

November 2009 Update...

Midwifery Intern Sarah Smith
PEX Spotlight: Rodrigo
DRI Site Visit a Success
May/June 2010 Trip
Late June 2010 Trip



WE'RE PROUD OF OUR NUMBERS

While 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!

Of every \$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, nurse, medical director and caretaker at Xela Aid's June Russel-Glennon Community Clinic in San Martín Chiquito. These professionals are there daily serving the needs of the community.

2 Cents · Covers the minimal costs of staying in touch with you and our other

Greetings!

Following, please find updates about several of Xela Aid projects. We're excited to report about how the generosity of our supporters is making a positive difference in so many lives.

In addition, learn about two Xela Aid Volunteer Vacation opportunities upcoming during the summer of 2010. We hope you'll consider joining us!

We wish you and yours a fulfilling Thanksgiving holiday.

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 · Susan Lominska · 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?

 [Forward to a Friend](#)

Midwifery Intern Soaking Up Experiences, "Stunned" at the Kindness of Strangers

Guatemala experience shaping a lifetime of service



At left: Sarah Jane Smith with her friend Stephanie, who she has lived with for two months, and their host mom, Romelia.

Sarah Jane Smith isn't just any college co-ed; she's a young woman on a mission. Sarah is focused on gaining the

knowledge and experiences she knows will shape the course of her life as she heads towards being a career midwife. Having traveled to Guatemala as Xela Aid midwifery intern in July, she'll return stateside in December. In her own words:

"Things are going excellent here for me in Guatemala. While here, I have had the opportunity to work with two different communities of

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, 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

NEWS BRIEF



Xela Aid Launches Family Festival

To supplement revenues for Clinic operations, this spring, Xela Aid teamed with Claremont Farmer's Market Manager Oscar de León to launch the [Celebrate Claremont Family Festival](#). The City of Claremont, California, is home to a number of past participants in Xela Aid Volunteer Vacations.

Held each Wednesday evening April thru September, the Festival was designed to create 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. Xela Aid Directors Pat Maxwell, Sheryl Fontaine, Mel Dinkel and Leslie Baer, and

midwives and the Xela Aid Clinic in San Martin. I've been able to attend a ton of prenatal appointments, three beautiful births, and am consistently learning here.

"Right now I am focusing my work on doing interviews with midwives for my research. I have completely fallen in love with my life here in Guatemala. It pains my heart to think about leaving. I've been welcomed with open-arms here, and am consistently stunned by the kindness of the people I've met.

"The most remarkable thing I have learned so far has to be what faith the midwives here have, in terms of the natural birthing process. I've been reminded of how normal and natural birth is when surrounded by knowledgeable midwives.

"I've learned a great deal about myself on this journey and see this time as one of the most important in my life thus far."

Xela Aid salutes Sarah as she prepares for life as a midwife!

[Learn more about Xela Aid midwifery internships](#)

PEX Spotlight: The Story of Rodrigo

Xela Aid has brought hope to Rodrigo and his family (and more help is needed...)



This story is among the saddest we've ever had to tell. I felt it important to include here not to parade a family's suffering, but to punctuate the great hope in little things, like the help we are able to bring.

*-- Leslie Baer Dinkel
Xela Aid Founding
Director*

Rodrigo Isaias Gomez Chaj was born June 22, 2003. While still in the womb, he was diagnosed HIV positive. At just a year old, Rodrigo lost his father to AIDS, and his young mother was left alone with five children (current ages), Mildred (15), Alan (14), Pablo (13), Antonio (9) and Rodrigo (6).

Many people in rural areas have no understanding of how HIV/AIDS is transmitted, and are extremely fearful of even speaking with Rodrigo or his family believing they would become infected. This is why when Rodrigo started studying this year, he was expelled by the director of the school when she learned that he was HIV positive.

