



Book Delivery Update

March 19, 2001

Dear Supporter,

Jeff and I send greetings from Guatemala City. We've just finished two challenging, exhausting, yet rewarding months of book deliveries, in which the hope and promise of a better education was brought to over 6,000 new students in 25 schools. The student's thank you letters (enclosed with the newsletter) convey the excitement and outpouring of appreciation we encountered at every turn:



In Senahú, three aged men carried a Marimba (a huge wooden keyboard) up a steep mountain road in order to entertain us as we delivered school supplies. Sweat poured from their worn, leathery faces as they belted out song after song.

In Chuacruz, a poor farmer walked for two hours from his home to thank us for bringing books to his son. In Patzún, a group of Rotary Volunteers burst into tears as children crowded around them like rock concert fans, saying "gracias, gracias, gracias. may God bless you!"

In Comalapa, tears of laughter flowed as one of our volunteers solemnly presented a plaque to the people of Como-la-papa, butchering the name of the town and saying instead "I eat potatoes."

For us, I think the most touching thing about the deliveries was seeing how others are adopting our project and making it their own. Guatemala fever is spreading. It's like when one candle lights another. The flame of the second in no way diminishes the first but afterwards there is twice as much light. Thank you for being a candle bearer for this project.

This much-needed work has been made possible by all of you who are reading this letter, through your support both in the U.S. and Guatemala. Our lady of Guadalupe Church in central Ohio conducted bake sales and raffles, first graders at Visitation School put their nickels and dimes into a jar, members of 82 Rotary clubs from around the U.S. emptied their pockets into a passing hat, Precision Strip, Inc. and other companies and foundations made generous donations and several hundred of you sent us checks throughout the year to fund various aspects of our work. On behalf of all the children here-and their families--we sincerely thank you.



We're now waist-deep into our new computer labs initiative, which is being funded by Microsoft. Jeff and I have been hearing a growing clamor over the last two years for computer labs and training at our schools. Desperately poor people, especially in the rural areas, see computer skills as a "ticket out of poverty" for their children. Indeed, in a country with nearly 50% underemployment, "marketable skills" can make the difference between getting a good job or falling back into the impoverished life of



subsistence farming. We plan to implement three new labs in 2001, which will provide vital training to over 1,000 children, each and every year. Jack and Marie Eiting have taken a lead in this project by funding a three-month technical volunteer-Howard Lobb- to help us develop the project. Howard is a mechanical engineer in Seattle, who spent a year in Guatemala in 1998, speaks Spanish, and has volunteered previously on Cooperative for Education programs. He's been here for two weeks now and is already making a huge contribution. Joe will be working in Guatemala until May 1 in order to help with the computer labs implementation and also further develop our scholarships and libraries programs.

Thank you for all that you've done for the people of Guatemala.

Affectionately yours, Joe, Jeff, Johanna, Anne, and the whole Cooperative for Education team

Will you help? According to our project teachers, textbooks improve the quality of a student's education by more than 70%. Your help can make a significant difference in the lives of Guatemalan children.

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