



CFCA UPDATE

CHRISTIAN FOUNDATION FOR CHILDREN AND AGING

Offering hope. Restoring dignity. Worldwide.

NOVEMBER 2004

Children of Guatemala give us many reasons to hope

By Jack Reybold, CFCA Sponsor

My wife and I sat quietly in the retreat center cafeteria in San Lucas Toliman, Guatemala, with 48 fellow Americans as the 7-year-old Mayan Indian boy stepped tentatively up to the microphone. I think all of us were expecting another short "Thank you for your support" speech.



Photos courtesy of Jack Reybold

Sponsor Jack Reybold, left, visits with Brenda Hernandez, sponsored by Jack's mother, Nancy; Brenda's mother, Paola, and Brenda's niece on a mission awareness trip to Guatemala in April of 2004.

Testimonials from Guatemalan men, women and children were a regular item during our mission awareness trip with Christian Foundation for Children and Aging. We'd heard a few by then, so it was surprising when the boy cleared his throat and said, "Congratulations for the support you give us." At the time I laughed with the others at what had to be an unintended glitch in translation. Now, I'm not sure it was a mistake.

To congratulate is to express pleasure at another's good fortune, and it truly was our good fortune to be there, sharing meals and time with our sponsored kids and their families. We experienced their warmth, generosity,

quiet dignity and pride. During our weeklong stay we got a glimpse of their culture as well as some of the hardships they face.

Those hardships boil down to a need for basic necessities. I asked our sponsored child's mother what they received from CFCA and she said food. I remember the impact of hearing that and thinking how easily we take food for granted in the United States. As we learned more about the program, we discovered that as vital as the basic necessities are, the organization seemed to be providing something more. A little bit of intangible confidence and perhaps some real hope.

One church elder in San Lucas Toliman called it the "Tranquil Force of Liberation." This phrase struck a chord in us. We heard it as well used by a CFCA staff member and took it to mean a low-key, peaceful, apolitical approach to empowering the community through education and need-based social outreach.

This philosophy seems to strike the correct balance in a country trying to right itself after a debilitating 36-year civil war. Ordinary Guatemalans are no longer oppressed by military death squads or gun-toting leftist guerillas, but they clearly still face difficult and bitter times. With world coffee prices at historic lows and 75 percent of the population at or below poverty level, do they dare to hope for a better future?

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DATES SLATED FOR 2005 MISSION TRIPS

Bolivia
Sept. 3-11

India
Nov. 5-18

Chile
Oct. 8-16

Kenya
Sept. 17-29

Colombia
June 19-26

Mexico
Juarez
July 16-23

Costa Rica
April 9-16

Guernavaca
Oct. 1-8

El Salvador
July 16-23
Sept. 17-24

Merida
April 23-30
Oct. 22-29

Guatemala
Jan. 29 to Feb. 5
Holy Week,
March 21-28
May 7-14
July 9-16
Aug. 6-13
Dec. 26 to Jan. 2,
2006

Monterrey
March 5-12
Oct. 15-22

Nicaragua
Aug. 13-20

Philippines
Feb. 20 to March 1

Honduras
June 25 to July 2

On all CFCA-sponsored trips, every effort will be made to assure the health and safety of our participants. The cost of a CFCA mission awareness trip to Mexico, Central America or South America is \$350. A trip to Kenya, India or the Philippines is \$650. Food, lodging and in-country transportation are included in the cost of our trips. Airfare is not included. For more information, contact our trip coordinator toll-free at (800) 875-6564, trips@cfcausa.org or visit us at www.cfcausa.org.

Please join us in prayer

Our hearts and prayers go out to our sponsored friends, sponsors and all those affected by severe weather this hurricane season.

'Peace is the path'

(continued from front)

One 13-year-old girl in Antigua delivered an oratory in which she quoted Ghandi, saying, "There are no paths to peace; peace is the path." She spoke of love of neighbor and country, the importance of being a good student, the responsibility of universities to teach the truth, and many other things. It wasn't just her message that impressed us. It was the passion, verve and idealism she exuded. Here was a young female patriot daring to hope for a better future in the most male-dominated country in Central America. Her potential as a future leader excited us.

Will either she or the shy 7-year-old boy grow up to be president of Guatemala some day? Most likely not. Will these CFCA children change their communities and their country in peaceful, perhaps small, but lasting ways? We believe they will.

They are hopeful reasons among many others why we will continue to sponsor through CFCA and urge others to do the same.

Youth minister runs marathon to promote sponsorship

Back when Jim Shoopack was in high school, running a mile at soccer practice seemed like a lot. Now, at the age of 30, Jim has gone the extra mile to help children and aging persons through CFCA.

Jim, a youth minister at St. Luke's Catholic Church in Stroudsburg, Pa., near Scranton, ran in the Steamtown Marathon

on Oct. 10 to promote CFCA sponsorship. He finished the 26-mile race in 5 hours and 30 minutes.

After taking youth from St. Luke's

"I run straight toward the goal in order to win the prize, which is God's call..."

Philippians 3:14

on CFCA-organized mission awareness trips to El Salvador for the last three years, Jim wanted to do something out of gratitude for the personal growth he experienced.

"The poor taught me what was truly important in life - faith, human dignity, family and health," he said.

Jim said running a marathon to raise

awareness of sponsorship was a small sacrifice compared with the two to three hours some Salvadoran children walk to and from school each day.

Christmas cards cherished by sponsored

A Christmas card with a short personal message such as "I'm thinking of you at Christmas" will be cherished by your sponsored friend.

If you plan to send a card, letter or small gift item to your sponsored friend this Christmas, here are some things you can do to help CFCA projects.

- Mail early. Send your greeting or gift item via international air mail directly to the CFCA project serving your sponsored friend. Check with the post office for international rates.

- Be sure to put the project's complete address on the envelope, including the subproject designation, listed in capital letters following the project's name (e.g. Manila ABN). You may request pre-printed mailing labels at www.cfcausa.org or call Sponsor Services at (800) 875-6564.

- Choose something small and inexpensive if you are sending a gift. Make sure your item fits in an envelope no larger than 9 by 12 inches, weighs less than a pound and is less than an inch in thickness. Some

gift ideas include a t-shirt, puzzle, soccer cards, paper dolls, coloring book and colored pencils.

- Do not declare a value for your gift item, as it may result in high customs fees for CFCA projects. One project reported a recent example of a simple gift of a crucifix resulting in customs, storage and handling fees totaling \$33.85.

- Do not send packages, as they may be damaged, lost or stolen in the mail. CFCA projects are not required to accept packages because of high customs fees and other costs.

- Project coordinators in Haiti and Nairobi, Kenya, request that no gift items be sent at this time, as most will not arrive safely.

You also have the option of donating to CFCA's Christmas Fund, which helps provide gifts and celebrations for all sponsored friends with 100 percent of your donation going to CFCA projects. Your remittance form includes a line for designating a Christmas Fund donation. You may

also donate online at www.cfcausa.org.

For more information, contact Sponsor Services toll-free at (800) 875-6564 or mail@cfcausa.org.



Christmas card made by Pedro Luis from Bolivia.