



Maya Educational Foundation

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Dear Friends,

At the mid-point of each year, we send you a short update. This time we highlight two areas of MEF's work that we hope merit your support.

RURAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS

Earlier this year, a group of MEF supporters and board members visited schools in remote villages in Guatemala and Chiapas to check on the conditions and progress of several scholarship programs. The poverty and the lack of infrastructure in these rural areas means that education is a very difficult process for many willing and eager young students.

We visited five rural schools in Guatemala and five in Chiapas and saw schools without books, without electricity, and without easy access. At all the schools we saw students eager to learn, walking often more than an hour a day to reach the school, and we saw parents who were committed to the education of their children but who were financially unable to make the needed payments. We met teachers who regularly work for low wages, or sometimes for no pay when there is no money. At Patzulá, the community had to send a truck to bring us to them because the road was too steep and rough for our van.

Education is so important to these parents, teachers, and students that they persevere in the face of almost impossible challenges. These schools need support from the world outside Guatemala and Mexico in order to survive. **MEF scholarships currently assist 120 students in remote areas of Belize, Mexico and Guatemala. With your help, we can do more.**

FOMMA WOMEN'S GROUP IN CHIAPAS, MEXICO

The new FOMMA community center is now ninety percent completed, and the women of FOMMA are redoubling their efforts to reach the finish line. The center will become a focal point in San Cristóbal de Las Casas for indigenous women and the entire indigenous community, providing a theater for FOMMA's award-winning original plays and space for public and private meetings, conferences, and much needed additional classrooms.

In recent years FOMMA has offered adult education classes to many Maya women, developing their skills and empowering them to be independent and to contribute productively and self-confidently to society. Computer classes, Spanish classes, indigenous language classes, tailoring and baking classes have given many women a way to make a better life for themselves and their families. **In order to start a new and expanded series of classes this year, FOMMA is asking for your support.**

To see the whole spectrum of MEF's work, please contact us directly or visit www.mayaedufound.org. Your concern and contributions bring new hope to many in need. We and they appreciate your willingness to help with a mid-year donation. Thank you!

Elisabeth S. Nicholson
Secretary of the Board of Directors

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Meeting with members of Asociación de Educación Uke Ma Noj and students in Patzulá, Guatemala



Left: Parents and student in Todos Santos, Guatemala

Center: Scholarship coordinator Fernando Limón visits with Chuj students and family members in Chiapas, Mexico

Right: Tz'utujil students in San Pedro La Laguna, Guatemala



Theatre (*left*) and literacy courses (*right*) at FOMMA' s new community center