

TO SERVE PARASERVIR

News from Xela Aid

Summer 2007

Greetings!

July 1-15 marked Xela Aid's 15th Anniversary trip to Guatemala. Learn about it in this issue.

On behalf of Xela Aid's team of Directors, Administrative Staff and Advisors, a heartfelt THANK YOU to all of you who, through the years, have made possible loving service to underserved of Guatemala.

Thank you, also, to each and every member of this year's Xela Aid Team for making the 15th Anniversary trip so productive and enjoyable: [Sarah Bowman](#), [Shelby Churchill](#), [Carlos de la Rosa](#), [Colleen Dodds](#), [Karen Edwards](#), [Debi Esquivel](#), [Sheryl Fontaine](#), [Cliff Hague](#), [Claire Hiyati](#), [Jordan Klarenbeck](#), [Justin Klarenbeck](#), [Frank Long](#), [Claudia Nocke](#), [Karla Parsons](#), [Martha Saatjian](#), [Katherine Sanchez](#), and [Megan Schulte](#).

Xela Aid Coordinators, 15th Anniversary Trip

Pat Florez, PEX Director

Mel Dinkel, Chief Operating Officer

Leslie Baer, Founding Director

This online newsletter is best viewed online and with html enabled so you can see the images.

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XELA AID CELEBRATES 15 YEARS!

"This has been the best organized long-term medical missions trip I have experienced," says Frank Long, M.D. "Out of the 15 or more missions through many groups and in many different countries I have been on, this will have the most lasting effects."

The 15th Anniversary Xela Aid trip welcomed 20 volunteers to undertake medical and near-vision clinics, repairs at the clinic, the delivery of an ultrasound machine, a massive rehab of the greenhouse (still ailing from the ravages of Hurricane Stan), a distribution of PEX funds and update of records, a children's bookmaking project and tutoring program assessment, restoration of the clinic waiting room mural, a water and waste management assessment, distribution of [infant receiving packs](#) (thank you [Alana Jolly](#)) and more. During the medical and near-vision clinics, more than 600 people were served! From our volunteers:

CALENDAR & PROJECT UPDATES



Clinic welcomes ultrasound with gratitude to Direct Relief International and an anonymous donor

Don't miss Xela Aid's 15th Anniversary after-trip reunion. All past participants, their loved ones and friends are invited. Reconnect with old friends:

- REUNION ON CATALINA! Saturday, Sept. 29. 3 p.m. Exact location to be announced. \$15. RSVP to [Claudia Nocke](#) 310.510.1824
- December - Watch for updates on holiday Weaving Sales!
- [Host](#) a Fundraising Dinner, Talk, Weaving Demonstration and Sale

[SUPPORT ONE OF THESE IMPORTANT PROJECTS NOW](#)

JUNE RUSSEL-GLENNON CLINIC AND COMMUNITY

Dr. Frank and patient by Megan Shulte

"Watching Dr. Frank interact with the children was one of the highlights on the trip," said volunteer Megan Shulte. "His compassion and respect for his patients, young and old, was a marvelous example of friendship, generosity and shared community."



"I came home from the trip with Xela Aid with an awareness of the feeling appreciation," said Martha Saatjian. "I feel appreciation for the leaders of Xela Aid who had and continue to have a vision for the community of St Martin; for team members who work within the framework of this vision; and for persons who financially support this vision to provide practical, dignified help for others."

"I witnessed appreciation," Martha continued. "In the voice and on the face of a child who is in school because of the support of someone she will probably never meet; in the eyes of a young mother whose child received life saving medication provided by Direct Relief International; and in the hands of the women of the co-op who provided daily meals for the work team."

"The Xela Aid project is a great experience, a life changing experience for others and a life changing experience for me."



Kids at work, by Sheryl Fontaine

"This is a picture of the PEX children writing their stories in the newly minted "Centro de Estudios" (a study/activities room upstairs in the clinic).

"Debi Esquivel and I asked the children to write stories about anything they wanted -- their family, friends, animals, school, or any story that they really liked. We also provided crayons and markers so they could illustrate what they wrote."

"We were so impressed by the intensity and care with which the children wrote -- we saw them as they searched their minds for what to write, then carefully wrote, revised, discussed, and wrote some more. The children wrote with great independence, but were also eager to have their friends read their stories and see their drawings."

"As the culmination of the story writing, during the PEX Celebration on Saturday, we invited three of the older children read their stories to the appreciative crowd in the Clinic lobby."

Colleen Dodds and Attitlan Bug, by Karen Edwards

"This picture was taken at Casa Del Mundo when a beautiful bug landed on the outside of the door to our room," noted Colleen Dodds. "I was inside at the time but as others outside gathered to see it and take pictures of it,

CENTER

Serving more than 200 clients each month, the clinic is now equipped with an ultrasound machine, thanks to an anonymous donor who came to assist Xela Aid through [Direct Relief International](#) (DRI). Special thanks to that generous donor and DRI.

[KCO Club](#) members will be proud to know that during 2006, the Clinic served more than 2400 people -- most of whom, otherwise, would not have had the resources to see a doctor. This year is off to a great start with attendance increasing.

