

ROCLA UPDATE ON THE AMERICAS

The 35th Annual Alternative Fair is Coming Soon!

By Marilyn Anderson

What ROCLA sells at the Alternative Fair mirrors the changes that have happened in Guatemala and the rest of Central America over many years. At one time, we sold embroidery from Nicaragua and crafts from El Salvador. We have often sold the work of Mayan weavers. In the 90s, the weaving was the work of Guatemalan refugees living in Mexican camps. One year, I received a shipment of several hundred refugee-made shoulder bags that we sold over several years. When refugees began their return to Guatemala, new coops formed and we also purchased from them. Since then, basket making has become more important in



Guatemala, and this year will have some baskets at the ROCLA tables, along with items from UPAVIM (Unidas Para Vivir Mejor), a thriving coop in Guatemala City made up



The Alternative Fair

Sponsored by Metro Justice
Friday, Dec. 2 5-9pm
Saturday, Dec. 3 ... 10am-2pm
First Unitarian Church
220 Winton Road, South
Rochester, New York

of 75 women, many of whom were displaced by the violence of the 1980s.

In 2007, I was thrilled to visit a coop made up of women whose husbands had been killed in the 80s by the army. They had received a grant from the Japanese government that allowed them to build their own weaving center. Men used to be the treadle loom weavers, but women coop members now do such weaving and handle all their own finances.

As we did last year, Paola Macas Betchart, another

Steering Committee member, will also have textiles from Ecuador and Mexico at our ROCLA tables and I will have copies of my newly-published book, *Guardianes de las Artes/Guardians of the Arts* (see page 6 for more information), cards and coloring books for sale.

Come and buy special hand-made gifts for your friends and family—gifts that help support women and families and the artisan traditions of Latin America. You can be sure that everything we sell has a story behind it!

Haiti Relief after Hurricane Matthew

**URGENT
ACTION**

By Grania Marcus

When we learned that Haiti had been slammed again by a natural disaster, this time Hurricane Matthew, the immediate reaction was: "What can we do to help?" Haiti is far from recovered from the

deadly earthquake of 2010. On October 4, Hurricane Matthew directly hit the very vulnerable southern coast of the country, especially the southwest Tiburon peninsula and the provinces of Sud, Grand'Anse and Nippes, including the cities of Jérémie and Les Cayes, with 145 miles per hour winds, rain and storm surge. The devastation is still being assessed. Local groups on the ground



Damage near Corail, Haiti, after Hurricane Matthew passes.
Photo: ABC News

estimate over 2.1 million people are affected, with more than 1,000 deaths, between 90% and 100% of homes destroyed or damaged, and 100% of crops and 90% of

livestock wiped out. Schools and hospitals have also been severely impacted. With sanitation and clean water never adequate in many places, and
(Haiti continues page 2)

URGENT ACTION*(Haiti continues from page 1)*

Residents work cleaning a house in Les Cayes, Haiti. Reuters: Andres Martinez Casares

thousands homeless, cholera is now stalking the people of Haiti again.

We have become aware over the years since the earthquake that a significant proportion of the billions of dollars Americans and others donated for humanitarian aid never reached those most in need, and has not been spent because it has been held for reconstruction that hasn't happened or has been diverted. We have therefore sought information on local organizations that have been effective in providing for immediate needs, as well as promoting direct medical care, clean water, food sovereignty, sanitation infrastructure and, providing temporary shelter and later reconstruction. One of ROCLA's long time partners, the Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti, suggests that donating funds to local Haitian grassroots groups and Haitian-led initiatives is the best path to short-term recovery. IDJH has recommended the following organizations—we know you can't donate to all, but we hope you'll choose one or two and give real help to Haitians.

