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breaking  
the cycle of poverty  
in Guatemala  
through  
education

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# cooperative COMMUNICATIONS

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## New Projects!

CoEd launches initiatives in teacher training & primary school education

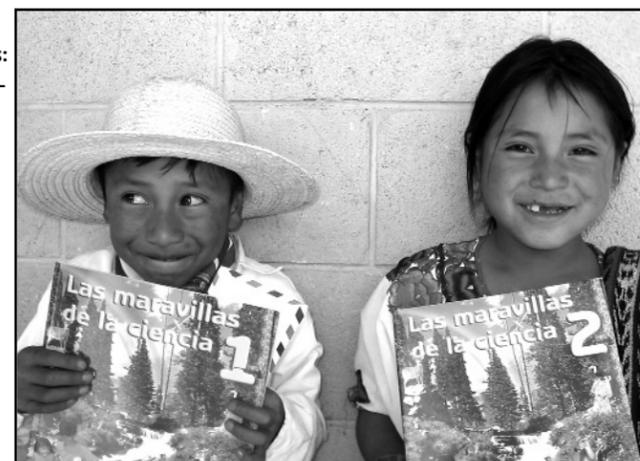
by Joe Berninger

Guatemalan schools face many challenges: limited resources, inconsistent and outdated teaching methods, and high drop-out rates to name a few. With your help, CoEd has spent the last 11 years perfecting its textbook and computer projects in order to overcome some of these obstacles.

Yet the need still exists for an even more comprehensive approach if we're going to fully accomplish our goal of breaking the cycle of poverty in Guatemala. To that end, I'm excited to announce two new CoEd projects: the Culture of Reading Program and a teacher training initiative.

Unlike many Western countries, Guatemala does not have a culture of reading. One in every two people in rural areas cannot read or write. What this means for their children is no stories at bedtime and stark classrooms without a single book in sight! With the help of literacy expert Carolyn Johnson, CoEd has designed the Culture of Reading Program (CORP). CORP will strive to improve basic literacy by developing a culture of reading in Guatemala, beginning with primary schoolchildren. According to Johnson, "The best way to combat illiteracy is to encourage primary teachers to teach reading every single day. With CORP, we will facilitate that process by bringing books to primary schools, training teachers in reading instruction, and allowing students to take books home with them."

While CORP marks CoEd's foray into primary education, we also continue to improve our textbook program in the basic, or secondary, schools. Together with the International Reading Association, CoEd has developed a training program for all textbook project teachers. The comprehensive 50-hour course is designed to improve the



Through the Culture of Reading Program (CORP), primary school students like these will benefit from books that make reading fun and interesting. CORP will be piloted at one to three schools in 2008, then expanded to as many as five more schools in 2009.

quality of teaching by replacing the outdated "chalk and talk" and rote memorization methods with more modern teaching strategies stressing student involvement. CoEd New Projects Manager Mario Yac explains, "CoEd is now 'teaching the teachers' with techniques that foster critical thinking and interaction among students." Participants are given the "homework" of training their colleagues upon return to their communities, further implementing the methods at all CoEd schools.

CoEd has received enthusiastic responses from teachers who have completed the training. Marta Chun Aurelio, a teacher in San Marcos, says proudly, "These teaching methods truly facilitate the process of learning as students begin criticizing and questioning the 'why' of each aspect of the subject. I have succeeded in awakening the interest of the students and their active participation in the classroom."

We look forward to seeing similar results throughout the country as we eliminate one more roadblock on the path to success. Thank you for all you do as CoEd supporter to make this possible. ■

## Join us for a Guatemala adventure!

### Delivery Tour February 15-24, 2008

Spend a week traveling throughout the Guatemalan highlands, delivering textbooks and inaugurating brand-new computer centers. You'll attend celebrations for these new projects and have multiple opportunities to interact with the children and families CoEd serves. Every Delivery Tour is different because we inaugurate new schools in new locations every year.

