David's efforts by donating funds for the children to have uniforms. In return, the children will spend four hours before receiving their uniforms cleaning the central park of San Martín Sacatepequez.

"The children are making an example for other children of the area," said Luis.

Several times each week, Katherine visits the school and donates her time to teach English.

"The children are quick to learn and are very excited to be speaking English," says Luis, adding that "In Guatemala, English is a very useful language to know." English is part of the high school curriculum.

"Katherine's work gives these children a head start," he says.

Xela Aid salutes Katherine and David's ongoing support of the San Martín Chiquito Elementary School.

Flourishing: School at Loblatzan, Xela Aid's First Construction Project

A single classroom has grown to many.

In 1992, Xela Aid Volunteers arrived at the small village of



ABOUT US

Founded in 1992, Xela Aid, a non-profit, non-denominational, humanitarian organization responds to requests for assistance from economically disadvantaged communities of Guatemala in ways that restore health and well-being to the people and the environment, promote cultural understanding, and preserve dignity.

A private charitable organization, Xela Aid receives no government funding. Team members pay their own expenses and fund projects by way of a project fee that each person contributes.

The good works of Xela Aid are made possible by the generous gifts of ordinary people who wish to do extraordinary good for others - people like **you**.

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Luis Enrique de León (in blue, center), remembers Xela Aid construction of the first room of the school in 1992 visible in the background.

Loblatzan to find a handful of children trying to study in a dilapidated chicken coop, seated on stones and writing on planks of wood atop stones. With tears in their eyes, Xela Aid volunteers **Rudy Vargas** and **Rick Cass** filmed that sad state of education in that community, vowing to create a short video to raise funds and replace the structure. They did make the video (Xela Aid's introductory video, even today, at right). But it wasn't

needed to fund raise for this project, for just hours and a few phone calls later, generous friends had donated the \$5000 Xela Aid needed to team with local citizens and raise a proper school.

Luis Enrique de León, then a friend to the project and now Xela Aid's director in Guatemala, quickly organized a committee of local leadership, and the project was underway. Just a week later, the first classroom of the Elementary School at Loblatzan was raised, and shortly after, in use.



Xela Aid - Projects for Self Rel

"We organized the community who provided land and labor, and with the donations from our Xela Aid friends, we purchased materials and started the work side by side - Xela Aid volunteers working with local parents, the teacher, and even some of the young students themselves," Luis recalls.

In 2006, Xela Aid provided funds to add another classroom, made possible by the generosity of a single donor, **Dr. Flora Johnson**.

"Today, this school has eight rooms, eight teachers, and 300 students," Luis continued. "Since those days, the community has continued to have an organized committee that works to better living conditions for the community.

"It is a community united, thanks in great part to Xela Aid."

UPCOMING IN FUTURE ISSUES...

> An update on Xela Aid Emergency Relief effort led by volunteers **Janet Taylor** and **Katherine Sanchez** for a

14-year-old PEX student left to care for four brothers and sisters.

> Launch of a new website

> New photo galleries!

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