



■ Success Stories of our Female Graduates

Dear Friends,



The school year in Guatemala runs from the beginning of January until the end of October so we are very excited that this week is graduation week. Our students are busy decorating the school with palm fronds and flowers they find in the surrounding jungle. Proud parents will travel for up to two days in order to participate in their children's graduation, as most of our students are the first ones in their family to graduate from high school. This year, 169 students are graduating from our Father Moran Vocational High School and our new high school in the Peten, the Indigenous Institute for Rural Development. As they graduate with nine months of hands-on experience with potential employers, 62% of our senior class have already been employed before their graduation. They are working as park guards, agricultural extensionists, cooks, waiters, and facilitating poverty reduction activities in rural communities. Ak' Tenamit has an in-house employment office which helps students find great jobs, so the remaining graduates are sure to be employed very soon after graduation.

As Guatemala continues to face tremendous obstacles due to the impact of extreme climactic events such as hurricanes and tropical storms, our graduates play a key role in lifting their families and communities out of poverty. They graduate with the skills they need to advise communities by implementing climate smart agriculture and by planting crops that are resistant to drought and flooding. Students also help villagers

adapt to changing rainfall patterns and advise on starting small businesses to generate wealth while protecting the region's pristine rainforest. As an outcome of the COVID-19 pandemic, the area we serve has seen a large increase in the numbers of adolescent pregnancies, forced marriage, malnutrition and the irregular migration of youth to the United States. Our graduates are equipped to counter these trends, and to act as agents of change supporting their families and communities so that at-risk girls and boys can continue their education and find gainful employment in Guatemala.

This tremendous success has been achieved because of your faithful support of our students in Guatemala. Ak' Tenamit is now run by a local indigenous board of directors composed primarily of the first students that entered into our school, went on to study at a university level, and returned to serve the organization that provided them with the opportunity to achieve success in life. I continue to support the local board as Chief Technical Advisor, helping to develop innovative ways to serve indigenous communities to help them overcome obstacles that build wealth and offers hope and opportunity in Guatemala.

Thank you for playing such a vital role in the transformation of the lives of the thousands of students that have graduated from our school and that have become leaders and agents of change in Guatemala.

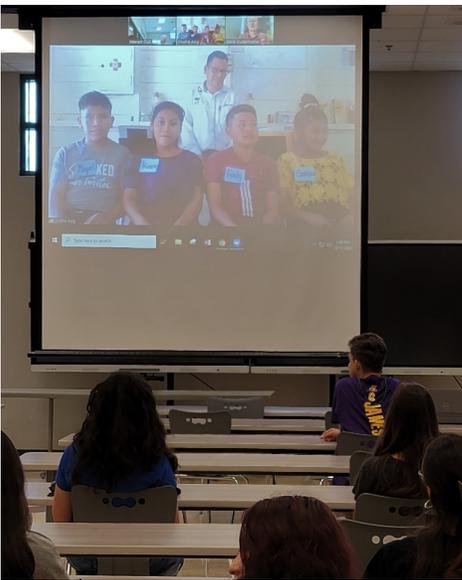
Steve Dudenhofer
Founder and
Chief Technical Advisor

Donor Spotlight: Tribute to former GTF Board Director Bob Jones



We mourn the loss of our long-term board member and supporter Bob Jones. Bob spent countless hours working with The Guatemalan Tomorrow Fund organizing and strengthening our administrative procedures. Over the years he made many trips to our school in the jungle where he helped our indigenous board of directors strengthen their operational policies and impact. We will miss Bob's big smile, boundless energy and eternal optimism.

Rotary Interact Club-Florida's Jupiter High School Students meet the Sponsored Students in Guatemala



Jupiter High School Interact students had the opportunity to meet the 7th grade Guatemalan students they sponsor at Ak' Tenamit (AAT) school in Rio Dulce. In attendance on the Zoom call in addition to the students were GTF/AAT Founder, Steve Dudenhoefer, and Student Sponsorship Coordinator, Onofre Asig.