Cost\*: \$1,175 double occupancy / \$1,375 single occupancy



### Snapshot Tour August 6-10, 2008

Experience a 5-day glimpse into Guatemala and each of CoEd's programs. You'll bring educational supplies and materials to schools that are already successfully participating in CoEd's textbook and computer center programs. This is the perfect trip for those who love to travel, see amazing scenery and meet interesting people, but find the Delivery Tours a challenge for their schedules.

Cost\*: \$875 double occupancy / \$975 single occupancy



See more beautiful photos from Guatemala at  
[www.coeduc.org/photogallery.htm!](http://www.coeduc.org/photogallery.htm)

There is no deadline to join a CoEd Project Tour; however, spaces are limited so sign up early! For more details go to [www.coeduc.org/tours.htm](http://www.coeduc.org/tours.htm) or contact [jestieritz@fuse.net!](mailto:jestieritz@fuse.net)

\*Prices for all tours include land portion only; airfare is purchased by the individual.

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Jessica Stieritz, Editor

# New Snapshot Tour “fun & rewarding”

*“I have two children in this school and I am only paying for one. I often have difficulty paying the fee. You can imagine, if I have trouble paying for just one child, how hard it would be for me to pay for both. Thanks to CoEd and our patrons, the scholarships have been a great help and blessing of God.”*

With these heartfelt words, Manuel Bucú welcomed the participants of CoEd’s Snapshot Tour to Santiago, Sacatepéquez. His pride evident, Manuel spoke of his eldest daughter, Hilda, a top student and recipient of a CoEd scholarship that has helped her achieve the almost-impossible: graduation from 9th grade and the opportunity to go on to high school.

And that was just day one of CoEd’s first annual Snapshot Tour.

Seventeen participants joined CoEd staff for a five-day tour of schools benefiting from CoEd’s textbook, computer, library, and scholarship projects. The group delivered

**“It’s amazing that not long ago these students hadn’t even touched a computer. Now they are using their skills to impact their whole town.”** -Dave Noll, tour participant

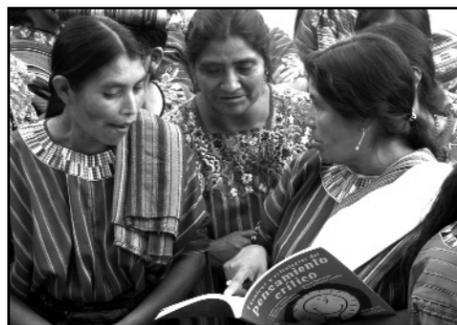
supplies, visited with students and parents, and heard how the projects improve education in the schools.

One such school is located in the rural community of Chipiactal. With livelihoods

depending on agriculture, Chipiactal’s students helped their parents improve the farms’ profitability using skills learned at their CoEd Computer Center. The Snapshot group was welcomed by an impressive PowerPoint presentation demonstrating how the students used Microsoft Excel to determine that zucchini—and not broccoli, as had been widely accepted—was the most profitable crop. Many parents changed their planting habits, improving not only their own income, but also the economy of the community.

Tour participant Dave Noll remarked, “That presentation could easily stand up to an analysis in a college-level business class. It’s amazing that not long ago these students hadn’t even touched a computer. Now they are using their skills to impact their whole town.” Fellow participant Elizabeth End agreed, noting that the presentation “really demonstrated the depth of education, critical thinking, and impact that can result from CoEd’s involvement in a school.”

The five-day Snapshot Tour proved very successful, as well as convenient for many travelers. Tour participant Regan Hauptman expressed his gratitude, saying, “I’m a small business owner with five young children. Without the shorter Snapshot Tour, I could never have taken such a fun and rewarding trip. I’ll never forget meeting the children and seeing just how much CoEd’s projects really are making a difference in their lives.”



