



President's Message by Kirsten van der Meer

Greetings to all of our Sombrilla friends, Summer is around the corner, and there are lots of exciting things happening at Sombrilla. We are delighted to be hosting the Alberta Council for Global Cooperation Youth Tour at the end of July. We will be travelling with 5 Alberta youth to our partner community of Yurac Yacu, in the highlands of Peru. The Alberta youth will be paired with Peruvian indigenous youth and they will spend two weeks living, learning, and sharing with each other. We are very excited to showcase our Yurac Yacu project- the youth will be making a video of their experiences to share with their classmates, other schools, and with the broader Edmonton community.

This is a landmark year for Sombrilla, it has been 25 years since our grassroots NGO came to life through the efforts of a small group of concerned citizens. We continue to work on community development projects in Latin America based on a belief that we can make a difference in the lives of the people in our partner communities. This October, we will be planning a 25th anniversary reunion celebration. We are inviting all of you to this exciting event on October 19, and we could use your help to contact past members and volunteers and meet new people who are interested in our organization. Please mark your calendars, more details to come!

25th Anniversary for Sombrilla

Plans are now underway For Sombrilla's 25th anniversary celebration. The event will take place Friday October 19th. There will be food music and a presentation by some of the students who will be participating in the youth tour this summer. We are also hoping to have with us lots of people who have been involved with Sombrilla over the years. If you or anyone you know has been involved with Sombrilla in the past please let us know. We want to

invite past members and volunteers and we are looking for pictures documents etc. from the past 25 years.

ACGC Change Your World Youth Leadership Tour

At the end of July 5 Alberta Youth and two leaders will be travelling to Peru where they will visit the projects of three Albertan NGOs. They will spend the first 10 days at Sombrilla's Yurac Yacu project where they will be joined by 5 Peruvian youth from the Yurac Yacu project area. As well as seeing Sombrilla's projects the youth will be going on and overnight hiking trip into the nearby Huascarán National Park and will be participating in a family stay in another Andean Community.

Meet the Youth

The five young Albertans that will be travelling with us to Peru are:

Julie Lee



Julie is a grade eleven student at Father Lacombe High School in Calgary, Alberta. She has been an active member in both her local and school community. As a member of the school's social justice committee, Julie has developed a passion for the pursuit of social justice, thus joining The Mobilizers, Free the Children's Calgary youth group. In addition to having been a member of these groups, she is also a part of her school's yearbook committee, student council, choir, and a few athletic

teams. Julie has an earnest, keen interest in world issues and believes that each person can contribute to making a change, including herself.

Kianna Dewart:



Kianna is a grade 12 student at Queen Elizabeth High School in Calgary. She has been involved in many activities in her school. She runs the International Certificate Club, is an active member of the Youth Volunteer Club, she played on the high schools volleyball team and in grade eleven organized and ran

her high school's first Glee Club.

Outside of school Kianna is an official volunteer for the Canadian Red Cross. As a Red Cross Youth Leader, Kianna, along with five other students, organizes workshops for teens, educating her peers about global issues such as HIV/AIDS and Child Soldiers at youth events across Calgary. In 2011 she went with the Calgary Board of Education as one of 28 students to attend the International Youth Leadership Summit in Macau, China. This year Kianna was named as one of Alberta's top 30 under 30 2012 by the Alberta Council for Global Co-operation.

Kianna enjoys volleyball, musical theatre, dance, eating ice cream and travel. Next year she is planning to study International Development in the fall at the University of Calgary.

Ross Anderson



Ross is finishing up Grade 12 at [Strathcona High School](#) in Edmonton. By far the best experience of this school year has been his involvement in the school's Live, Love Lend campaign. The campaign successfully raised \$56,000 for [Microloans](#). Ross will be entering Engineering in the fall at the University of Alberta. In his spare time, Ross enjoys playing and coaching tennis, swimming, snowboarding,

playing the guitar, computer programming and mountain biking. He has had some great travel experiences in the past and is excited for even more in Peru!

Sarah Carr



Sarah is a grade ten student at ME Lazerte High School in Edmonton. She is active in the leadership program in her school.

Sarah is very excited to start her world travels with the Change Your World Tour

Chance Roasting



Chance is a grade 12 student at TsuuT'ina Jr/Sr High School. Chance plays on the school volleyball team and is an active member of the Students Against Drunk Driving chapter.

Chance is looking forward to learning about Peruvian culture.

Project News - Tierra Colorada Project

Tierra Colorada Canton is a Mayan community comprised of about 200 families located about 5 kilometers outside of Quetzaltenango, which was the traditional Mayan capital of Guatemala. While there are extremes of poverty and wealth in both the Spanish and Mayan populations in the city of Quetzaltenango, the Spanish community does have an emerging middle-class, from which presently the Mayan population in general is excluded due to racism and entrenched classism. The adult Mayan population in Tierra Colorada has a general literacy rate of about 60%, while the adult female rate is closer to 40%. Illiteracy contributes to the people's inability to emerge from poverty. Many adults

recognize that education is important for their children but at the same time they need their economic and therefore experience conflict between the needs of today and the long-term benefits of education for tomorrow.