International Organizations:

Oxfam, https://secure2.oxfamamerica.org/page/content/emergency_haiti_hurricane_matthew/

International Organizations that support/fund local Haitian community organizations involved in relief:

Partners in Health, https://donate.pih.org/page/contribute/hurricane-help?subsource=homepage_take_action

Fonkoze, <https://give.fonkoze.org>

Grassroots International (works with various peasant movements including Tet Kole and National Peasant Movement of Papaye (MPNKP), among others), <https://grassrootsonline.org/who-we-are/partners/haiti/>

Area-specific organizations:

Beyond Borders (families on the island of Lagonave, Jacmel), <http://hurricanemat-thewhaiti.org>

Foncove (Jérémie), <https://www.gofundme.com/MH-ACallToAction>

Fondation Aquin Solidarite (Aquin), <https://www.gofundme.com/aquinhaiti>

Friends of Paradis des Indiens, Inc. (Grand'Anse), <https://www.gofundme.com/aquinhaiti>

Project Saint Anne (Camp Perrin), <http://projectstanne.org/>

Saint Boniface Foundation (southern Haiti), <https://interland3.donorperfect.net/weblink/WebLink.aspx?name=E90723&id=29>

SOIL (Port-au-Prince, with connections in southern Haiti), <https://www.oursoil.org/get-involved/donate/>

For frequently updated information, see www.ijdh.org and click on "Hurricane Matthew Relief." ■

NEWS FROM LATIN AMERICA

Protesters telling the new unpopular President: "Get out, Temer!" Photo: Mídia NINJA/flickr/cc

The Truth About the Coup in Brazil

By the Landless Workers Movement (MST)

Brazil's Landless Workers Movement, *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra-MMST*, is a social movement founded in 1984. On July 30, 2016, MST issued this statement in opposition to the impeachment process against Brazil's leftist president Dilma Rousseff. Rousseff was suspended in May when the Brazilian Senate voted to hold an impeachment trial against her. She is accused of tampering with government budgets to hide a budget deficit, a common practice in Brazil and elsewhere. On September 25, her impeachment ended 13 years of left-wing Workers' Party rule in Brazil and brought to power interim President Michel Temer, who is a deeply unpopular right-wing politician, for the remaining two years of Rousseff's term.

Opposition to the impeachment has come from social movements, the Work-

ers Party and even 40 U.S. House members, as well as others. Rousseff has said that her opponents spearheaded the impeachment to shield themselves from prosecution and to undo years of progressive policies. An excerpt from MST's statement is reprinted here from MRzine. To read the entire statement, see <http://mrzine.monthlyreview.org/2016/mst300716.html>.

The Truth About The Coup

The removal of a president is only constitutional if he or she has committed a crime.

The authors of the request for impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff argued that she had been "tax pedaling."

This practice does not constitute a crime and has been used by other presidents in the past such as Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Lula da Silva.

Interim president Michel Temer practiced the same methods and 24 more governors from around the country, including Geraldo Alckmin from Sao Paulo and former

(Brazil continues page 3)

**NEWS FROM
LATIN AMERICA**

(Brazil from page 2)
governor of Minas Gerais
Aécio Neves [did too.]

If the Supreme Court was faithful to the Brazilian Constitution it could cancel this process.

More than 100 of the deputies who voted in favour of the coup are being investigated in the separate Operation "Lava Jato" (Car Wash) corruption investigation. These politicians therefore have no legitimacy or moral grounds from which to judge anyone, let alone a woman against whom there is no charge of corruption or account of corruption abroad.

The rapporteur of the case in the Senate is Antonio Anastasia, former governor of Minas Gerais who also practiced tax pedaling during his five-year term in office.

It was revealed in a leaked recording of a telephone conversation between Senator Romero Juca (PMDB-RO) and a colleague that the real purpose of the impeachment trial was to stop Operation Lava Jato as President Dilma had refused to protect parliamentarians involved in the investigation. For this reason, among others, he made a pact to support Michel Temer and his plans to oust Rousseff.

Saddled with an economic and political crisis, the government of President Dilma decided to decrease the advertising budgets of big media companies such as Globo and Editora Abril. In response to this budget cut, its owners, angry, began promoting anti-government demonstrations and the idea to depose Rousseff.

The fact is that this im-

peachment has no legal basis; it is no more than a scam concocted by the most corrupt politicians, mass media, and anti-patriotic businessmen.

The Illegitimate Temer Governor Is Against The Workers And Against Brazil

It has issued a provisional measure authorizing the privatization of state enterprises in the energy sector as well as the country's ports and airports.

