



**SEPT 2011 UPDATE**

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**Banner Photo -**  
*Volunteers and village friends take a break at Lake Atitlan.*

**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

**Greetings!**

We had a wonderfully rewarding Volunteer Vacation this summer, and are pleased to update you about that trip in this edition of our newsletter. You'll also learn about the efforts of some of our volunteers, new PEX sponsors, our new website, find dates for one of next year's trips, and more.



Also in this edition, we say goodbye to long-time friend and leader of Xela AID **Karen E. Edwards**, who passed away earlier this year. Please join us in giving thanks for Karen and her many heartfelt works for the people of Guatemala.

As always, we appreciate your ongoing interest and support.

Most sincerely yours,

**The Xela AID Directors**

*Carlos de la Rosa · Mel Dinkel · Sheryl Fontaine · Patricia Maxwell · Frank Long · Luis Enrique de León · 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?**



*Volunteers and local Xela AID staff enjoy a respite at Lake Atitlan.*

professionals are there weekdays serving the needs of the 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 our 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*

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## A SAMPLING OF ONGOING PROJECTS

### Xela AID's 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 former Xela AID Director Emeritus **Karen Edwards** (deceased).

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

## Summer 2011 Volunteer Trip a Great Success!

**Twenty-three volunteers lent their time, energy and hearts to projects spanning clean water, construction, general medicine, art, mentoring and more**

It started out as an average-sized group of 14, but by mid-summer, the the summer 2011 volunteer corps had grown to 23 spanning 18 to 70 years plus! This diverse group spent two weeks together in service to some of Guatemala's most underserved people, sharing experiences that several group members described as "life-changing."

Enjoy a few photos and highlights below, with links following to **MANY** more photos!



*Volunteers completed Xela AID's new street-side marketplace for weavers to sell their fine wares. Special thanks to the Logan family for making this wonderful building possible!*



*Volunteers Claudia Nocke, Xela AID Medical Director Dr. Frank Long, Janet Taylor, Jeremy Reineck and Justin Flint restocked Xela AID's medical storage room.*

appreciated. Learn more about the [Clinic](#) and [KCO](#).

**Children & Young Adults Educational Scholarship Program (Protecto Educativo de Xela AID, "PEX")**

More than 70 children and young adults are currently sponsored for school through Xela AID's PEX program (Proyecto Educativo de Xela AID). 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.

**"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 one of our two tutors employed is a graduate of our own PEX program. Our advanced-studies tutor is funded through the generosity of **Marissa Grimes**.

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



*Xela AID Advisor Karen Yoshino made having your blood pressure taken fun!*



*Volunteer Kevin Macpherson commits model Catarina to canvas.*



*Volunteers and village friends relax at Lake Atitlan - a good time was had by all!*

Xela AID 2011 trip directors **Carlos de la Rosa, Frank Long, Mel Dinkel** and **Leslie Baer** thank this year's team members for their great work! Included were Xela AID advisors **Cliff Hague, Colleen Dodds** and **Karen Yoshino**; and **Amy Logan, Claudia Nocke, Don Logan, Dove Benari, Janet Taylor, Jeremy Reineck, Jessica**

### San Martín Tots Preschool

The preschool, or "guardaria," is a joint project with SOSEP, a project of the First Lady of Guatemala. Opened in 2007, the preschool serves 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 *mám*-speaking children in Spanish, reading, writing and local history, and serve breakfast foods and a hot meal for lunch.

We are not in need of additional funding for this program, but would invite you to support one of our other educational programs (Educational Scholarship, Study Center)

**Support one of these Projects [NOW](#)**

**Read about these, and many other ongoing projects on our website, [www.xelaaid.org](http://www.xelaaid.org)**



#### ABOUT US

Xela AID recognizes that education is key to overcoming poverty and to creating abundance. We aspire to ensure that every child in our current area of focus is safe, healthy, well-nourished, educated and equipped to be

**Sonnenfeld, Jill Onken, John Douglass, Justin Flint, Kathy Logan, Kevin Macpherson, Meaghan Yolles, Paul Hubbard, Sherry Robins and Wanda Macpherson.**

A heartfelt THANK YOU to all!

*To see more photos from this year's trip, visit our Facebook page and photo albums [HERE](#).*

*To see our dates for next year's confirmed trip and to preliminarily reserve space, continue reading!*

### Xela AID Says Farewell to Long-Time Advisor, Director Emeritus Karen E. Edwards

**Karen's work to empower women and their families is continuing**



Karen E. Edwards, one of Xela AID's founding Directors and Board members, died in late April from cancer. Karen passed away peacefully at home in Toronto, Canada. She was 61. She is survived by life partner and current Xela AID Advisor and Director Emeritus Colleen Dodds.

A social worker for more than three decades, Karen served on Xela AID's Board of Directors from 1993 to 2006. She was also founder of Toronto-based Cinnamon Toast Dignified Housing where she provided a safe and respectful environment for recovery for women suffering with addictions.

At an evening of remembrance, clients talked about how Karen had changed their lives for the better, and in many cases, had saved their lives.

