



Supporting Education for Maya Students since 1992

June 2021

Dear Friends:

We hope that this finds you and your families in good health and spirit. With increasingly more people now vaccinated here in the USA, many of us are able to return to some degree of normalcy. However, it is still a lot different in the countries we serve where vaccinations are slow, creating many challenges for people there for a whole while longer. Some progress is being made, with Guatemala, Mexico, and Belize reporting that now most of their essential workers and the elderly have been able to get vaccinated.


On the educational front, things are confusing and in constant flux. Similar to what happened here, schools are being opened, then closed again, with governments issuing orders according to changes in infection rates. One thing is for certain, especially in rural areas younger student enrollments for 2021 are down severely, with many parents scared to send their children back to school until they feel that it is safe to do so. Some will never come back, the teachers fear. — We are glad to report that most university students in our programs have been able to return to their student housing in urban areas and are observing all health precautions to stay safe. They are determined to continue their studies and to make good progress. Due to your generous response to our *Bridging the Digital Divide* campaign thus far, we have been able to provide laptops to 34 students most in need. Having these laptops has kept these students from giving up and having to drop out. We thank you very much. With any additional contributions to this campaign, we will be able to help even more students.

Work with our partner organizations continues strong: In Chiapas, Sna Jtz'ibajom is holding steady, with 30 Maya university students. The scholarship students are motivated and are showing good results. In Guatemala, FEPMaya is continuing with 70 Maya students. We have strengthened relationships with all our partners during these past 16 months and commend each one for their extra care and initiative during this period, finding new ways to engage the students and reaching out to whole communities with helpful projects (Maya Traditions, Esperanza Juvenil, Grupo Cajolá, Julian Cho Society, to name a few). In Antigua, our partner CIRMA was able to open its doors again to the public but has also seen a marked increase in visitors who access its digital archive collections online. Students, supervisors, and you, our supporters have all shown great courage this past year. Working together, keeping the faith, we have gotten through a very dark time together and we will help our neighbors to do the same.

Although the English Language Program (ELP) volunteers decided not to travel to Antigua this year, they plan on returning in 2022. In the meantime, with much enthusiasm and good will, ELP volunteer coordinator Randhi Wilson was able to secure spots for 30 Maya students in a lively ESL online program in Oregon. We thank her and all involved for making this possible. Thanks also go to Christine Eber and her colleagues at Weaving for Justice for their continued, successful sales of Maya textiles to benefit our students. We are grateful to our textile donors and everyone who remembers us and supports our work. ¡Muchas gracias!

As the next academic year will start again in a few weeks for our scholarship students in Belize and Mexico, we hope you will consider a midyear donation to MEF if you are able to. You can see some of the students you are helping on the next page. We wish you a good summer and thank you for your support.

Sincerely,


Pablo Chavajay
President


Elisabeth S. Nicholson
Executive Director

Not standing still... Despite the pandemic, MEF scholarship students are determined to continue their educational quest. Here are some of them:



Medical student Vilma is getting vaccinated in Guatemala.



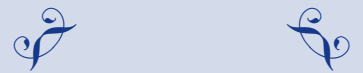
Andrés studies criminal and forensic sciences in Guatemala.



Celso studies language & culture in Chiapas.

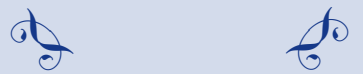


Estrella studies economy in Chiapas.



To help us support scholarships for bright Maya students like these, please donate at www.mayaedufound.org

Thank you!



Jorge Gutierrez, student supervisor at our partner Sna Jtz'ibajom in Chiapas says: "The support you give to the students has made them feel more secure and has given them the motivation to continue to accomplish their academic commitments and to also reflect on the pandemic, to collaborate and to initiate helpful measures in their Maya communities. For example, Celso is helping his community with preserving oral records; Estrella is improving quality and production to help women weavers in her community."