



Maya Educational Foundation

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Dear Friends,

For more than 20 years, donors like you have made it possible for the Maya Educational Foundation (MEF) to help Maya students in Guatemala, Mexico, and Belize continue their schooling and improve their futures, as well as those of their families and their communities. You have made a marked difference in these students' lives through the scholarships that we have been able to provide because of the generosity of so many people who share our goals.

The growing numbers of Maya young people who are eager, ready, and qualified to attend university is one of MEF's success stories, but also a pressing fundraising challenge. Recently I visited our Guatemalan project partners, and everywhere young men and women approached me to inquire about scholarship availability and how to apply. The Guatemalan non-profit organization that administers many of our 150 university scholarships is Fundación para Educación y Profesionalización Maya (FEPMaya). It is located in Mixco, about half an hour's drive from Guatemala City. FEPMaya currently supervises fifty of the university students funded by us and reports that it had received an astonishing and unprecedented 2,000 applications for the few open scholarship spots advertised for the 2014 academic year.

Inspired by this great demand, the MEF Board has committed to raising funds for additional university scholarships. A university scholarship currently costs MEF approximately US\$2,200 per year. Although this amount does not cover all of a student's expenses, it makes all the difference as to whether that student can afford to go to university or not. Students also do their part. Most work part-time or take on an assistantship, tutor other students in the programs, or perform service in their local communities during semester breaks.

With this mid-year letter we are appealing to you to help us answer the challenge to offer more scholarship opportunities to talented young Maya women and men in the countries we serve. We hope that you will continue to support our work on behalf of these Maya students or, if you are new to the Maya Educational Foundation, that you will want to become a donor. Perhaps you would like to sponsor a student for the duration of his or her studies. While this level of commitment would be amazing, any donation to MEF will help make it possible for more students to achieve their dreams.

We hope you enjoy the photos on the back of this letter that show some of the inspiring young people of the FEPMaya group during our recent visit. Before returning to the States, the students and their supervisors in Guatemala asked me to convey their sincere thanks and blessings to you. Thank you!

With kind regards and appreciation, and wishes for a good summer,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elisabeth S. Nicholson". The script is fluid and cursive.

Elisabeth Nicholson, Director

MEF Students in Guatemala greeting visitors with Maya ceremony, 2014.



What else does MEF do?

- MEF also offers Maya children scholarships at the primary and secondary levels, in collaboration with nonprofit partners in the countries we serve.
- In addition, MEF promotes and joins forces with a number of other educational programs and organizations. For example, MEF supports empowerment projects for Maya women like *Thirteen Threads/Oxlajuj B'atz'* and also *Maya Traditions/ Fundación Tradiciones Mayas*, both in Panajachel, Guatemala. Maya Traditions and MEF provide over 100 scholarships for children from elementary to university levels.
- MEF partner *Amigos de San Cristóbal* in Chiapas, Mexico supports projects of informal education and skill training.
- *Centro de Investigaciones Regionales de Centroamérica (CIRMA)*, the social science research center in Antigua, Guatemala offers scholars and the public valuable materials for the understanding of history and cultures in Central America.



¡MUCHAS GRACIAS!