

## Local Heroines

### Evelia

From an impoverished family of nine, Evelia never had the opportunity to attend school, but despite illiteracy, she has been a leader of *La Nueva Esperanza (LNE)* since its founding. Prior to joining *LNE*, Evelia's primary source of income came from the production of *petates* (straw mats) from which she earned about fifty cents per mat that required two days of work. In sewing classes, she learned that she was particularly good at making men's pants and did a sizable business in producing school uniforms, an opportunity she lost when production was centralized in workshops. In response to the change, Evelia has developed two new businesses--skirt and cheese making. She buys remnants that she makes into brightly colored skirts and sells to women in her community. She also buys milk and rennin that she turns into a popular Salvadoran cheese. Evelia's ingenuity is typical of women in developing countries most of whom have several lines of work so that if one runs dry they can turn to an alternative.



Evelia Flores

### Delmi

Delmi came to the attention of *Co-partners'* volunteers when she organized and costumed eight children from her community to perform a traditional dance for the organization's Christmas program. Her initiative and success with the children made it clear that she had talent for teaching and warranted a *Co-partners'* scholarship. For Delmi, funding was not the only hurdle. Her family also had to be converted to the idea of further study, but as she persevered they gradually began to support her.

With the support of the Co-Partners scholarship, Delmi finally graduated from high school and applied for teacher training. *Co-partners* has committed to continue her scholarship through the five years of study required for a teaching degree.

Delmi faces many barriers. She must support her 6 year-old child. Her family would prefer that she quit school to care for her paralyzed brother. She does not have books because they are either unavailable or too expensive. She must travel almost 3 hours each way to get to school. Because getting to classes takes so long, she has little time to do the chores, which as a woman, she is expected to complete. At night, she must care for her son before she can do her homework by the light of a candle or lantern. The pressure to quit is great, but so is her desire to build a better future for herself and her family.

## Rosa

President of La Nueva Esperanza, 1998-2010

Rosa Flores was elected president of *La Nueva Esperanza* in 1998. She has been so successful that she has been reelected every year through 2010. After eight years of leadership she was rewarded for her work when *Co-partners* provided her with a week of training in Washington. Rosa received instruction in typing and community development. She made fund-raising calls to the Inter-American Foundation and St. Anthony's Church. Highlights of the training were a visit to the White House and a little shopping!

An example of Rosa's dedication and ingenuity can be seen in her problem solving capacity. When the roof of the meeting rooms of La Nueva Esperanza needed repairs and an outside estimated came in at over \$1,000, Rosa organized a spouse workday and the roof was repaired for the cost of a good lunch.

