



LIVE.LEARN.THRIVE!



BE THE CHANGE for a child! Edgar wants to be a musician. He is one of several children on our waiting list seeking an educational sponsor.

Children Seeking Sponsors

You can make a child's dreams come true. Learning how to read, write and become productive and self-sufficient will change not only this child's future, but will help break the chain of poverty. Find children here on our [WAITING LIST](#). To sponsor, or for more information, contact the program's director, [Pat Maxwell](#).

Update from Guatemala - March 22, 2013

THREAD QUEST!

This month, the work is on to expand the Weaving Cooperative's product line and revenues

(See VIDEO links below...)

Luciana and Magdalena stand in a thread store knee

deep in colorful purchases, looking slightly worried. "It's a lot of responsibility!" says

Luciana Perez Lopez, president of Xela AID's Tesoros del Corazón Fair Trade Weaving Cooperative. The new inventory, totaling more than \$800 in thread and fabrics for resale, was made possible



by way of a micro-loan from **Kathy Logan**, Xela AID Board Member and Founder of the Cooperative. Kathy is determined to continue to grow revenues for the 11 women who populate the cooperative -- all of which have great need.

"Our vision is that the cooperative is a thriving business for the weavers that makes a significant difference in their



Got Stuff?

Are you upgrading your technology? Cleaning out drawers? Or just want to go out and buy a little something to help someone meet their needs? Consider a tax deductible gift-in-kind that we can put to extremely good use in the highlands of Guatemala this summer.

Needed are:

- > Used (or new) working PC laptops, iPads, iPhones, Kindles
- > Miscellaneous sewing supplies
- > Hair brushes (new)
- > Hand mirrors
- > Combs (new)
- > Notebooks
- > Paper
- > Pencils
- > Pens
- > Birthday candles
- > Ribbons
- > Balloons and other party supplies...

Donations are needed in-hand by May 1, 2013.

Contact [Leslie](#)..

income, and their ability to meet their personal goals and contribute to their families," says Kathy. "We've made progress, and it's time to take the next steps."

The next steps mean adding products and market access that will create a steady stream of income for the ladies.

The cooperative, which got its own new building two years

ago, had focused on developing a product line for tourists visiting Guatemala.

At the weavers' request, Xela AID funded a six-month training course in sewing. By virtue of the training, the group made significant inroads in developing purses, table runners, placemats and other items of interests to visitors.



Florinda, a budding seamstress, with Kathy wearing one of her purse creations.

"The product lines and individual skills have come along

nicely, but the traffic has been the real challenge," says Kathy, who described an expanded strategy for the success of the Cooperative. First, with the high-quality woven products for tourists they are already producing, the weavers will receive help to connect with new markets.

As a second outlet, Kathy has committed to a quarterly schedule of purchasing weavings. These weavings will fuel [JOJI Bags](#) , started by Kathy and daughter Amy to support the formation and success of the cooperative. The news of regular quarterly sales was received with genuine joy by the weavers. "Because we know we can depend on regular sales, we can approach our weaving as the art that it is



Seeking Costumes!

Xela AID's "Leaders" group which has launched a micro-business renting party supplies and setting up parties believes that there is a market for appearing in costume and being photographed with party goers. Donations of costumes in adult sizes would be greatly appreciated (used are fine), including princesses, superheros, vampires and other recognizable characters. Donate a costume and receive a gift-in-kind receipt for your tax deductible donation. To donate, contact [Sue Rikalo](#).

instead of seeing it only as a way to make money," one weaver said, expressing her gratitude.

Following up on a suggestion from the weavers , Kathy is supporting an

expansion into the local retail market.

"The idea is to bring more affordable supplies to San Martín, since we are 30 minutes by bus from the nearest fully-stocked weaving

and sewing supply store in San Juan Ostencalco," says Luciana. New products will include weaving and sewing supplies, hand-woven "corte" (skirts), and other weaving-related gifts.



Kathy gets a weaving lesson from a male weaver from Salcaja, near Xela, where men produce "corte" for skirts that will be resold by the Cooperative in San Martin.

To reach out to the tourist market and guide the weavers in administration of the business, earlier in March, Kathy and Xela AID Executive Director/Guatemala, **Luis Enrique de León** secured the part-time assistance of **Yaneth Gramajo**, owner-operator of [Spanish School Juan Sisay](#).

"Yaneth has the connections with language schools to win our weavers invitations to demonstrate their art, then sell it," Luis said. "She also has many business skills and will be a great asset in this role of building the women's capacity."

This month, Kathy, Yaneth and Xela AID Executive Director/USA **Leslie**



Yaneth is serving as the Cooperative's in-country marketing coordinator, and business coach.

Baer Dinkel joined the weekly cooperative meeting, where Kathy led a training in business basics, from entering items into inventory to filling out a sales record, to how to figure net revenue. It was eye-opening. "It was the first time the women had understood their costs,"

Kathy said. For example, many women had sold their hand-woven huipils for Q200. They were surprised to learn that their material costs alone are about Q190, meaning that their weeks of weaving were bringing in only Q10, about \$1.50!"

Ever resilient, the women took the news well, and put the information to good use as they changed prices on their wares for their March sale to Kathy immediately following the meeting. "We would buy our threads, spend weeks and sometimes months weaving our huipils, then happily sell them without understanding why we had to add money next time we went to buy thread!" said Luciana, laughing. "Now we understand how to come up with a just price for our weavings."



In the late afternoon, the visiting Xela AID team left Yaneth to partner with Luciana and the rest of the women to add all items into inventory, and begin the process of learning how to run a business. It will be a steep curve for most -- only four of the 11 women can read and write.

"Illiteracy in rural Guatemala is still common among women over 30," said Leslie. "Through our many education programs, and supporting programs like microbusiness development, this is something we are helping to change."



VIDEOS!

Think hand weaving is easy? Have a look at these videos!

> Tessa gets the hang of [backstrap weaving](#) (5 min.)

> Leslie gets a quick [lesson on a big loom](#) (1 min.)

Thank you... for your ongoing interest and support!

[The Xela AID Board of Directors and Advisors, and Staff](#)