It has issued a law allowing foreign capital to purchase our airlines, land and natural resources.

It has kept interest rates as the highest in the world, which will lead, in 2016, to the transfer of R\$500 billion from the Treasury to the banks and the rich, because they are owners of domestic debt.

It authorized increasing the salaries of the judiciary, which will cost the taxpayers US\$60 billion. ■

Calls for Justice Commemorate the 2nd Anniversary of Ayotzinapa Disappearances

On September 26-27, two years ago, six people were killed, over forty people were injured, and forty-three students from the Ayotzinapa teachers' college in Guerrero, Mexico, were forcibly disappeared. The students' families had hoped they would be found alive and have been pressuring the government to investigate and find them. That has not happened. After two years of marching, touring 40 U.S. cities, holding hundreds upon hundreds of meetings, publishing poetry,



A poster with pictures of the missing students says "Bring them alive!"
Photo: Emma Buckout, Mexico City

releasing documentaries about the incident, setting up exhibitions, and confronting the president, with no results, the families and others continue to actively respond to criminal impunity and state inaction in Mexico and to the state's suspected complicity. In 2015, in response, the U.S. even withheld \$5 million under the Merida Initiative to force Mexico to deal with its deteriorating human rights situation.

The Mexican Government has denied complicity in the Ayotzinapa disappearances and has pushed the theory that the students were taken to a local trash dump by a drug cartel, killed and their bodies burned. Two independent reports, from an Argentina forensic group and the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (GIEI), the team appointed by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) and mandated to monitor the investigation of the disappeared students, have proved that theory impossible. A recent article in *Science* has reinforced their conclusions. The

GIEI's final report, released in April 2016, also shed light on inconsistencies in the government investigation and point to a concerted effort to cover up or manipulate information. The remains of only one student have been identified.

Now, the mandate of the GIEI has expired, and the Mexican government has failed to renew it. The families would like GIEI to continue to investigate, but the hostility of the government

and the press makes that very unlikely. Under a September agreement for a continued investigation, the IACHR will name at least two technical advisors to gather information, document the case, and visit Mexico as frequently as needed for the time required to resolve the case. The advisors would also be given full access to all of the files of the case.

Meanwhile, posters in Ayotzinapa on the second anniversary were emblazoned with the slogan "Resist to Exist," and students, workers, cultural collectives, communists and anarchists, and movements against privatization joined a march in Mexico City. Families and friends of the disappeared students protested impunity for not only their loved ones, but also for 28,472 people now reported missing in the country, according to the latest available statistics reported by *La Jornada*.

For additional detailed reports and updates concerning the disappeared students, see *Latin America Working Group*: www.lawg.org. ■

**NEWS FROM
LATIN AMERICA****Environmental
Human Rights
Defenders
Under Attack**

Latin America has recently received the unflattering title of “the most dangerous region in the world for environmental human rights defenders.” A recent report, *A Deadly Shade of Green: Threats to Environmental Human Rights Defenders in Latin America*, from the Center for International and Environmental Law (CIEL), documents in horrific detail unprecedented levels of violence, torture, abduction and murder against land defenders across Latin America, a total of 88 killings in 2014 alone. It also reveals that 40% of those victimized are indigenous people, who are being attacked for defending their lands, cultures and way of life from destructive “development” projects such as mining and the hydroelectric dams that will provide the energy to run them.



Ashéninka tribal leader Edwin Chota was killed for defending his ancestral lands in the Peruvian Amazon against illegal loggers in September 2014. Photo: GlobalWitness.org.

The murder of Berta Cáceres in March 2016 brought attacks against environmental activists in Honduras to international attention. Global Witness, a UK-based NGO, has shown that at least 109 people were killed in Honduras between 2010 and 2015, for taking a stand against destructive dams, mining, logging and agricultural projects.