Presently 80 families enroll at least some of their children in the local public primary school which has been chronically overcrowded since it was built in 2004 by a Spanish NGO. A 2009 decision by the Guatemalan government to cover the inscription fee enabled more families to enroll their children, at the same time increasing the overcrowding. We anticipate that the children from 100 families would benefit from a new school. Since there was not enough land available at the current school to expand horizontally, it was decided to expand vertically.



Construction got underway in Aug'2010 . All construction was done by hand, with no heavy equipment except a cement mixer, and this was only used

during the construction of the floor and ceiling. There were several rainy months in 2011 that delayed construction.



Following completion of the structural construction, we had to hire a certified engineer to carry out an inspection. Without his sign-off, the 'new classrooms' could not be used.

This inspection identified a few shortcomings that were addressed during August & September of 2011.

Over the last few months of 2011 the finishing was completed: - applying a finish to all walls & floors; installing a drainage system for the entire facility. Because the exterior walls of the school touched surrounding homes, it was necessary to ensure rain did not runoff the school's rooftops onto to adjacent homes & land

Nancy Cowle, co-administrator of the project travelled to Tierra Colorada early this year, and in

February she was in attendance at the official opening of the school expansion.

Department of Education and local municipal authorities, along with students & parents were in attendance at the 'celebrations'. Following speeches & songs, refreshments were enjoyed by all. As you can see in the accompanying photos, the project was very successful.



While construction was underway, some volunteer teachers prepared a submission for the Guatemalan Department of Education to start a 'Basico Institute' for Grades 7 thru 9 at the school in 2012. The Basico program will use the same space as the Primary program but will take place in the afternoons after the primary program is dismissed.

Approvals for the submission were slow in coming because of the National elections; but, by December we received approval for the new program. Sombrilla, supported by a donation from Paul Layte has committed to fund this project for the first three years at an annual estimated cost of \$12,000-\$14,000 The Government of Guatemala will take over all operational costs after the initial three years and parents in the community will contribute \$20 Quetzales (\$3) per month for each student.

Contributions to this new program are most welcome.

Project News - Yurac Yacu Project

By Diana Morris, Andean Alliance

In March we received several students and 2 teachers from the Roosevelt School in Lima (they had donated 10 old Emac computers in December) who came with a few hundred books to help start the library. They spent 2 days here cataloging the books and doing some great reading activities with the children. The Yurac Yacu Association prepared a lunch and awarded them with a plaque. The Roosevelt school has made a commitment to continue to support the computer area and library.

April was nutrition month and the preschool children started it off by visiting the gardens at the nearby Inn and pulling vegetables to make their own school salads. When asked earlier where certain vegetables came from they answered "The Market", what a surprise for them when they harvested vegetables from the ground.

As well, we started our small science corner in the preschool classroom. The first project was planting sunflowers in plastic bottles with rulers to measure growth. The dirt and compost was cleverly delivered in the Tonka Trucks after been dug by the children with their small shovels. The sunflowers are now planted in the outside garden and are taken care of by the children.

In May young volunteers, from the Yurac Yacu area, were taught use the computers to work with the library books. There have also been afternoon computer classes for the volunteers as we hope they will be able to work with the community in the computer area.

June saw the start of the 2nd Leadership/Mountain Skills course. This is being taught by a Canadian/American couple in conjunction with Diana and Luis from Huaraz. There are 15 kids in 2 groups who are learning the art of communication, leadership, decision making, risk taking as well as cooking with camp stoves, rock climbing, setting up tents, loading a pack, basic first aid, and nutrition. They will finish in July with a 2 day camping trip.



Roosevelt Students organizing the Library



Trying out the new computers.



Picking veggies for their salad.



The Science Corner.



Leadership/Mountain Skills Group



Sunflowers in the classroom.

From our Sombrilla Archives

In celebration of our 25th anniversary here is an article from an early Sombrilla newsletter. In September 1988 Sombrilla was headed toward the first anniversary of incorporation. At the time of writing Sombrilla was focused on bringing refugees from Guatemala and El Salvador to Edmonton and supporting them as they adjusted to life here.

There were 4 working groups, of 25 people each, Mill Creek, Amistad, Libertad and West End. Each group was responsible for one refugee family. At the time of this article two families had arrived in Edmonton and two of the groups were still waiting for their families to arrive. Lorne and Patricia Wallace were amongst the founders of our organization. This article is a report of their trip to Los Angeles and to Central America where they met some of the people waiting to come to Canada under Sombrilla's sponsorship.

Lorne and Patricia's Central American Tour

Lorne Wallace and his wife Patricia spent five weeks visiting Central America and California over the summer. As part of their trip, they met with the refugees whom Sombrilla groups are sponsoring. Here's their report.