At the Jupiter High School site in Florida, Guatemalan Tomorrow Fund (GTF) Executive Director, Debora Kerr, joined Rotary Interact sponsor, John Kelly, and Josephine Buscemi, Jupiter High School Rotary Interact Club student sponsor. Students collected funds to sponsor five students by selling chocolate bars in the community. GTF/AAT are grateful for the sponsorship and the Guatemalan students expressed their appreciation during the Zoom call.

Rural Education Transforms Lives



Successful Careers of our Female Graduates

Breaking gender stereotypes, many of Ak' Tenamit's female graduates have been hired as forest rangers and to work with municipalities and nonprofit organizations supporting sustainable development in rural communities and especially helping accompanying rural women in initiatives related to poverty reduction and conservation. The involvement of women in jobs that are traditionally reserved for men helps provide inspiration for the girls in villages and the young women studying at our school. If young women are not gainfully employed, they are much more vulnerable to domestic violence, forced marriage and to not having a voice in major decisions that affect their lives. Ak' Tenamit female graduates are able to find gainful employment which allows them to help support their families and gradually continue their studies at a college level so that they can become leaders in their communities and beyond. Ak' Tenamit's board of directors is led by several female leaders from the community.



Photos are of AAT graduate student, Doña Juc, who works with "The Mesoamerican Alliance For Women and Forests". The Alliance highlights the vital contribution of indigenous women in protecting tropical rainforests, and making sure that their voices are heard at international events related to conservation.

Students Engage in Climate Resilience Methodologies



Guatemala is a very susceptible country to extreme climactic events. Tropical storms and hurricanes repeatedly cause flooding, topsoil loss and displacing people from their communities. Repeated droughts cause crop failure in communities which don't have any way to irrigate their fields. This in turn increases the rate of malnutrition and deaths from malnutrition, and contributes to desperation thus increasing the number of adolescent pregnancies of young girls being forced to marry at a young age and of the boys attempting irregular migration to the United States. As part of their coursework and internships, Ak' Tenamit's junior high students studying Rural Well-being and high school students studying Sustainable Community Development learn the skills they need to be able to help rural villagers implement climate smart agriculture. They visit rural villages to promote improved agricultural practices such as planting drought resistant and highly

nutritious vegetable varieties. They also help communities grow organic cacao to make chocolate and plant a variety of fruit trees. Our students have learned how to create rural tree nurseries to facilitate the reforestation of degraded areas that in turn protect water sources and provide firewood. This also provides a source of income from the eventual harvest of tropical hardwoods.

■ Student Spotlight-Angeles Barcarcel Cucul



Angeles Barcarcel Cucul is one of the brightest and most motivated students in Ak' Tenamit's 10th grade tourism class. Angeles grew up in the Guatemalan port town of Puerto Barrios under very precarious conditions. Her mother was a single mother that suffered from mental health problems and was often unemployed, so as the oldest of six siblings, Angeles assumed the role of mother and breadwinner from a very early age. Two years ago, her mother suddenly passed away and Angeles and her siblings found themselves homeless living on the rough streets of Puerto Barrios. When Ak' Tenamit's staff learned of their predicament we offered full scholarships to all of the children, and Angeles was able to start her new life as a full-time student. This year Angeles has participated in three months of internships at high-end Guatemalan hotels and restaurants where she has served as a cook, waitress, and barista. Angeles entered into our school with very low self-esteem, but she is now a leader in her class and she is focused on graduating with a great job so that she can support her younger brothers and sisters. Her long-term goal is to continue her education

to become a lawyer so that she can help at-risk youth, as she experienced firsthand difficult life on the streets. Because of your support, Angeles will graduate from our Father Moran Vocational High School as a self-sufficient woman, capable of being an agent of change, lifting others out of crippling poverty.

■ 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.

The Guatemalan Tomorrow Fund, P.O. Box 3636, Tequesta, FL 33469
Phone: **561-747-9790** | info@thegtfund.org

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 fund raising arm of Ak' Tenamit.



The Guatemalan Tomorrow Fund, Inc is a US based non-profit, non-denominational, 501(c)(3) charitable organization.