After retiring from her post on Xela AID's Board, Karen continued as an advisor on the overall growth and development Xela AID, and continued to travel with the project and co-lead optometry projects. A generous donation she made secured the land upon which Xela AID's Clinic was built.

During this year's summer Xela AID trip to Guatemala, participants gathered in Xela AID's June Russell-Glennon Clinic to remember her. Colleen eulogized Karen in both English and Spanish, which was then translated to *Mám*. A number of people who knew Karen spoke, including local residents who remembered her kindness and dedication to the poor of San Martín Chiquito and surrounding areas.



*Colleen Dodds (center) with Adelberto and his sister Rosa, summer, 2011. Colleen and Karen Edwards began Xela AID's educational sponsorship program when they sponsored these two children who went on to become a school headmaster and teacher (Adelberto, and Rosa, respectively).*

"Karen was a source of

self-reliant. Xela AID partners to address the health, socio-economic and environmental challenges that threaten well-being and pose obstacles to learning. We pursue an integrated model of community development, and solutions that are comprehensive, sustainable, scaleable and transferable.

*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 just like you!*

Join Our Mailing List!

strength and vision for Xela AID," said Leslie Baer Dinkel, Xela AID's president. "She was a 'can-do' kind of person and dear friend who always had an encouraging word and some good advice for the project. Her presence will be sorely missed."

*The two stayed in their village of Santa Cruz de Laguna.*

Karen's work will continue through Xela AID's [Karen E. Edwards Women's Empowerment Project](#).

***Those wishing to contribute in Karen's name may use the donate button, top right of Xela AID's [Home Page](#), then send a follow-up email specifying the donation to the Karen E. Edwards Women's Empowerment Project to [xela\\_aid@earthlink.net](mailto:xela_aid@earthlink.net).***



*Scout Troops came together to make gift packs for children in Xela AID programs. Pictured: Junior Scout Troop 50611.*

## **Girl Scouts Teamed to Prepare Gift Packs for Children in Xela AID Programs**

**Xela AID volunteer Sherry Robin engaged Girl Scouts to prepare hundreds of gift packs for some of Guatemala's most needy and appreciative children**

Ten Girl Scout troops from Santa Barbara and Goleta made more than 100 gift bags to be brought to Guatemala this past summer for children sponsored through Xela AID's Educational Sponsorship Program (PEX), those using Xela AID's Study Center, and those attending the San Martín Tots Preschool, a joint project between Xela AID and the Guatemalan government.

Volunteer **Sherry Robin** engaged Daisy, Brownie, Junior, Cadette, and Senior Girl Scouts to participate in the project, which filled half a dozen large, rolling suitcases with gift bags! "The troops used their troop funds that they made from cookie sales to buy school and art supplies, books, toys, etc to fill one-gallon zip-lock bags for each child," Sherry described.

In Guatemala, excited children lined up to receive the colorful bags which Sherry and her crew of volunteers handed out to each of the

excited children.

"Thank you to all of you girls, your leaders, and parents for your generosity," said Sherry.

The Directors of Xela AID add their thanks to Sherry's for each and every Scout and parent who participated in this project, and thank Sherry for her dedicated service!

*Learn more about Xela AID's Volunteer Vacation Program by clicking [HERE](#).*



## Xela AID Gets a New Website

**Volunteering their time, a web programming and design team outdid themselves (with more surprises coming, soon...)**

Now it's easier than ever to learn about Xela AID, to see how to get involved, or to make donations. The organization can also do realtime maintenance on easily-editable pages (goodbye HTML!) This is thanks to **Gary and Michelle Richmond** who donated months of their time to complete Xela AID's new user-managed website!

The site features drop down menus, improved navigation, a home-page link to our introductory video, and a streaming link to our [Facebook page](#).

Coming soon from Gary and Michelle: Xela AID's online marketplace, so keep a lookout!

Xela AID thanks these two dedicated volunteers for making this state-of-the-art site possible.

We are also extremely grateful to **Laura Bokesch** for her many years of work on the Xela AID website, for her continued work on the website for Xela AID's summer-months fundraising event "[Celebrate Claremont Family Festival](#)," and for the ways we'll work together in the future!

*Visit Xela AID's new website at <http://www.xelaaid.org>*



*Jill Onken and John Douglass with newly sponsored child during Xela AID's summer trip 2011.*

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### **New Sponsors Welcome Students into "PEX," Xela AID's Educational Scholarship Program**

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**Generous sponsors on Xela AID's 2011 summer volunteer trip made it possible for 12 new students to be assured of the chance to go to school**

Xela AID is deeply grateful to the following individuals who, between them, sponsored twelve children during Xela AID's 2011 Volunteer Vacation! Thanks to:

• **Dove Benari · John Douglass · Justin Flint · Cliff Hague · Paul Hubbard · Kevin Macpherson · Wanda Macpherson, · Jill Onken · Jeremy Reineck · Sherry Robin · Karen Yoshino**

Of special note, Kevin and Wanda Macpherson (who claimed during the trip that they "don't like kids") sponsored *four* children, including three siblings of very significant need.

