



President's Message by Kirsten van der Meer

Greetings from Sombrilla, I hope that you had a great summer! Summer is a time to take holidays, spend time outside, and enjoy all of the wonderful festivals that pass our way. It is also time to rest and rejuvenate - the Sombrilla Board has enjoyed a short summer break, and we are now ready to jump back into action.

There are several pieces of good news to share with all of our Sombrilla supporters. First, we have officially changed our name from Sombrilla Refugee Support Society to Sombrilla International Development Society. This change reflects how we have evolved as an organization from supporting Latin American refugees in Canada during times of civil war in the 1980s to today's focus on supporting community development projects in our partner Latin American communities. Despite considerable red tape to follow through with the name change, our persistence was rewarded.

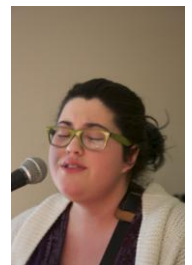
In June 2011, we organized an amazingly successful concert with traditional Latin music ensemble, De Menor a Mayor. The band played a diverse repertoire of songs reflecting the struggles and triumphs of Latin American peoples - some songs sad and somber, others joyous and upbeat. The concert celebrated 30 years of performance by lead vocalist Marianela Adasme. The concert raised about \$2500 for Sombrilla, and we greatly appreciate the generosity of De Menor a Mayor for contributing their musical talent, energy and spirit to this event.

Looking ahead, Sombrilla continues to engage in two development projects - the Tierra Colorada school improvement project in Guatemala, and the Yurac Yacu community business development centre in Peru. We are also forging a new partnership with the Central Mayan Foundation to support the operation of a high school and Teacher's college in Cunen, Guatemala. We will be hosting a house concert to raise funds for these projects on October 21, 2011- there are more details in this newsletter, please join us! For those of you who are wondering about our annual International Dinner fundraiser, it will be held in the spring.

As always, we are recruiting volunteers to join us on the board or on the the following committees: Foreign Projects Committee, Governance and Policy Committee, and the Public Engagement Committee. Please contact me (kvdmeer@hotmail.com, 780-267-6995) if you would like more information about any of these committees or other opportunities to get involved with Sombrilla.

Spring House Concert with Quetzala Carson

Last spring Sombrilla hosted a wonderful House Concert with singer songwriter Quetzala Carson. We were all tremendously entertained by Quetzala's strong voice and clever lyrics. As well as the music we were treated to some fabulous appetizers and desserts prepared by Suzanne Cook.



Project News - Yurac Yacu Project

The last few months have been an exciting time for the Yurac Yacu Project. In March we had reached our initial fundraising goal of \$25000 for the project and subsequently applied to the Community Initiatives Program (CIP) of the Government of Alberta for matching funding. The community began preparations of the building site and making adobe blocks in July in order to take advantage of the dry season in Peru. At the end of August we were very happy to receive \$21000 from CIP bringing us very close to the \$50000 needed to complete the project. We still need to raise \$4000 and will be trying accomplish that this fall.

The education programs are progressing well. Volunteer teacher Berta Schule finished her time with the program at the end of July.



At present a teacher from Pincher Creek, Karen Larter is volunteering with the program. Andean Alliance is presently looking for a volunteer to replace Karen when she has to leave in October. Please contact us if you are interested in volunteering or know someone who may be interested. Andean Alliance is currently trying to find a local teacher who would offer more continuity to the program.

We would like to thank the Federation of University Women-Calgary North for their donation of \$500 to the Yurac Yacu Education Programs, to be used for literacy. Achieving literacy is hugely important for the children and this kind of support can make a tremendous difference for the volunteer teachers working with the children.

Project News – Our Newest Project

Sombrilla's newest project is in Guatemala and was started several years ago by a local group, the Central American Mayan Foundation. They recently entered talks with Sombrilla and we came to the conclusion that we would be able to be more effective working together. The foundation will become a part of Sombrilla and we believe this partnership will be a long and productive one. This is a very rewarding project for Sombrilla to be involved in as it brings us back to our roots working with the returning refugees from the Guatemalan Civil War.

Central American Mayan Project by Ron Poirier

The Central American Mayan Foundation is based on the scripture reading "What you do to the least of mine, you do unto me".

The Bilingual Mixed Intercultural Colegio was born from a need by the Mayan people of Guatemala to confront their poverty and a host of serious problems such as illiteracy, infantile deaths, malnutrition, as well as a lack of appropriate technological services for agriculture, drinkable water, electricity, and educational opportunities at the junior high, senior high and university level.

The Guatemalan government supports only primary and elementary education. Higher education was not accessible to them in the larger centers. To solve these urgent educational needs, the municipality of Cunen in 1999 founded a Mayan community education program that seeks to train bilingual teacher for primary schools in the language and cultural context of the communities. This effort was due to the efforts of parents, students, salaried positions in the morning and volunteering in the afternoons, evenings and weekends. Some 250 teachers are now teaching in primary state schools in the language of the people throughout the mountainous region of El Quiche.

