



Supporting Education for Maya Students since 1992

June 2020

Dear Friends:

During these difficult times around the world, we wanted to let you know that we are thinking about you and your families. We also wanted to share an update about how our scholarship students are doing, including their participation in COVID-19 prevention efforts, while maintaining their educational pursuits.


Most of our students in Guatemala, Mexico, and Belize were able to return to their hometowns to stay with their families. The remaining handful of students stayed in place, due to transportation services being suspended and concerns about their remote hometowns not having Internet access that would support distance learning.

The students were very relieved to learn that we pledged to continue their scholarship support during the pandemic. They are, as much as possible, studying by means of WhatsApp, Facebook, and other social media platforms. The transition from in-person classes to learning via social media has been challenging. Like in the U.S., carrying out courses solely via the Internet has required adjustments on the part of both instructors and students who were unaccustomed to this learning and teaching format. Most of our scholarship students' access to the Internet is limited to their cell phones, as frequently neither they nor their families own personal computers or tablets. Prior to the pandemic, students routinely paid for Internet access at Internet cafes and the like. When these sites closed, securing reliable and steady access to the Internet to complete their work has become difficult. As we learn of particular hardship situations from our student supervisors, we are addressing them as fast and best as we can. We just received a special donation for students in Chiapas which will help them with recent, insanely increased food costs and will allow our medical students to purchase protective gear.

Many of our students, especially those in medical and nursing programs, have shown great initiative and are educating their families and communities about COVID-19 and preventive measures, such as social distancing, wearing masks, and frequent handwashing. They have taken a proactive approach that is sensitive and relevant to their cultural and local circumstances. This is particularly important given the chronic medical conditions many in their Mayan communities suffer from, and given the difficulties accessing medical clinics and hospitals. The few students who did not make it back to their hometowns, including one nursing student, shared that they had conversations over the telephone with family members and friends, urging their strict adherence to safety protocols in their everyday lives. You will see some of these students on the next page.

The Maya students are very grateful for your support. They as well as our board members and staff send our wishes that you and your families may remain safe and healthy during this pandemic.

Sincerely,


Pablo Chavajay
President


Elisabeth S. Nicholson
Executive Director

Other MEF News:

- It is the 10th Anniversary of the Shelton Davis Scholarship Fund. To commemorate and celebrate the great person Sandy Davis was, a friend of his will match donations up to ten thousand dollars. Please, check www.mayaedufound.org for more on this special effort!
 - We welcome our newest board member Karen Kaiser from Mexico! You will find information about Karen as well as other information on our newly designed website at www.mayaedufound.org
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We send our love and best wishes to our students, the supervisors and the teachers who are going out of their way to keep connected to the students. May all stay safe and healthy! Here are a few of our scholarship recipients who are in the health field, some now doing their internships at hospitals.



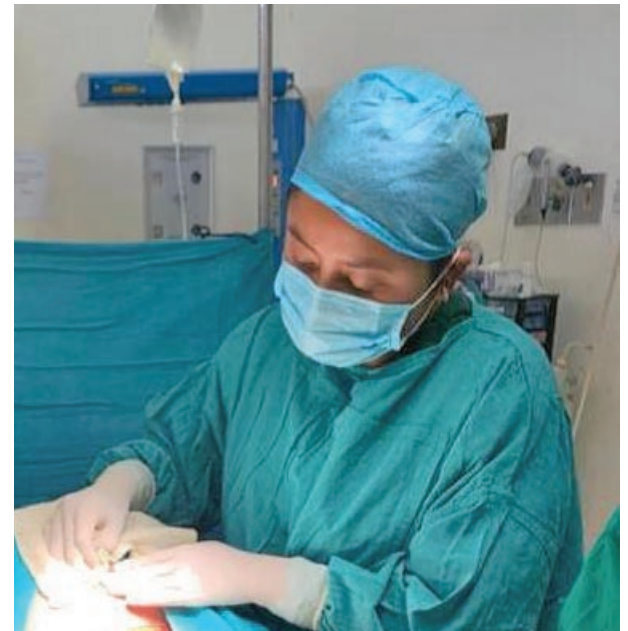
Vilma, a Kaqchikel medical student from Caserío Cooperativa, Sololá, Guatemala.



Delmar, a K'anjobal medical student from Comitán, Chiapas, Mexico.



Pop Ajpu, a Mam dentistry student from Salcajá, Quetzaltenango, Guatemala, here before social distancing.



Crisly Roxana, an Ixil medical student from San Miguel Uspantán, Quiché, Guatemala.

We commend all health professionals and those in training like the students featured here. They are brave and dedicated young men and women. Your support gives them hope and strength. If you are able to, please donate to MEF in their honor. Thank you.

www.mayaedufound.org