But Berta is only the most prominent of many others in countries including Brazil, Peru, Colombia, Honduras and Guatemala, which have the highest numbers of deaths. She was fighting against the Agua Zarca hydroelectric dam, which would destroy the homes of her Lenca people. Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, the UN’s Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, points to the major cause, “You cannot delink the fight of indigenous people for their lands, territories and resources from the violence that’s committed against indigenous women and men, especially if this is a violence that is perpetrated by state authorities or by corporate security,” said Tauli-Corpuz.

In fact, the report details increasing attacks in countries where foreign investors are funding giant development projects and extractive industries. Using anti-terrorism laws and surveillance to target those who resist, “Complicit governments, and the lack of an independent judiciary system, work to further the interests of large corporations in the area, often favoring this tactic of abuse as a means of targeting environmental defenders.” The report concludes that, “Environmental campaigners demonstrate that states’ economic development cannot be addressed without integrating respect for human rights, particularly

economic, social and cultural rights.”

To see the complete report, go to http://www.ciel.org/wpcontent/uploads/2016/08/Deadly_shade_of_green_English_Aug2016.pdf ■

**Court Refuses
to Release
Names of
WHINSEC
Graduates and
Instructors**

In 2014, a group of School of the Americas (SOA) Watch activists prevailed in a lawsuit against the U.S. Government to release the names of the students and instructors at the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC, formerly known as the School of the Americas, or SOA). The infamous military school was a training ground for dictators, death squad members, and torturers, fueling human rights abuses and coups across Latin America, earning it the moniker “the School of the Assassins.” Some of its graduates include the Argentine military leaders of the “dirty war” and General Efraim Rios Montt of Guatemala who is facing trial for genocide and war crimes.

The SOA Watch activists sued the U.S. government, because it had denied SOA Watch’s Freedom of Information (FOIA) requests for these names for the years 2004-2010, after providing the names for decades. In that decision, Judge Phyllis Hamilton ordered the names of students and instructors to be released, but the U.S. Department of Defense appealed the ruling.

In October 2016, the judges of the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, in a split decision, sided with the U.S. Department of Defense and reversed Judge Hamilton’s ruling, arguing that human rights activists do not have the right to know the names and military units of foreign security personnel and instructors attending WHINSEC, arguing that providing the names is a violation of privacy and risks terrorist attacks on former students.

In a dissenting opinion, Judge Paul Watford said, “Without knowing the actual names of those allowed to attend the Institute, the public has no way of independently verifying if students are properly vetted before enrolling at the Institute, or whether after graduating they engage in human rights abuses in their home countries. As the majority would have it, the public must simply take the government’s word for it that the reform measures mandated by Congress have been effective. This fox-guarding-the-henhouse notion is, of course, completely antithetical to the FOIA’s core purpose.”

SOA Watch is an independent, grassroots movement that provides citizen oversight of U.S. military training given to Latin American military and police personnel at WHINSEC. Through vigils and fasts, demonstrations and

nonviolent protest, as well as media, legal and legislative work, the movement works in solidarity with the people of Latin America and the Caribbean for human rights, economic justice, and democracy. SOA Watch has fought for decades to close WHINSEC. ■

Voting Result:	
IN FAVOUR	191
AGAINST	0
ABSTENTION	2

UN Unanimous Vote Against Cuban Embargo

On October 26, 2016, for the first time, the United Nations General Assembly voted unanimously 190-0 to end the U.S. blockade of Cuba. The vote came about after 25 years of previous votes and the U.S. had always voted “no” and Israel had followed the U.S.’s lead. This year, following U.S. policy changes in 2015 to reinstate diplomatic relations with Cuba and tear down some trade and travel barriers, U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Samantha Power announced that the U.S. would abstain, clearing the way for a unanimous vote in favor. Israel also abstained.