In 2006 they outgrew their space in an old building and asked the international community to help them build a new college. People from Alberta and Saskatchewan responded and under the direction of the Rainbow of Hope for Children Foundation a new college was built by monies and efforts of local business and individuals.



Today a new college exists with a new name, the Rainbow of Hope for Children Colegio, enrolling over 410 students in 2011 in Junior and senior high school and teacher training. The College employs 26 teachers and professors, a Director, two assistant directors, a secretary and a janitor. The Colegio boasts 12 classrooms, a computer center, a library, and audiovisual room, a living area, a cellar, and a custodian room and a sports field.

Unfortunately, building a building is the easy part. The students can only afford a nominal fee and consequently the staff is paid minimal salaries.

The Central American Mayan Foundation was formed to raise money to create a sustainability fund. We are aiming at raising \$250,000 in the next 3 years to help fund the administration of the college, pay salaries to teachers and fund bursaries for students. Through Sombrilla, we are now able to give tax receipts for donations.

Our first formal fund raising activity "The Right to Learn Gala" is on October 14, 2011. For more information or to donate to Sustainability Fund or the Gala call Colin Levangie (780 953 3948) or Ron Poirier (780 920 0880).

Sombrilla Calendar of Events

September 23, ACGC Gala Evening with Wade Davis

ACGC is thrilled to announce that Wade Davis will be delivering the keynote address entitled "Why Ancient Wisdom Matters in the Modern World"

Sombrilla will be a participant in the NGO fair at the gala. The event takes place at the Rozsa Centre, University of Calgary Campus from 6 to 10 pm.

October 12 Sombrilla Volunteer Appreciation & AGM

All Sombrilla members, volunteers and supporters are invited to our volunteer appreciation party and AGM. There will be food and drinks and we will be playing music from our partner countries. We will also have photos from the projects. This is a chance to visit with the board pass on your ideas and have some fun with other friends of Sombrilla. At 8:30 we will start the Annual General Meeting. We expect the meeting will take about 30 minutes.

The event will take place between 7 and 9 pm in the Upper Hall at Holy Trinity Anglican Church, located at 10037-84 Ave.

October 20 United Nations Association in Canada NGO Fair

Sombrilla will be making a short presentation at this event. The event will be held at Grant MacEwan University, Governor's Board Room 7-218 from 7-9 pm.

October 21 Billie Zizi and Cam Neufeld House Concert

Sombrilla presents An Evening of Music from the Gypsy Trail featuring local musicians Billie Zizi and Cam Neufeld playing a mixture of Hot Club Swing and Gypsy Jive. We will once again be serving delicious finger foods created by Suzanne Cook. Wine will be available at a cash bar. This is an intimate evening with only 50 tickets available. Tickets are \$40 with a \$25 tax receipt provided.

The concert will take place at the Mann residence, 9704, 88th Avenue Doors open at 7 pm and music starts at 7:30 pm

For tickets please call Sarah 780-988-2976 or email sombrillahome@gmail.com.

November 18-19 **Just Christmas**. Sombrilla will have a table at Just Christmas.

JUST CHRISTMAS is an Alternative Global Market Place where you can find unique gifts and support social justice. When you purchase a gift from one of the thirty different non-profit and charitable organizations in this market, the money you spend goes towards the building of healthy communities around the world. It's happening on Friday, November 18 from 5:30-9 pm and Saturday November 19 from 9:30am-4pm at the Alberta Avenue Community Hall (9210-118 Ave). For more information visit www.justchristmas.org.

Adopt a Community - YURAC YACU



Sombrilla International Development Society, in partnership with Peruvian NGO Andean Alliance, is building the Yurac Yacu Community Centre and helping to fund educational projects in the community. We would like to thank everyone who has helped us with contributions to this project. We will continue to send updates as we complete the building of the Community Centre and continue to support the educational programs.

Now we need to ask you for your support one more time. While the building is underway we are still \$4,000 short of funds to complete the project. We will be trying to raise the last \$4,000 this fall. Any contributions to this effort will be very gratefully received.

You will receive updates from the community with news and photos. You may choose to receive your updates by e-mail or regular mail. You will receive a tax receipt for all contributions.

How to make your contribution to the Adopt a Community fund: Choose one of the following methods.

- Online: From our website, www.sombrilla.ca, under donate, click on the Canada Helps button and choose donate monthly. Type Yurac Yacu Project in the text box
- Mail a cheque payable to Sombrilla, 11424 - 77 Ave, Edmonton, AB, T6G-0L8

For more information go to www.sombrilla.ca, call Sarah at (780)988-2976 or email sombrillahome@gmail.com

