



## August 2024 - Student Enrollment Reaches 1,000+



### Dear Friends

So far, 2024 has been a very busy and exciting year for the Guatemalan Tomorrow Fund and Ak' Tenamit. Due to an increase in the number of needy students asking for scholarships to study at our vocational boarding schools. This year we increased our enrollment to over 1,000 students between our two jungle boarding schools. A rapidly changing climate has increased the rate of malnutrition and internal displacement in the part of Guatemala we serve, due to droughts, flooding and the loss of topsoil. This increased vulnerability leads to girls being at greater risk for adolescent pregnancy and forced marriage. The communities we serve have the highest rate of pregnant girls between 10 and 14 years of age in the Americas, so we have prioritized helping as many girls as possible stay in school so that they can graduate with good jobs in Guatemala, become self-sufficient and have control over their own futures.

Due to generous support, we have been able to install commercial grade satellite Internet antennas and have added over 100 computers for students to increase their digital skills. Students learn the skills they need to get good jobs working with municipalities, environmental organizations, cooperatives and in the tourism industry. We recently initiated a new training program where our students studying a vocational degree in sustainable community development will also receive intensive training in the use of technology for land surveying. On top of graduating with high school technical degrees in sustainable community development they will also graduate as certified land surveyors. We have identified a strong job market for surveyors, both working with governmental, municipal and non-governmental organizations and for self-employment, so we are

confident that this additional training will increase employment opportunities for our graduates. The Q'eqchi' Mayan region that we serve has over 500,000 women and girls and there is currently only one certified Q'eqchi' woman surveyor, so we are tremendously excited about providing this professional training opportunity.

Visiting Rotary and Knights of Columbus service groups worked with students to build a new girls' dining hall and multipurpose building at our Rio Dulce campus, build additional bunkbeds and school furniture and to improve our solar energy system to power our computer labs and for the student's nighttime study hall and recreational activities. In addition to helping us increase and improve the services we provide for our students, this was a wonderful opportunity for our female and male students to increase their carpentry and electrician skills, strengthening their employability and overall self-esteem.

Your faithful support has been instrumental in our students being able to continue their education so that they can graduate with great jobs and lift their families out of poverty. The increase in enrollment at our boarding schools has stretched our budget to the point where it is challenging to feed our students and pay our dedicated staff. Your continued support is greatly appreciated by our students and their families.

Thank you for providing hope and opportunity for thousands of Guatemalan indigenous girls and boys!

In Service,



**Steve Dudenhofer**  
Founder/Chief Technical Advisor

## Steve receives Global Recognition at Singapore Rotary Convention



Ak' Tenamit's founder, Steve Dudenhoefer, was recognized by Rotary International as one of six Rotarians globally to receive the People of Action: Champions of Impact award. It was a great honor for Steve to have been chosen out of 1.4 million Rotarians to receive this recognition. The award was presented at the Rotary International Convention in Singapore, where Steve gave talks about Ak' Tenamit's work in Guatemala. Over 13,000 Rotarians attended the Singapore convention, so it was a great opportunity to spread the word about Ak'



Tenamit's unique vocational training methodology, and its extraordinary impact on the lives of the indigenous youth the organization serves in Guatemala.

## Donor Spotlight-Ruth Dexter

Recently, Ruth Dexter visited our jungle campus after choosing a Gate1 tour group. Having been so impressed with Ak' Tenamit, Mrs. Dexter called the office and spoke with Debora and eventually Steve, and offered to purchase 60 new Chromebooks for girls' education.



Indigenous girls and women in Guatemala are most affected by the digital divide. Having access to these computers in order to become digital literate, to learn to use Excel and Word, and to access online learning platforms such as Duolingo to learn English, will increase our female students' chance of getting a good job when they graduate. This will enable them to be self-sufficient and greatly reduce vulnerability to exclusion and gender based violence. In order to have sufficient bandwidth for the 60 new Chromebook to connect to the Internet for online learning, Mrs. Dexter also agreed to provide funds to install two

commercial-grade Starlink Internet satellite systems at our jungle school.

