



November 2023 - Building Resiliency in Guatemala



Dear Friends

Ak' Tenamit's school year runs from January until the end of October, and as I write this our students are preparing for their high school graduation. They have been busy collecting brightly colored ginger flowers and palm leaves in the jungle surrounding the school which the students will use to decorate the building where their graduation ceremony will be held. Their excited families, who have traveled from far away villages, will happily sleep on the floors of our classrooms the night before graduation. The students have prepared a traditional meal of tamales and stew for the big celebration post-graduation. In Guatemala, only 4% of rural indigenous boys, and only 2% of rural indigenous girls graduate from high school, so our students feel very fortunate to have had the opportunity to continue their education to this point. In addition to their high school diploma, they graduate with nine months of hands-on experience with potential employers, and many are already gainfully employed before they graduate. We have achieved the highest post-graduation employment rate in the country, 84% compared to the national average of only 10%, and our graduates continue to earn double the national average for entry-level jobs.

These great achievements are because of your faithful support. With your help, young girls are no longer forced to get married, and boys do not have to risk their lives trying to reach the United States in search of employment. Our students become leaders in

their communities where they lift their families out of poverty and help their communities become more resilient to climate change and natural disasters. They graduate with the skills they need to be able to improve their family's nutrition through climate-smart agriculture and secure employment to support their families economically, many starting small businesses with part of their earnings.

Due to recurrent droughts in Guatemala, we have seen a sharp increase in the number of severely malnourished children. There has also been a significant increase in the rate of pregnant girls between 10 and 14 years of age and of boys attempting to migrate to the United States. For these reasons, we hope to increase the number of full scholarships we offer in the coming school year and to enroll more at-risk girls and boys in our vocational boarding schools. We are also working with governmental and non-governmental organizations in Guatemala to identify the neediest families and children and enroll them in our school-an important first step to lifting students and their families out of poverty.

I ask you to please continue your faithful support of our students so that together we can transform lives, and provide hope and opportunity for Guatemala's neediest children. Thank you for the difference you have made in the lives of the families we serve.

In Service,

Steve Dudenhofer
Founder/Chief Technical Advisor

■ New Ak' Tenamit Board of Directors Elected

Ak' Tenamit's Board of Directors is, by statute, composed entirely of local indigenous community members. The board term is for a period of three years and our outgoing board president, Graciela Coy, finished her term last month. A general assembly was held, and the assembly members, composed of a young woman and man from each of the indigenous villages near the Rio Dulce project site, voted for a new president and board of directors. Lucas Che was elected to serve as the new president and legal representative. Lucas was one of Ak' Tenamit's first boarding students and he studied at our school for six years before continuing at university level. Among his goals as president are to strengthen our accounting systems, increase strategic alliances, and to offer scholarships to more at-risk girls and boys.



The entire BOD is composed of Ak' Tenamit graduates-Congratulations!

■ Donor Spotlight-Riccardo Boehm-Rotarian and GTF Board Member

Riccardo Boehm has traveled to Guatemala 11 times and spearheaded many Rotary projects, among them grants for electric boat motors to save on transportation costs.

Riccardo is Ak' Tenamit's honorary grandfather! A member of the Palm Beach Flagler Rotary Club, Riccardo has visited our jungle schools many times, leading groups of Rotarians to help with construction projects and teaching English. At our schools, Riccardo teaches students CPR and other life-saving techniques and when back in the US he keeps busy asking different Rotary Clubs to support our work in Guatemala.

Thank you, Riccardo!



Msgr. Tom's Recent Trip to Ak' Tenamit

Monsignor Tom Skindeleski made his 22nd trip to Guatemala, leading a group of Florida Knights of Columbus for their annual pilgrimage. While at our Father Moran Vocational High School, they worked alongside our students building school furniture, supervising student feeding programs, and teaching English. At 78 years of age, traveling to the Guatemalan jungle is a tremendous sacrifice for Msgr. and our students are eternally grateful for his visits. Msgr. Tom is a great inspiration to our students and staff, and they eagerly await his returned to our jungle school. Msgr. Tom "loves going to Ak' Tenamit and looks forward to making more trips in the future."



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 and 8th 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 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 meeting.



Thank you, Interact students!!

Student Spotlight-Students helping Communities



Our students are helping communities adapt to climate change through reforestation, climate-smart agriculture, disaster preparedness, and food security.

We are proud of our students for taking the lead, and helping their families adapt to a rapidly changing climate. Students learn about climate-smart agriculture, value-added crops such as organic cacao. They are also helping villages identify and avoid climate related risks such as flooding and landslides; and alternative sources of income, such as community based tourism initiatives for villages that have suffered repeated crop failure. At our rural vocational high schools, students get hands on experience that they can use to help strengthen their communities, and to help their families be more resilient. Students learn to use GPS and mapping software to identify parts of villages that are prone to

flooding and to identify the best areas to reforest. Our students assume leadership roles in their communities and become agents of change to support their community's well-being.

New Program Researches Solutions



Ak' Tenamit is investigating adolescent pregnancies and will provide results and solutions in 2024.

Alarmed at a stark increase in the number of adolescent pregnancies and forced marriages in the Q'eqchi' region of Guatemala, Ak' Tenamit social workers have recently completed an investigation that has identified the municipalities and communities with the highest level of vulnerable girls. Our multidisciplinary team is currently designing an intervention strategy for 2024 wherein we plan to visit the communities and families of girls that are

in eminent risk of adolescent pregnancy and forced marriage in order to provide scholarships to study at Ak' Tenamit's schools. As our female students graduate with good jobs, we see that an appropriate vocational education can help break the cycle of poverty and vulnerability in the future.

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
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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.

