
Wednesday, October 31, 2012



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Tierra Colorada project leads Paul Layte and Nancy Cowle completed the final reporting for their grant from the Alberta Community Initiatives Program. The Tierra Colorada school improvement project included building additional classrooms, installing bathrooms and bio-water filters. At the conclusion of their project, they reported increased enrolment in all grades and more children staying in school from year to year. Improved school facilities have also enabled them to start up a junior high program in 2012 with 37 students registered for Year 1. Years 2 & 3 will start up in 2013 & 2014 respectively.

The Yurac Yacu Community Centre Project is continuing to flourish. Sombrilla funding is supporting construction of the community centre as a hub for local development, education, and income enhancement. Construction of the preschool classroom, meeting room, library, and computer room are completed. The Roosevelt School in Lima will be donating books and computers and setting up the library in March, 2013. Work will soon be started on the income-generating terrace including a kitchen, bakery, café and guiding office and installation of plumbing and sanitation systems. Our partner organization, Andean Alliance, estimates that another \$15,000 will need to be raised to finish the project. Local residents supplied all of the labour for this project.

Throughout the year, Sombrilla has participated in local events to engage with Albertans. We have travelled with our display to Seedy Sunday, Just Christmas, and the Alberta Council for Global Cooperation AGM. In May, we hosted our annual International Dinner attended by over 120 people. We aim to increase our public engagement and outreach to Albertans over the next year.

We are now seeking a new project with ADIM (Asociación para el Desarrollo Integral de Multiservicios), an organization that we have a long history with in central Guatemala. We are currently reviewing project proposals, and we will work with ADIM to scope out the new project over the next few months. We will move forward with fundraising of our selected project in 2013.

Many thanks to all of you who support Sombrilla, and our ongoing work

Kirsten van der Meer

YURAC YACU PROJECT

The Yurac Yacu community is once again buzzing with activity as work is underway on the third stage of construction of the Community Centre. This stage includes the installation of the water and sewage system and the construction of the kitchen, bathrooms, a guiding office and rooftop terrace. This part of the Community Centre will provide much needed economic opportunities for community members with jobs being created in the bakery and cafe, and space available in the guiding office for guides, donkey drivers and cooks to contract with tourists planning mountain expeditions. At the same time the preschool program continues to serve the small children in the community and planning is getting underway for summer school which will run for 6 weeks in January and February.



So far the workers have finished the excavation of the building site, the production of 1000 adobe blocks and the foundations have been poured. This work provides valuable income for the members of the Yurac Yacu Community Association. The work is rotated through the member families so that everyone gets an equal opportunity to work.

Over the next few months work will begin on the water and sewer systems. Dry composting toilets will be installed in the bathroom. These toilets have been chosen as they use minimal amounts of water, important in this community where water is becoming a scarce resource. The output of the toilets is composted and spread on pasture lands.

Once the plumbing is done work will start on raising the walls. We expect to see the buildings finished by the end of December.

The teachers in Peru have been on strike for a couple of months, but at this point the schools are still thinking they will be able to finish their year by Christmas and the summer holidays will go ahead as usual. The education available in the local public schools leaves many deficiencies so during the long summer break we hold classes daily, trying to fill in some of the gaps. We offer Spanish, Math, Science as well as a camp program with crafts games etc. This is all provided by a team of teachers, from the local community and the nearby city of Huaraz, and volunteers from Canada and the US. Sombrilla helps out with money for materials and to pay local teachers. We try very hard to give the children a different educational experience using games and hands on activities as we try to build their basic abilities and understandings.

Sombrilla is currently fundraising for the Yurac Yacu Education Project, supporting the Preschool Program and the Summer School.

ACGC CHANGE YOUR WORLD YOUTH TOUR

In late July Sombrilla and Andean Alliance hosted the ACGC Change Your World Youth Tour. Our wonderful team of five Alberta high school students, Chance, Julie, Kianna, Ross and Sarah along with Joelle Badman from ACGC and myself left Canada to spend two weeks in Peru learning about how Alberta organizations contribute to development in Peru.