Our Río Dulce campus is divided into two sites. The first site houses our girl's boarding facility which has a dedicated computer lab for girls (open after school and on weekends) where the 60 Chromebooks will be installed, and a second site which houses our boy's boarding facility and high school campus.

Thank you Mrs. Dexter!!



## Msgr. Tom's Recent Trip to Ak' Tenamit



Our students were elated to have Monsignor Tom Skindeleski return to Guatemala for his 21st trip to our jungle vocational high school campus, the Father Moran Vocational High School. Monsignor Tom lead a group of 13 Knights of Columbus from the Florida State Council. Every year our students eagerly await Monsignor Tom's visit, and when his boat reached the dock of our jungle campus the students were lined up



on the dock and main paths of our high school, cheering the arrival of monsignor Tom and the Knights of Columbus. During their one-week visit, Monsignor taught English and the Knights joined forces with our students to build furniture and install solar powered lighting. Our students know that most of the food they eat at the school is paid for by funds donated by parishioners at Catholic parishes

in South Florida, and they expressed their gratitude to Monsignor for his help in keeping food on their plates.



## Students Train for Community Forest Fire Prevention



A rapidly changing climate has increased the frequency of droughts and forest fires in the areas that we serve in Guatemala. Our students received training from Guatemalan government agencies to be community forest fire fighters. They learned how to safely prevent the spread of forest fires and how to teach community members to keep their forests and communities safe. Our graduates have obtained good jobs as forest rangers and working with environmental organizations, so these new skills will be instrumental in helping them find gainful employment upon graduation.

Twenty-three Chicago-area Rotarians traveled to Guatemala to work alongside our students in the construction of a new dining hall for our female students. Our students learned to use power tools and basic carpentry skills to build a large dining hall which seats over 300 students at once. The building will also be used in the evening as a study hall for our female students, and as a recreational building where the girls can keep busy during the torrential rains that are common at our jungle campus. The new dining hall will allow us to enroll more girls at our Rio Dulce campus, providing hope and opportunity for girls that dream of being able to continue their education. Stephen Legge and Dan Wolf of the Buffalo Grove Rotary Club led the group of hard-working women and men.



## Student Spotlight-Krizzley Ordoñez



Krizzley Ordoñez is a 20-year-old indigenous youth leader who will graduate this year from our school with a vocational degree in Sustainable Community Development. During Guatemala's 36 year long Civil War, Krizzley's family was displaced to Mexico because of violence. She grew up in a refugee community, where she learned the value of helping others. Krizzley is a very bright student and because of her leadership she was recently given a scholarship to attend the COP-16 Global Biodiversity Conference in Cali, Columbia, where she will speak about her experience as an indigenous woman, and youth leader. Krizzley wants to continue studying to become a lawyer so that she can help indigenous communities, and especially indigenous women to achieve sustainable development and self-determination.

## Surveying for Conservation, Land Rights, and Gainful Employment



Thirty-two twelfth graders working on a Sustainable Community Development degree are receiving training to become certified land surveyors. They are learning to use electronic surveying equipment and mapping software to help communities legalize their land for reforestation and conservation initiatives. We have identified a strong job market for students that graduate with these skills and are excited that for the first time in Guatemala, our students will graduate with a dual

degree. A high school degree in sustainable community development, and a certification as professional land surveyors. There is currently only one Q'eqchi' Maya woman out of a population of 500,000 that is certified as a land surveyor. We are breaking new ground training rural indigenous women for these high paying jobs that are directly related to increasing community's resilience and conservation efforts.



## Sponsor A Student Transform A Life!

Ak' Tenamit's practical, vocational education, 3,000 hours of job experience, and personal motivation prepare graduates to succeed in their rural environment and inspire them to help their families and their communities. For just one dollar per day (\$365 per year), you can transform the life of a young person who would otherwise be trapped in poverty.

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**WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!** Donations are tax-deductible as permitted by law and processed through a PCI Compliant Data Security Company. The Guatemalan Tomorrow Fund is the US-based, non-profit, non-denominational fundraising arm of Ak' Tenamit.

