



November 2009 Newsletter

# Co-partners of Campesinas

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*Co-partners of Campesinas* is a US based, 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization that supports *La Nueva Esperanza (New Hope)* and other associations working for women's education and empowerment in developing countries in Latin America. *New Hope* is an organization of sixty rural girls and women from four impoverished communities near Ilobasco, El Salvador, who meet weekly to learn income-producing skills and advance the education of members and their children. Co-partners also supports the *Asociación para el Desarrollo Indígena de El K'iche (ADIK)* and the *Asociación de Desarrollo Comunitario (ASDECO)*, indigenous organizations located outside of Chichicastenango, Guatemala with goals similar to those of *New Hope*.

## Recent Successes in Guatemala

In Guatemala *Co-Partners* works with a local indigenous non-governmental organization (NGO) the *Asociación de Desarrollo Comunitario (ASDECO)* to support educational and health activities. This organization, which emphasizes work with rural youth and women in the area around Chichicastenango was established with the support of a consortium of European NGOs shortly after the signing of the Guatemalan peace accords.

As part of *Co-partner's* collaboration, Ned and Lydia Stone have just returned from Guatemala where they taught English to a group of 28 students ranging in age from 12 to 26. The students were enthusiastic learners with no absences at all throughout the course.



*Ned with students in Chujulimul*

The class was also attended by a number of young local teachers, one of whom thanked the volunteers for demonstrating an interactive method of

teaching, very different from that typically used in Guatemalan schools. Another student reported that he had learned more English in seven days of the *Co-partners'* classes than in all of his previous years of English study.

While Ned and Lydia were teaching in Chujulimul, volunteer Jim Heinzen conducted four days of strategic planning focusing on financial sustainability with the ASDECO board of directors.



*Strategic planning with Board*

This work was important because the donor that has been supporting ASDECO's operating costs, is withdrawing from all Latin American activities in the coming year making it necessary for ASDECO to generate additional income to cover its operating expenses.

The Board developed a detailed strategy, targets and timeline, and assigned responsibilities in five overall initiatives: 1) Approach organizations and

agencies that haven't traditionally worked with ASDECO, 2) Publish an ASDECO Web Page, 3) Develop written materials that document ASDECO's service delivery and impact, 4) Increase the use of mass media to communicate ADESCO's message, 5) Present proposals to a broader group of potential funding sources.

During the trip ASDECO presented a detailed report on *Co-partner's* educational funding for 2009. *Co-partners* provided a \$1,000 grant for the 2010 school year to fund school supplies for 90 primary school students and a \$1,000 grant to support three scholarships for a one year Community Nurses program.



*Lydia presenting partial 2010 school supplies*

### **Follow-up on El Salvador Vocational Training**

In August while delivering the Women's Leadership Workshop, Jeannette Rodriguez and Archer Heinzen conducted a follow-up evaluation on the 2008 vocational training program that had a goal of preventing youth immigration to the U.S. They found that 75% of program participants did not intend to migrate and were working or attending school. Two young men did leave El Salvador; one was not working; and two youth were pulled out of their jobs to cover family responsibilities—one to work on the family farm and a girl to care for her siblings. An important lesson learned in this experience was that we did not do sufficient work with parents to ensure that they respected the youths' jobs and commitments.

### **Getting Out-of-School Children Back to School**

One of the most successful community plans to come out of the Women's Leadership Workshop was developed by the six members of the Azacualpa group, who decided to establish an afternoon program to tutor out-of-school children so that they might be able to return to school in the coming year. Starting in August, they have had 25 to 30 children in a daily catch-up class. When school opens in January, these students will receive school supplies packages funded by the Emily Sandal Memorial Mini-grants Program.

### **2010 Volunteer Opportunities**

For the coming year, *La Nueva Esperanza* has asked for workshops on parent-child communication, improving self esteem, and developing small businesses. Their preference is for these workshops to be in February or March, which is agricultural down time in El Salvador. Volunteers Ned and Lydia Stone plan to repeat their English classes in Guatemala next November and Jim Heinzen will return to evaluate progress on the ASDECO strategic plan. Additional volunteers are sought to teach English and provide basic sewing instruction in Guatemala.

#### ***Co-partners of Campesinas, Board of Directors***

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