While the vote and U.S. abstention are positive steps, in a statement following the vote, the Cuba Solidarity Committee pointed out that the vote changes nothing on the ground, because the U.S. continues to fund regime-change activities and only the U.S. Congress can lift the full embargo. That is unlikely to happen with a Republican Congress. ■



Update: Migration of Central American Women and Children Rising Again

By Grania Marcus

In the summer of 2014, Americans heard almost daily about the “border crisis.” Instead of recognizing the flood of families and children from the violence-torn countries of the Northern Triangle as refugees, the Obama Administration, fearing political repercussions, initiated several utterly inhumane responses:

Programa Frontera Sur (Southern Border Program): The Southern Border Program pressured Mexico into ramping up apprehensions, detentions and deportations in Mexico. The U.S. provided at least \$120 million through the Merida Initiative, although there is little transparency about enforcement details, training and funding of this program. Reports of excessive force, violence, and deaths have accompanied these operations, which include preventing migrants from riding atop cargo trains collectively known as La Bestia, forcing them to find more remote and dangerous routes far from shelters along the traditional migrant trails, and increased

infrastructure on the Guatemala border. As a result, apprehensions in Mexico of Central Americans increased 71% from July 2014 to June 2015.

Detention and Deportation of Asylum seekers: In 2014 and 2015, the number of U.S. family detention beds increased from less than 100 to 3,000, in a bid to reinforce “zero tolerance for border-crossers.” Huge so-called family detention centers built in remote area were seen as a way to deter other families from coming to the U.S. These facilities have come under increasing scrutiny for their inhumane conditions for children, and several studies and witness accounts have documented their failures to provide adequate medical care, education and food for mothers and children, the growing numbers of sick children, and other indications of abuse.

Expedited removal, “rocket docket,” lack of representation and failure to provide due process: Particularly odious were the failures to

provide any semblance of due process to the most vulnerable women and children. Stuck in detention centers in the middle of nowhere in Artesia, Dilley and Karnes, Texas, even valiant efforts by American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) attorneys to represent them reached only a limited number. Most, even small children, were forced to represent themselves. The result was inevitable and cruel: studies have shown that only a tiny proportion, 3.8% in one study and 4% in another, of those who were unrepresented were granted asylum, while about 40% of those who had an attorney were awarded asylum or some form of relief, this despite evidence that approximately 90% have a credible fear of persecution. In the words of retired Immigration Judge Paul Wickham Schmidt, “Having a lawyer isn’t just important – it’s everything in Immigration Court.”

As crime and violence in the Northern Triangle countries of El Salvador (now the most violent country with the highest female homicide rate in the world), Honduras and Guatemala continue to escalate in 2016, the influx of women, families and children seeking refuge has risen again. Will the U.S. continue to treat these refugees as unauthorized migrants?

There are a few signs of hope for fairer and more humane treatment of these incredibly vulnerable families. From the beginning, human rights groups, some Senators and Members of Congress, the UN Human Rights Commission, immigrant rights groups and even immigration judges in some jurisdictions have loudly and persistently condemned these policies. In

(Migration continues page 6)

(Migration from page 5)

addition, two court decisions in 2015 — one determining that ICE couldn't detain asylum seekers "simply to deter others," and one that the government had to abide by the two-decades-old *Flores* settlement requiring that migrant children be held in the least restrictive environment possible, undermined family detention. The judge in that case, Dolly Gee, ordered the government to release children "without unnecessary delay."

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Advisory Committee on Family Residential Centers, created by DHS itself, added its voice to the chorus calling for an end to family detention on Sept. 30, 2016. The AILA also released a study calling for the end of family detention, "fast track" removal processes, and underscoring the need for legal representation in all removal cases. In response, DHS has reduced the average number of days asylum-seekers are held to under 20 days, but there are families that continue to remain in detention after a year.

While it is more than likely that *Programa Frontera Sur* will continue to expand, the other two prongs of this exceptionally cruel response seem to be cracking. We shall see. ■

ROCLA NEWS


SAVE THE DATE
**29th Annual
Rice & Beans
Celebration
and Dinner**
Fri., March 10, 5:15pm
Gates Presbyterian Church
1049 Wegman Road

Look for White Dove Award winners and full details in the Winter newsletter!