We spent about 10 days in Ancash province visiting Yurac Yacu and taking part in a homestay in the nearby community of Vicos. We were joined on our first day in the highlands by five Peruvian youth from the Yurac Yacu community. Yesenia, Mitchel, Marichris, Javiar and Eduardo were with us until our final evening as we prepared to return to Lima. They were wonderful hosts and guides sharing their insights on the culture, the region the community and the project. It was very sad for all of us to say goodbye.

As well as visiting Sombrilla projects, the group travelled to Chinchipe on the coast of Peru to visit projects by Rainbow of Hope for Children and to Lima where we visited still more projects by CUSU. Sarah, Ross, Kianna, Julie and Chance are all busy now taking all they have learned from the tour out to their fellow Albertans. All this fall they will be doing presentations and showing the short documentary they made of the trip. We are very grateful to all of them for spreading word of the work Alberta organizations are doing in the developing world.

>> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cFcYFT3x75k>

TIERRA COLORADA PROJECT

We have recently seen the completion of the Tierra Colorada School Construction Project. A second story has been added to the Tierra Colorada Primary School greatly reducing crowding in the classrooms, and at this point no classes need to share space. Five new classrooms were added as well as a new kitchen and bathrooms. The additional classrooms have enabled additional students from Tierra Colorada to attend school in their community. School enrollment at all grades has continued to grow by between eight and ten percent.



Not only are more children staying in school from year to year, but, while construction was underway, some volunteer teachers, inspired by a Grade 6 teacher, prepared a submission for the Department of Education to start a 'Basico Institute' [Grades 7 through 9] at the school in 2012. This will be a huge advantage to the children of the community allowing them to continue with their education without having to travel away from their community. This will also allow more students to access secondary education.

The first year of secondary school, with classes held in the afternoons, started in January this year with 37 students enrolled. The Tierra Colorada Basico Institute, [junior high program] will continue next year adding Year Two secondary programming in 2013 and Year Three in 2014. For the first few years the secondary program will have no government funding and will be funded wholly by Sombrilla at an annual rate of twelve to fourteen thousand dollars. Based on precedent, we expect the Guatemala Department of Education will assume funding for this school in 2015. It is thanks to the very generous contributions made to the project by Tierra Colorada Project Managers Paul Layte and Nancy Cowle that we are able to continue to support this important project. Contributions to the project would be very gratefully accepted.

SOMBRILLA 25TH ANIVERSARY

On October 19th we celebrated the 25th anniversary of Sombrilla's becoming a registered charity in Alberta. We started with our AGM at which we sadly said goodbye to departing board members Vanessa Kohut and Kirsten van der Meer, and we welcomed new board members, Tim Tanasichuk, Tara Kamp, Terry Venuci, Jocelyn Strepnyk and Courtney Lilley.

We quickly moved on to our party with food and wine, and music by De Menor a Mayor. Presentations were made by the Ross Anderson and Sarah Carr about the ACGC Change your World youth Tour and by Enneke Lorberg who took us back to Sombrilla earlier days and reminded us of just how much has been done over 25 years. It was a wonderful way to celebrate our present work partnering with marginalized communities in Guatemala and Peru and to look back over our many past accomplishments.

We look forward to 25 more years of striving to make a difference in the world.

A SHORT HISTORY, 25 YEARS OF SOMBRILLA

Five years into its existence, a partnership with another small development organization in Edmonton (Pueblo Partisans, headed by Tom Grauman) was established in 1991, and Sombrilla began to look closer at the politico-socio-economic circumstances within Guatemala which lead to the continuous flow of people seeking asylum. Our Society decided to redirect its energies towards overseas development, with the belief that in the long term, its efforts would be more effective and sustainable. This new visioning was nicely supported by the likes of journalist Jim Witte and ecologist John Chan and many other thoughtful, dedicated members who helped bridge our transitions from refugee sponsorship to overseas development.



A major three-year development project located in the Comitancillo community of Guatemala was conceived based on local community needs, and Arturo Avila and Adrienne Wiebe (and their two children) were dispatched as volunteers to support the leaders of this marginalized community in their development needs.

At their return to Edmonton five years later, the Avila/Wiebe duo continued to inspire, manage, lead and support Sombrilla's efforts in many ways, and along with the dedication and leadership skills of John Chan (who also remained active with Sombrilla for many years), Sombrilla has been able to manage and support an impressive array of development projects implemented not only in Guatemala, but in Mexico, El Salvador, Chile, Argentina, Honduras and Peru as well.