After several months banned from school, the efforts of friends and neighbors to have him reinstated (including efforts of Xela Aid Director/Clinic Director Luis Enrique de León) paid off, and Rodrigo was allowed to reenter school. Luis describes Rodrigo as "a very, very good student," who this year passed basic tests that will allow him to start first grade.

customer service rep. extraordinaire April Lyon, supported Festival operations.

The 2010 event will run during the summer, dates to be announced. Learn more [here](#), and plan to join us at Xela Aid's Sponsor's booth!

ONGOING PROJECTS

June Russel-Glennon Clinic & Community Center

The June Russel-Glennon Clinic and Community Center 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.

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.

As if this family hadn't experienced enough suffering, in February of this year, Rodrigo's sister Mildred was brutally raped. Unfortunately, many such cases go unpunished in Guatemala, and Mildred lives knowing that her assailant is still on the loose. To add to her burden, she is eight months pregnant as a result of the rape.

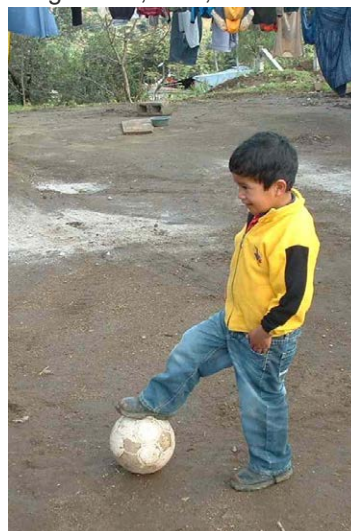
Through all the turmoil and hardship, Rodrigo's mother has continued working to try to feed her family. She washes laundry by hand all day most days. Even with her toiling through the days, the family could no longer afford to rent a place to live. Luckily, a friend of the family lent her a small corner of land. Soon, neighbors pitched in to build her a small house. Xela Aid's clinic has provided both medicine and food.

Sadly, Rodrigo's mother has been diagnosed as HIV positive, and her condition is deteriorating. If she does not survive, Mildred will be left in charge of Rodrigo and his four siblings--and, now, with her own young child.

Assisted in his regimen by Xela Aid medical staff, Rodrigo takes medications daily to combat HIV symptoms and the progress of the disease, but his prognosis is uncertain. Says Luis, "Rodrigo is a child with a huge heart. Like other children, he wants to have friends and live a happy life--for whatever time he has left."

Rays of Hope

Rodrigo is able to experience the joy of learning and sharing his days with school friends because he is sponsored through Xela Aid's PEX program. Two of his siblings are in school intermittently, and desperately want to continue to study. The family continues to receive medical aid and supplemental foods at Xela Aid's June Russel-Glennon Clinic.



If you're interested in sponsoring any of the Chaj family children, or another child on Xela Aid's waiting list, please email Xela Aid PEX Program Coordinator [Patricia Maxwell](#).

You can support Xela Aid's June Russel-Glennon Clinic by becoming a member of our [KCO Club](#).

DRI Trip Participants Respond to the Need

Spontaneous generosity is making it possible for more children to study and fueling needed expansion of a local school

We've all heard the saying "See the need, do the deed." Participants in a site visit by Xela Aid partner [Direct Relief International](#) (DRI) this summer did just that.

The group, organized by a DRI Director and Development Chair



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

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

The new "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, or email [Sheryl Fontaine](#) or [Debi Esquivel](#).

San Martín Tots Preschool

The preschool, or "guardaria," 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 máam-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](#)**

Sherry Villanueva, included 15 supporters of Direct Relief International (8 teens and 7 adult women). Among their stops in Guatemala, the group visited and volunteered at Xela Aid headquarters in San Martín Chiquito.

Hosted on a local tour by Director Luis Enrique de León, the group visited Xela Aid's Clinic, Study Center and Preschool, then a school in the nearby village of Las Nubes where prior to opening the June Russel-Glennon Clinic, Xela Aid had held clinics in people's homes.

Seeing the great need of children of the San Martín, a number of trip participants sponsored children through Xela Aid's PEX program so they can study, or stay in school (sponsors to be detailed in an upcoming edition.)

