



# Friends of FORMA

## April 2019 Newsletter

Our mission is to provide educational and nutritional assistance to youth and children living in impoverished rural areas of Guatemala.

### Message from the Board by Charley Hoffman, Board President

The indigenous families of the Highlands of Guatemala face extreme poverty, discrimination, lack of nutrition, and limited employment opportunities. Friends of FORMA through our local partner, FORMA Guatemala offers these families hope that things can be better for the next generation. Led by an indigenous couple who grew up in these same conditions, FORMA Guatemala provides scholarships to children of indigenous families to continue their education beyond the normal 6th grade as well as a variety of programs for younger children.

This year Friends of FORMA is providing scholarships for 35 middle and high school students, support for 2 community learning/library centers, and Saturday morning tutoring programs for elementary school students in two communities. These tutoring programs are taught by the older scholarship students and are one of the ways in which FORMA Guatemala instills in the scholarship students a commitment to giving back to their community. This year, the government of Guatemala is providing nutritional support to school students, so Friends of FORMA is exploring ways to provide nutritional support to children who are too young to attend school, a serious need in Guatemala.

None of these programs would be possible without your generous financial support. On behalf of your Friends of FORMA Board of Directors, thank you for your generosity and commitment to our mission.

### Introducing Some of our New Scholarship Students



**Dolores Angelica**

Dolores is from the village of Santiago Atitlán. Her mother Maria is a craftswoman. Her father Juan is illiterate and is a street vendor. Dolores is the oldest of three children. She has a sister Mayra, nine years of age and a brother Juan, who is six. She is a great student with good grades who counts on the moral support of her family. Her big dream is to be a tourist guide. With her dedication and good personality, she will be able to succeed in all that she undertakes.

**Viviana Josefina**

Viviana is from the village of San Antonio Polopó and is the daughter of Vicente, a day laborer, and Juana, who is a housewife. Viviana is the eldest of six children. She counts on the moral support of her family; however, the lack of economic resources impedes her ability to continue studying. She is a very good student with good grades and is responsible. She also has a good personality. Her dream is to be a good teacher to help her family and her community.



## Carlos David

Carlos is the son of Domingo and Cecilia, both of whom are illiterate. Domingo is a farmer and Cecilia is a housewife. Both are from the hamlet of Pena Blanca, Sololá. Carlos comes from a large family, the second to last child in a family of six sisters and three brothers, who have only been able to complete primary education, due to the lack of economic resources. In spite of this lack, Carlos dreams of graduating so that he can help his family and the community. Carlos has many strengths: his personality, his enthusiasm and his self-confidence that will help him achieve all that he attempts.



## Guatemalan Families Try to Escape Food Insecurity By Lynnette Brown, Board Secretary

As this nation engages in a passionate debate about immigration, we are hearing daily that there are thousands of Central American families seeking asylum by presenting themselves to U.S. officials upon their arrival at our southern borders. There are so many families arriving daily – so many that have already come – that our Customs and Border Protection Agency cannot handle them, let alone accommodate them, and the agency finds itself at the point of chaos. Among the multitude, the largest number has traveled from Guatemala.

According to a recent article from *The Washington Post*\* by Nick Miroff and Kevin Sieff, most Guatemalan families fleeing to the U.S. are from the Western Highlands. Recently, there has been a slow but steady deterioration in the quality of life in this region due to consistently disappointing harvests, drought, and economic and employment decline in the coffee fields due to the presence of “coffee rust” fungus and lower than average rainfall. To put it bluntly there is a critical shortage of food.

“Hunger, food insecurity, limited work opportunities and abandonment by the state are unfortunately the status quo in much of rural Guatemala, which has the highest rate of chronic malnutrition in Latin America ... “ said Richard Johnson, a PhD candidate at the University of Arizona in *the Washington Post* article.

This information is not breaking news, but it serves to emphasize the *WHY* behind our fervent efforts at **Friends of FORMA** to apply every dollar you contribute toward assisting the youth and communities of the Western Highlands around Lake Atitlán in Guatemala through improving their education, nutrition and personal development. Thank you for the difference you make in a desperate part of the world.

\*(Read the entire article at:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/hunger-not-violence-fuels-guatemalan-migration/>)

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