You can help keep this community clinic fully staffed and open daily by becoming a KCO Club member -- "Keep the Clinic Open" [NOW!](#)

PEX DISTRIBUTION, NEW SPONSORSHIPS, HOPEFULS

This summer, scholarship funds were delivered to more than 60 sponsored children who had dutifully completed their semester, some, under extremely difficult circumstances. So far, nine children and young adults have been sponsored by participants in this year's Xela Aid trip to Guatemala:

[Martha Saatjian](#) sponsored German Daniel Vasquez Guix and Yolanda Mendoza Gomez. [Jordan and Justin Klarenbeck](#) sponsored long-time hopeful Jose Silva Garcia. [Katherine Sanchez](#), already a sponsor, added Magdalena Juarez de León, Vilma Everilda Vasquez Lopez and Wendy Esthepanie Dejarlira Lopez Toc. [Cliff Hague](#) sponsored Andreas "Geovani" Benjamin Vasquez Guzman, and [Shelby Churchill](#) sponsored Kathy Vasquez Guzman. [Leslie Baer](#) sponsored Solomon Garcia and San Martín Tots pre-school Coordinator Ruth Vasquez.

Program Director Patricia Florez and the balance the Xela Aid

Karen Edwards called to me to stay inside and open my mouth -- so the photo you see looks pretty scary."



PEX children and hopefuls, by Katherine Sanchez

Says Katherine Sanchez, the trip's volunteer photographer/ historian, "I have so many meaningful pictures, but this picture says a great deal.

"This picture shows how much has been accomplished with the clinic, the happy children holding their bags with tuition and a hope for the future. On the edges are the children who are not yet in the program," she says.



"The message is that there is still so much work still to do."

In Hot Pursuit, by Justin Klarenbeck

"I have lots of photos to share. This one isn't one of Jordan's favorites," Justin Klarenbeck says of a snap of son Jordan in a car, a gaggle of San Martín gals gathered just outside the window.

At a farewell fiesta, all team members were honored by the San Martín community. When asked for a message for the people of San Martín, Jordan, 12, replied, "You've got great corn."



Unguarded Joy, by Justin Klarenbeck

"When Jordan was 3, I was distressed that I was always at work and not spending enough time with him. I felt very guilty and I could see that my absence was a

team send a hearty thanks to each of these generous new sponsors, and those who've been with the program for years. To see these newly sponsored children and all our PEX kids, browse the [PEX Brag Pages](#). To peruse children hopeful for sponsorship at the time of this mailing, visit our [Hopefuls Page](#).

During this year's summer distribution, two graduations were also celebrated. Juana Lopez Gomez, sponsored by [Sandra Peterson](#), received her teaching credential and looks forward to serving as a teacher in San Martín or a surrounding community. For her efforts, the project awarded her a typewriter. A project being explored by PEX sponsors [Sheryl Fontaine](#) and Debi Esquivel seeks to employ a tutor based in the learning center of Xela Aid's community clinic, perhaps Juana.

Xela Aid also celebrated the first college graduation by a Mám-speaking youngster from San Martín who had been sponsored through PEX. David Oscar Garcia, sponsored by [Leslie Baer](#) received a civil engineering degree, and was presented a stylish leather computer satchel.

PEX sponsorship funds allowed these and more than sixty other children and young adults to register in school and to buy books, supplies and clothing required to attend. PEX children also received a medical exam and parasite treatment paid for with sponsor contributions. THANK YOU PEX SPONSORS!

Meet children on our [Hopeful's Page](#).

Browse [Sponsored Children](#).

problem for him. I kept thinking, 'My son needs me, I must spend more time with him.'

"Despite my anxiety, I was unable to withdraw my nose from the grindstone. Then one day when Jordan was 6 while I was away shooting, my wife Val emailed me a photo much like this one. The unguarded joy that I witnessed in that photo, much like I see in the faces in this one, made me realize that it was I who needed Jordan.

"It seems as though the language of play is the same all over the world. Of the group of us that went to Guatemala, the 'conversation' in this photo is one that only Jordan could have participated in. It was a great moment, a defining moment and sadly, sweetly, a passing moment. It was wonderful to witness."

Other Contributed Favorite Snaps...



Slippery When Wet, by Leslie Baer

Cliff Blending in with the Locals, by Carlos de la Rosa



The Green House Team, by Mel Dinkel

URGENT ACTION: SAN MARTÍN TOTS PRESCHOOL IN NEED...

The "San Martín Tots" preschool ("guardaria") opened in January has served an average of 34 children aged 3 to 6 each school day. A teacher and three assistants tutor the mostly Mám- speaking children in Spanish, reading, writing and local history, and serve a hot meal for lunch.

Xela Aid has contributed funds, furnishings and supplies intermittently, and contributed a kitchen due to a donor's generosity. However, the government grant that funds daily operations may end in December. All operations total \$650 per month.

Anyone interested in supporting ongoing operations, who knows of a potential source of funding or who would be interested in leading a grant writing effort is encouraged to contact [Xela Aid](#).