**Membership
Donation Reminder!**

By Dr. Arnold Matlin

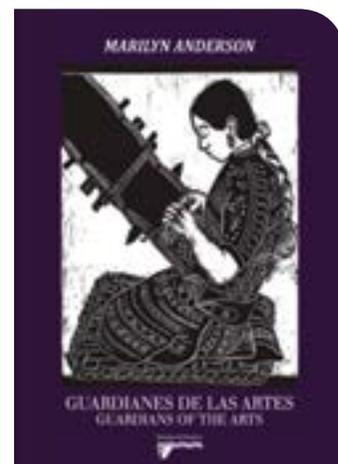
By now, ROCLA members have received and, we hope, have responded to our membership renewal request. Now we turn to you, our friends, and ask you to join and help support ROCLA. ROCLA is the only organization in the Rochester area that deals with all of Latin America. We use your membership donations to further the work of 20-plus organizations and individuals working for justice, democracy and human rights on the front lines in Latin America and the Caribbean. For example, this year we sent over \$1,000 in medicines to Cuba through the Friendship initiative.

Your membership also helps underwrite our monthly programs on critical issues related to Latin America, including travel funds and honoraria

for our speakers, and brings ROCLA's White Dove Award winners to Rochester to share their incredible stories. As a member, you receive our quarterly newsletter and invitations to various events, including ROCLA's annual Rice & Beans fundraising dinner, with its great food, auctions, and comradery. It is unlikely that we'll ever receive government funds and grants, because most of what we do is to oppose and try to change U.S. policy.

Please do your share to keep ROCLA alive and well, and begin or renew your membership—still only \$30—now. We are counting on you!

Make your tax-deductible check payable to MJ/ROCLA and mail it to Kathy Goforth, 45 Lynbrook Drive, Rochester, NY 14609. Thank you!

**Marilyn
Anderson's
New Book,
Guardianes
de las Artes/
Guardians
of the Arts,
Available Now!**

Marilyn Anderson, long-time ROCLA Steering Committee member, has just published her new bilingual book *Guardianes de las artes: grabados de artistas y artesanos de Guatemala/Guardians of the Arts: Prints of Guatemalan Artists and Artisans* (2016, Ediciones del Pensativo, 142 pages). The book contains beautiful wood and linoleum prints of the arts and crafts traditions of Guatemala, and 25 drawings, that come out of Marilyn's more than 40 years of involvement with the traditional arts of Guatemala.

This book comprises an important part of Marilyn's *Pro Arte Maya Project*, which includes her art, photography, books, exhibits, as well as collaborations with Mayan educators in Guatemala. Marilyn explains: "I do it in the spirit of solidarity with Maya people and all Guatemalan artisans."

(Marilyn A. continues page 7)

(Marilyn A. from page 6)

What motivates her is “my drive to make art with a social purpose.” After looking at some of her prints, a Maya artisan told Marilyn that he had no idea so many crafts were produced in Guatemala, and a Guatemalan friend encouraged her, saying that there was a need “for a perspective that conveys profound respect for traditional Mayan artists, especially the woven artwork of Maya women.”

Guardianes de las artes: grabados de artistas y artesanos de Guatemala/ Guardians of the Arts: Prints of Guatemalan Artists and Artisans is Marilyn’s response, which graphically celebrates Guatemalan arts and crafts traditions and the artisans themselves. It contains reproductions of 43 wood and linoleum prints, and drawings on 25 of the caption pages. Each print has an extended bilingual caption in Spanish and English that describes techniques, the various uses of the crafts, their history and place in today’s world. Five essays give additional information and context on the arts and crafts of Guatemala.

This is a perfect holiday gift for ROCLA members and their friends and families!

Guardianes de las Artes will be available at the Alternative Fair, Rochester, NY, on December 2 and 3, 2016, (See announcement on page 1) and will be sold through Marilyn’s website: www.proartemaya.org. The price is: \$45. It is also available at Greenwood Books, 123 East Avenue, Rochester, NY; at the Before Your Quiet Eyes Bookstore, 439 Monroe Ave., Rochester, NY; and at Talking Leaves Books, 3158 Main Street, Buffalo, NY, as well as several other outlets in the U.S. ■



Elizabeth Keen with her 9th grade students at Santa María Tzejá, Guatemala

Santa María Tzejá seeks 2017 Middle School English Teacher

By Elizabeth Keen

Elizabeth Keen spent 6 months in Santa María Tzejá, Guatemala, teaching English in the middle school founded by Randall Shea that ROCLA has helped support. The school is seeking an English teacher for the 2017 school year, which runs from January to October. If you are interested in this position, contact Randall Shea at rshea1957@yahoo.com. Ed. Note

I took on the role of the English teacher in the middle school from January through June, [2016] I had the privilege of working with 82 students, ranging in age from 11 to 18 years. . .