*Clockwise from top: Volunteer Dana Martini presents a book to a 5th grader at Santa Cruz Primary School; parents at San Marcos School eagerly examine books that will help their children learn critical thinking skills; volunteer Elizabeth End overcomes the language barrier by blowing bubbles for the kids during recess; CoEd visitors stand in solidarity with parents, teachers and students at San Marcos School; volunteer Regan Hauptman learns new computer tricks from scholarship student Rosa Cuc at Santiago Cooperative School.*

# Kids helping kids

10-year-old requests donations to Guatemalan children in lieu of birthday gifts

by Elizabeth Wu

Andy Baden’s wish list for his 10th birthday was typical of a boy his age: toys, games, sports equipment. What was remarkable: he planned to donate it all to children less fortunate than himself living in Guatemala.

A few weeks before his birthday, his mother asked him how many things he really needed. He took that thought to heart.

The previous year, Andy’s third-grade class had raised money for CoEd through our **School to School Program**. Inspired and touched by what he learned during that experience, he took personal action.

Andy wrote up party invitations to all his friends requesting donations, rather than gifts, of items he thought Guatemalan children his age might enjoy.

“My own room has enough toys to keep me busy for weeks,” Andy says.

“Our garage is filled with bikes and balls. My basement has video games and air hockey. I chose Guatemala because CoEd inspired me to help kids who have barely enough to eat, books for school, and sports supplies.”

At Andy’s birthday gathering, 11 children brought donations of everything from sports equipment to books, games and school supplies. Andy wants to do it again next year, but bigger and better. He also sees this line of service in his future.

“I would like to be a computer technologist, and I would use my skills and money to help give computers to CoEd. Then CoEd can help kids in Guatemala learn so much more, and maybe even send e-mails to kids like me.”



*Andy Baden (fifth from left) and his friends crowd around the campfire at his 10th birthday party. According to Andy, “My friends liked giving to CoEd as much as I did. We all did a good thing together.”*

## Are you inspired by Andy’s story?

- ❖ For more information about CoEd’s **School to School Sponsorship Program**, contact Meredith Deitsch at [meredith@coeduc.org](mailto:meredith@coeduc.org) or 513-731-2595, x. 7.
- ❖ If your child would like to collect **sports equipment** for kids at CoEd schools, please contact Jessica Stieritz for a “wish list” of items at [jstieritz@fuse.net](mailto:jstieritz@fuse.net) or 513-731-2595, x. 5.

## What’s News at CoEd

- ❖ CoEd scholarship student **Hilda Bucú** was one of three students featured in an international film highlighting young leaders from around the world. Produced by the Aspen Institute, the film premiered this past June in Aspen, Colorado. On a recent visit to Hilda’s community of Santiago, Sacatepéquez, the impressive 16-year-old told us that during her interview the filmmakers asked what she would most like to do to change the world. Her response? **“If you want to change the world, you have to start with yourself.”**
- ❖ The Cincinnati *Business Courier* recently announced **Jeff Berninger** as one of Cincinnati’s **“Forty under 40”**, a select group of the next generation of leaders and innovators. Congratulations, Jeff!
- ❖ Since its inception in early 2006, the **Literacy & Learning Society (LLS)** has grown from 11 to 36 members! LLS donors pledge a five-year commitment of at least \$1,000 to CoEd, thus helping us plan for the future as well as give peace of mind to the parents, students, teachers and schools we serve.
- ❖ Several supporters are now hopping on board to **Leave a Legacy** for CoEd through bequests, donations of stock, or by naming us as beneficiaries of IRA’s and insurance policies. Would you like more information on the many ways to remember the children of Guatemala in your planning, or have you already done so? Let us know! Contact Holly End at 513-731-2595 ext 4 or [hend@fuse.net](mailto:hend@fuse.net).



*Scholarship student Hilda Bucú with her father, Manuel Bucú, in Santiago, Sacatepéquez.*

*Corrections: In our 2006 Donor Honor Roll, the list of scholarship sponsors omitted sponsor Irene Stranz; also, Gretchen Naff was omitted from our list of Literacy & Learning Society members. We apologize for these errors and regret any inconvenience they may have caused.*