Responding to the need of the school in Las Nubes, trip participant **Sherry Robin**, herself an educator, forwarded to Xela Aid a generous contribution to be used as school administrators elected; they opted to use it to buy materials to build a room that would serve as both an office for the school's teacher, and a needed library (see a portion of materials pictured above, right). Sherry's gift made purchase of the materials possible, and the local community will lend the labor. This summer, participants in Xela Aid's Volunteer Vacations will bring down and donate to the school a portion of the many school books donated earlier this year by long-time supporter **Jeff Pinochet**.

On behalf of Xela Aid, the San Martín community, and the Las Nubes community, many thanks to all site visit participants for sharing their time, resources and caring.

[Learn more about Xela Aid educational programs, including our Study Center, San Martín Tots preschool, and PEX Scholarship program.](#)

Xela Aid Volunteer Vacation Summer 2010: Medical Assistance and Maintenance Focus, with Scholarship Distribution **May 27 (late night departure)-June 6, 2010**

OVERVIEW

Augment health care services in Xela Aid's June Russel-Glennon Clinic including optometry, dental and/or medical clinics (depending on volunteer makeup). Spanish is not mandatory.



Sample Activities:

- Assisting in providing health care from sign in to vital signs to vision screening
- Painting
- Construction and repairs
- Greenhouse refurbishment/planting
- Distribution of scholarship funds

Participate in a variety of cultural activities including volcano climb



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**.

Quick Links...

- [Our Homepage](#)
- [Overview](#)
- [Projects](#)
- [About Us](#)
- [KCO Club](#)
- [PEX Brag Pages](#)
- [Gift Sponsorships](#)
- [Donate Now](#)

Join Our Mailing List!

(moderate to vigorous), volcanic hot baths, local music, weaving demonstrations and much more. R&R will include swimming, kayaking, exploring villages at world-class destination Lake Atitlan



and a stay at [La Casa Del Mundo](#), dubbed by Lonely Planet "the most magical hotel in Guatemala." (See photo at left, red roof of hotel visible bottom, right.)

Includes: RT airfare from Los Angeles, all chartered ground transportation, in-country project coordination, all hotel nights (double occupancy), entrance/honorariums to sights--everything except meals and optional gratuities.

**10 Days - BASE PRICE: \$1550
DEPOSIT: Due March 1, 2010 (\$500)**

[Click here](#) to be taken to the webpage where you may view and download the application for this trip containing a sample day calendar.

If you are seriously interested in this exciting Volunteer Vacation, [reserve space now](#) while your application is being reviewed.

Additional Information about our [Clinic](#)

For additional information immediately, email [Leslie Baer Dinkel](#)

Xela Aid Volunteer Vacation Summer 2010: **Educational Assistance Focus**

June 19-July 3, 2010

OVERVIEW

Work with children in either a preschool or study center setting:

- Develop children's games, activities, or study programs
- Help with elementary through high school reading, writing, mathematics work
- Tutor students who are studying English
- Help children develop basic computer skills
- Organize sports activities
- Assist with maintenance and repair of Xela Aid's headquarters
- Assist with gardening



Participate in a variety of cultural activities spanning a Mayan ceremony, volcano climb, volcanic hot baths. Travel to beautiful Lake Atitlan and explore historic Antigua (pictured below, left), Guatemala's first capitol city. Spanish is not mandatory.



Includes: RT airfare from Los Angeles, all chartered ground transportation, in-country project coordination, all hotel nights (double/triple occupancy), entrance/honorariums to sights; optional Spanish language study (add \$100 per 5-days of study)

14 Days - BASE PRICE: Less than \$1700

DEPOSIT: Due March 2010 (\$500)

[Click Here](#) to be taken to the webpage where you may view and download a document containing additional information.

Additional Information about our [El Centro de Estudios](#)

For additional information immediately, email [Sheryl Fontaine](#) or [Debi Esquivel](#)

Email Marketing by