SAN MARTÍN CLEAN

The program to install 30 permanent trash cans around town got off to a great start with the first one being cemented in front of Xela Aid's clinic to much fanfare. The 18 cans sponsored so far have now been installed and are being serviced regularly by community teams.

Many thanks to those who have sponsored trash cans so far!
[See Sponsors Here and Join In!](#)

[SUPPORT ONE OF THESE IMPORTANT PROJECTS NOW](#)

Quick Links...

[Support Our Clinic...go "KCO!"](#)

[Sponsor a Child](#)

[More Ways to Participate](#)



Up to Their Necks in Piñatas, by Leslie Baer



Wrapped Gals, by Mel Dinkel

Satisfied Customers, by Frank Long

Concludes Dr. Frank (known fondly by the end of the trip as a well of knowledge on parasites and as providing some of the most interesting meal conversation ever):

"The long term effects of Xela Aid's Clinic in San Martin are invaluable not only for the physical health of the people, but also as a hope for accomplishment and self-determination for themselves, their children, and all their neighbors to see.



Join our mailing list!

"Thank you to a team of fun, gregarious, visionaries who bring hope to a community that had waited many, many years."

NEW XELA AID DIRECTOR WELCOMED



Xela Aid's Directors met in Guatemala and agreed unanimously to invite a new Director onboard. Carlos de la Rosa has accepted the position of Environmental Projects Director.

By day, Carlos is Chief of Conservation and Education for the Catalina Island Conservancy in Southern California. During Xela Aid's 15th Anniversary trip, he completed a water quality assessment. In coming months, he will make recommendations that will

help guide Xela Aid's next 15 years.

In photo above, Carlos and Luis bemoan "Guatemalan Time" at a pharmacy that opens at 9 still closed at 9:30

Carlos shares his remembrances of this summer's trip:

Arriving at the Clinic · The Xela Aid clinic towered over the small, steep-hilled road that curved towards it. A crowd already gathered outside was a prelude to the next few days. Mostly women and children, their colorful textiles were all variations of a same theme. These San Martín patterns would become indelibly familiar to all of us over the next few days. As we disembarked from the bus, those who had been there before hugged their old friends. Those of us there for the first time got hugs too, shy smiles and "Bienvenido" greetings. Kids smiled and ran around, peeking into the bus and checking out this group of tall, fair-skinned strangers. Amalia, our long-time ambassador, comadrona and organizer gave directions in Mám to the ladies and everyone moved into action. Suitcases filled with medicines were rapidly unloaded and disappeared inside the building... Thus started a week of manic activity, of long lines of patients working their way in an organized chaos through the system we had set up, stations for registration and numbering, weight and blood pressure, doctors' examinations, samples and microbiology, pharmacy and eye glasses...

Julia and her Mom · There were many memorable moments during this week of activity in San Martín. One was getting to meet the children we are sponsoring to stay in school through Xela Aid's PEX Program. They came with their mothers to the Clinic after being advised we were there. Julia came into the pharmacy with her mom. She was shy, but immediately gave us a hug. We gave her some presents and talked with her. Her mom hugged us and started to thank us for our support, but the words did not come out. She just started to cry, quietly, sobs shaking her body while she held a small handkerchief to her face. Julia stood silently as Claudia and I just held her mom in our arms. No words were needed.

José and the Water Samples · José was a curious boy. In the first days of our visit to San Martín, he stood out from the other kids because of his hairdo and his bright-red nylon jacket. He slicked his hair back with a copious amount of hair gel making him look like he just got off a speeding motorcycle after a long ride in the wind. A pat on the head, like most other kids received, was really out of the question with José. However, his interest in everything we did was intense and he stuck with us, hairdo and all. I took him with me to collect water samples for bacteriological analysis. He wanted to do it all, collect the water, pump it through the filter system, prepare the cultures and make the observations. His interest was genuine and touching. He really wanted to learn what was in the water and how we gathered this

information. His interest didn't wane. On the last day of our clinic work, he took with me that last samples of water and helped me read the results and write them into my journal. He also made sure that everyone knew that he was "my assistant" which he really was.

[Enjoy Carlos' and Claudia's Xela Aid Photo Album...](#)

YOU CAN SUPPORT XELA AID BY USING GOODSEARCH

At the end of last year we told you about "GoodSearch," and how you can support Xela Aid each time you do a web search.



If you haven't had a chance yet, go to Goodsearch and select Xela Aid as your benefactor organization: <http://www.goodsearch.com>. Find where it asks, "Who do you GoodSearch for?" Type in Xela Aid, and Xela Aid should appear each time you search as your default benefactor organization.

If you want to be sure you GoodSearch for Xela Aid each time, you can set your home page to GoodSearch in your browser's Preferences. Each time you search, Xela Aid will receive one cent -- and every penny counts!

Tell friends and family about GoodSearch and how they can support Xela Aid's important work, and who knows how much we could raise by the end of the year! Remember, just about \$2,000 will keep the clinic open an entire month.

[Check out GoodSearch...](#)

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