Sponsorship will providing these children's families with a stipend to make it possible for them to stay in school, as well as access to Xela AID's Study Center and "check ins" with **Katherine Sanchez**, the program's in-country coordinator. Katherine recently completed the program's first full audit of grades which will make early intervention possible when children are struggling in school.

Xela AID thanks all new and ongoing sponsors for their generosity and commitment to helping the children of San Martín and surrounding communities achieve their dreams, beginning with getting an education!

***For information about Xela AID's Educational Scholarship Program click [HERE](#). To learn about sponsorship opportunities, contact the program's director [Patricia Maxwell](#).***

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### **First Xela AID 20th Anniversary Volunteer Trip Dates Announced**

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***SAVE THE DATE: July 29-August 9, 2012***



*Picture yourself here! (Xela AID Advisor Cliff Hague second from left on a recent Volunteer Vacation.)*

One of potentially several **20th Anniversary Xela AID Volunteer Vacations** will be held **July 29 - August 9, 2012**. The trip will match the needs of the San Martín community in Guatemala with the talents of volunteers, and will include a construction project, mentoring projects with children, continuation of a clean water project and much more!

Space is limited, and based on early counts, this summer's trips are likely to fill fast so please

reserve space soon! Trip will include airfare, in-country transportation, many meals and more. Cost is \$1750.

To hold space, send an email including how many spaces you wish to hold to [xela\\_aid@earthlink.net](mailto:xela_aid@earthlink.net). If these dates are perfect for you, we suggest you guarantee space by forwarding a \$500 deposit per held space to:

**Xela AID Partnerships for Self Reliance**  
**Attn: 20th Anniversary July/August**  
**3571 Windspun Dr.**  
**Huntington Beach, CA 92649**

Watch for additional information in the next few months!

*Learn more about our Volunteer Vacations visit [HERE](#).*

*For information about this trip, contact [Leslie Baer](#) at [xela\\_aid@earthlink.net](mailto:xela_aid@earthlink.net).*

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## **Sherry Robin, Christine Scott and Friends Made a Difference with Art Therapy**

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**You Can Help, Too...**

Xela Aid Volunteer **Sherry Robin** and Art Therapist **Christine Scott** combined their passions earlier this year to benefit Xela AID. The two put on an art therapy workshop and raised more than \$1200 that will fund important education initiatives!

The Directors of Xela AID thank Sherry and Christine for their heartfelt efforts to serve those in great need in Guatemala! Thank you, too, to all who attended.

Got an idea for a Xela AID fundraiser? We'd love to hear from you!

Write to us at  
[xela\\_aid@earthlink.net](mailto:xela_aid@earthlink.net).



*Sherry Robin at Lake Atitlan along side of Juana, teacher at Xela AID's Study Center.*



*Have friends who may be interested in becoming involved in Xela AID? Remember to **SHARE** this newsletter by forwarding and through your social networks!*

*Learn other ways you can help by clicking [HERE](#).*



### **"Thriller" Benefit for Xela AID October 29th**

**Sign up now to learn the moves!**

Santa Barbara's World Dancers will benefit Xela AID as they participate in a world-wide performance of Michael Jackson's "Thriller." And there's still time to sign up by contacting the group's director, **Janet Reineck**, who notes that "no dance experience is necessary!"

"The World Dance community in Santa Barbara is committed to assisting grassroots international projects through the class fees and fundraising activities," says Janet. In the past year, the Santa Barbara World Dancers have raised money to support women survivors of war; a village in Kenya; and most recently, raised the funds to send a young Kenyan women to nursing school.

Xela AID came to the attention of the group through **Sherry Robin** and her daughter **Meagan Yolles** who have become regulars on Xela AID Volunteer Vacations. "In July, my son **Jeremy** and our friend **Justin Flint** joined the expedition to Guatemala," says Janet. "The trip was life-changing for both young men. They made friends they will treasure always, and are both clear on their paths ahead-assisting communities in need. We will be forever grateful to Xela AID for making it possible for Jeremy and Justin to join the group."

Janet says the dance group will kick off efforts to support the people of San Martín through Xela AID's programs at a local restaurant on October 1st, and that dance class fees during October and November will be donated to Xela AID. The "big fundraising event" on October 29th aims to feature more than 100 Santa Barbarans performing "Thriller" as part of the international "Thrill the World" event, when "people all over the planet dance the iconic choreography at exactly the same moment as a global experience while raising awareness about the charity of their choice," Janet describes.

"Our dancers will ask friends and family to sponsor them to be part of this, and all proceeds will go toward the work in San Martin," says Janet. "Our goal is to raise \$3,000 for the village."

Xela AID is grateful to Janet and her dance company for their efforts, and to Sherry and Meaghan for continuing to help grow the family of Xela AID participants and supporters!

**Contact Janet NOW to dance for Xela AID, or sponsor a dancer!**

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We hope you enjoyed this edition of our newsletter, and that you'll consider [joining us next summer](#) or [participating at home](#). We hope, too, that you'll share Xela AID with friends and family. Look for another update this fall. -- *The Xela AID Directors*



Try it FREE today.