Our solidarity with the many communities touched by those development projects was strongly enhanced and affirmed by the extraordinary commitment and dedication of volunteers like the Avila/Wiebe team, Elene Berube, Tara Kemp, Diana Coumantarakis, Paul Layte/Nancy Cowle, Alvaro Loyola and members of Christian Peacemakers International (CPI) who dedicated themselves in direct service overseas to support the development of so many marginalized, struggling communities –principally in Guatemala and Honduras.

So as we celebrate twenty five years of service as an organization, we want to thankfully acknowledge all the many special, generous and passionate contributors who make possible our continued existence. Among these are many members of the Board of Directors who remained faithful to the cause, even through some of the more challenging times we had to face as an organization. Special mention should be made of people like John Chan, Arturo Avila, Newell Hudson, Sarah Cashmore, Alvaro Loyola, Tim Martin, and Giri Pulingula, who put forth extraordinary effort on our behalf. The high spirited and passionate activist Enneke Lorberg was very instrumental in raising our organization's profile in the local Edmonton community and we are very appreciative of her contributions as well as those of like-minded people such as Katrin Hoffman, Ros McCue and David Hubert.

All of you who have joined with Sombrilla over time have helped in advancing the cause of peace and justice through your acts of kindness, of solidarity, of compassion and through your hard work. Sombrilla will continue, in solidarity with non-violent peoples' struggles, to support grassroots partner organizations in Latin America through various interconnected spheres such as literacy, micro lending, food security, environmental protection, water resources, health, women's empowerment and social justice. Without question, these overseas projects continue to deliver significant impacts on the quality of life of families and communities affected, and we should take great pride in this solidarity.

By Rick Berube.

REVERSE THE CUTS

Last March, the federal Government announced that it will slash the budget of the Canadian International Development Agency by \$319 million (more than 8 percent) over three years. These cuts will lead to major set-backs in the fight against global poverty.

Decision-makers in Ottawa have begun planning for Budget 2013. Now is the time to raise our voices and tell them to Reverse the Cuts!

The mission of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) is to lead Canada's international effort to help people living in poverty. CIDA currently funds hundreds of development projects in dozens of countries around the world. The Agency collaborates with Canadian NGOs to contribute resources and technical expertise to address development challenges on the ground. CIDA also supports Canadian engagement in multilateral development mechanisms – like the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria – and delivers humanitarian assistance in areas impacted by natural disasters.

These investments are making a difference. For example, CIDA reports that in 2010-2011, Canadian development assistance in Ethiopia helped raise the vaccination rate for diphtheria, whooping cough and tetanus to 86 percent of children (up from 73 percent in 2008). In Pakistan, we helped 2,000 girls enroll in middle school classes and helped train more than 120,000 teachers and other education professionals.

The cuts to Canada's budget for international development could spell the end for projects like these and hurt families in developing countries.

Restoring CIDA's budget to 2011 levels, at a minimum, will help save lives and alleviate poverty – and it's affordable, too! The \$319 million cut from the CIDA budget is equivalent to the cost of just one of the 65 F-35 fighter jets the Government wants to buy. To put this in perspective, we're talking about \$3 per Canadian per year – less than you might spend on a couple cups of coffee!

The majority of Canadians believe that we have a moral obligation to assist those in the developing world, and that the government has a role in ensuring we meet this obligation.

If you agree, take action now!

>> http://reversethecuts.ca/Index_eng.asp

SOMBRILLA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

November 14: Sombrilla is hosting ACGC's "Development Drinks." Come out for an evening of informal discussion with other individuals who are also interested in global issues. It's a great space for discussion and to network with others in the city. Wednesday November 14th at Cafe Tiramisu 10750 124 St 5:30-8:00PM

November 23 and 24: Sombrilla will be at Just Christmas. Just Christmas is a global marketplace for quality arts, handmade crafts and other goods that are primarily obtained through fair compensation. When you purchase a gift from the non-profit and charitable organizations in this market, the money you spend goes toward the building of healthy communities around the world. Friday November 23 5:50-9:00PM and Saturday November 24 9:30 AM-4:00PM at Alberta Avenue Community HALL, 9210-118 Avenue.



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