As a farmer by occupation, I found myself challenged with the task of teaching seventh through ninth graders the language of my birth. Having had not more than a crash course on teaching an English Language Learners class from a couple of friends who are certified and a few textbooks

I was given, I found myself up for the task. I felt strangely confident and assured especially as I saw most of the youth really wanted to learn . . . Some of my students were children of parents who had received scholarships to study in the past, while others had parents who studied only to the 6th grade and even others had parents who didn’t know how to read or write.

Some of the children have stories that might break your hearts and make you weep. Several have a parent or parents they have never seen because they left in search of a better way to earn money in the United States or Mexico and never returned. Others have parents with serious drinking problems, an all-too-common occurrence here in Guatemala. Some students feel the pull to earn money too greatly and know they might not continue after 9th grade. But even with all the obstacles, the majority of the students realize their education is a priority and they study hard while their parents and extended family work to pay for their schooling. . . . I was able to participate in multiple special events and some fundraisers the youth



Elizabeth Keen planning a program with her students.

put on as part of an effort to pay for the 9th graders’ field trip to the ancient Mayan city of Tikal. I was truly impressed with the level of dedication the teachers demonstrated and the after-hours work they put in to make the school experience better. I found the curriculum to be extremely well rounded. Dance, music, theater and art as well as all the basics are covered. I was impressed especially with the enthusiasm that the youth had for both traditional and modern dance.

We look forward to a continued relationship with Santa María Tzejá and the friends we made while we were there. ■

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ROCLA UPDATE ON THE
AMERICAS

HELP KEEP ROCLA'S WEBSITE CURRENT!

ROCLA has an informative website (see: <http://rocla.us/>) where webmaster Jim Bearden posts current information about Latin America on an ongoing basis, as well as announcements of programs and other news. If you have information, articles or action opportunities about Latin America that you believe may be of interest to ROCLA members, please email the link or content to Jim at: jeb.bearden@gmail.com. ■

SIGN UP FOR ROCLA'S EMAIL LISTSERVE!

When you sign up for ROCLA's email list, you will receive your newsletter earlier than the print version and in color, and ROCLA will save the cost of paper and postage. To sign up for the ROCLA e-mail list, please go to www.rocla.us and **click on "Subscribe to ROCLA Email."** Then enter your name and email address and click on **"Subscribe."** Stay informed about ROCLA programs, upcoming events and urgent actions! ■

ROCLA

MISSION STATEMENT

Founded in 1973, the Rochester Committee on Latin America (ROCLA) seeks to build bridges between the Rochester, NY, community and the people of Latin America. Through its monthly presentations, speakers, films, and quarterly newsletters, ROCLA educates local residents about the culture, economics and politics of the countries of Central and South America, Mexico and the Caribbean and the ways globalization, U.S. trade and drug-war policies impact the lives of their people. ROCLA also supports the work of frontline organizations involved in working for justice and democracy in the global south, including the Latin America Solidarity Committee (LASC), Nicanet, Committee in Solidarity with the people of El Salvador (CISPES), Network In Solidarity with the people of Guatemala (NISGUA), Rights Action and the Pastors for Peace Cuba Friendship. We also encourage our members and others to advocate for U.S. policies that support human rights and reverse the often oppressive history of U.S. involvement in Latin America. Annually, ROCLA presents its international and local White Dove Awards for outstanding leadership and service in the cause of human rights in Latin America.

Steering Committee Marilyn Anderson, Paola Betchart, Kathy Goforth, Bob and Marilyn Kaiser, Grania Marcus, Arnie Matlin, Lew Montemaggi, Peter and Gail Mott, Callie Rabe, Esperanza Roncero, Vic Vinkey, Tom Ward • **Publishing Team** Editor: Grania Marcus, Designer: Jim Anderson