Like all of us in Sombrilla, the refugees we met in Los Angeles are waiting impatiently for CSIS security clearances so they can come to Edmonton. It's not getting any easier for them. Since the new American immigration took effect in May, it has become a lot tougher for illegals like our fiends to find work. Huge fines can now be slapped on employers who hire illegal immigrants. Although Canada red tape is causing irritatingly long delays, it appears we put in our sponsorships at the right time.

We visited two immigrant help organizations in Los Angeles: El Pescate, and the Central American Refugee Centre. Their staff reports two kinds of deportation are now going on. The first is official deportation. The U.S. rarely grants legal refugee status to Guatemalans and Salvadorians (because the official U.S. line is that they come from democracies.) And when illegal Guatemalans and Salvadorians are caught by U.S. Immigration police, only 2 to 3% manage to avoid deportation.

There's a second, unofficial deportation now occurring because of the new immigration regulations. They call it "deportation by starvation" because people who can't find work are being forced to go back to the countries they fled, despite the risks that may involve.

Varelas (Mill Creek group) Fermin Varela (who was a factory worker in Guatemala) has managed to hold onto an illegal job as a dishwasher. He has some English, and says he's eager to get back to other work. He and his wife Rosa Victoria have three sons: 10-year-old Fernando Mauricio, 7-year-old Jose Antonio, and the baby who arrived in May. The two older boys speak English well, but Rosa Victoria speaks very little. So the Mill Creek group will undoubtedly have as top priorities

shelter and clothing for the family, a job for Fermin, and English courses for Rosa Victoria and Fermin.

Castillos (Libertad) Mario Castillo and his wife Ana have been working as janitors. They had tried some painting work, but were cheated out of their pay by an unscrupulous client. The Castillos are a bright, good-humored couple with a fair understanding of English and will probably profit enormously from some ESL courses. Sons Leonel, 11, and Lourdes, 8, speak English and look forward to better schools than the ones they're at in L.A.

Wilder Tobias (Amistad) Wilder has pretty good English and has worked at a variety of jobs. He is currently completing a course as a radio technician at a community station in L.A. His greatest need will be in finding a job here, preferably in radio.

The Varelas, Castillos, and Wilder still have no arrival date for Canada... "the end of the year" was what was promised them, and our enquiries at the Canadian Consulate produced nothing further. However, the Sombrilla executive has written again to Canadian Immigration Minister Barbara McDougall asking that these people be allowed to come as soon as possible. Let's keep our fingers crossed.

Mendozas (West End) We also visited the West End Group's Mendoza family in Guatemala City. As we had been told, this family of six refugees from El Salvador was living in abject poverty in a concrete room with no furniture, few clothes, no food. We brought them \$500 from the West End Group. This helped them to survive until their arrival in Edmonton in September

Now the West Enders are busy trying to find work and English classes for Maria Teresa, her 19-year old brother Julio, and her husband Jose, school for daughters Indira Sheila, 11, and Claudia Carolina, 6, and medical help for Maria Teresa's mother Concepcion, who needs hearing aids and glasses.

We also met two Guatemalans for whom the Sombrilla Refugee Support Society has now put in "sponsorships (specific sponsors groups will be formed later.) Both are labour union members persecuted for their union work. One has a wife and two children, the other man is single.

The more we saw of Guatemala and El Salvador, the more convinced we became of the importance of private sponsor groups like ourselves helping refugees from these countries. These are militarized states, whose armies kill their own people. We saw the evidence with our own eyes. We also saw how illegal Guatemalans and Salvadorians in the U.S. increasingly confront the possibility of deportation to these countries. Yet Canada's quotas for refugees from Guatemala and El Salvador are pitifully small. Last year's quota of refugees from Canada's Guatemala City consulate was 425. Of those, over 200 were Nicaraguans, with the rest divided between El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. The families we are helping are over and beyond the official quota, so we are truly saving people in need who would otherwise not stand a chance of getting here.

Volunteers Needed

We are presently in need of volunteers both for Sombrilla here in Edmonton and for our partner NGO, Andean Alliance in Peru.

In Edmonton, Sombrilla needs volunteers to sit on the Board of Directors starting in October, and on committees such as the project committee, the public engagement committee, the policy committee at any time. We also need volunteers from time to time to work on events such as fund-raising dinners and concerts. If you are interested in volunteering with Sombrilla please contact us by e-mail at sombrillahome@gmail.com.

In Peru - Our Yurac Yacu partner Andean Alliance is looking for someone to work in the newly opened Community Centre. Please pass this on to anyone you think might be interested.

Andean Alliance Volunteer Opportunity

Position: Community and Education Program Worker

Location: Yurac Yacu Community, a rural indigenous community near Huaraz Peru

Overview: The Yurac Yacu Education Centre is a project of Peruvian NGO Andean Alliance with support from Canadian NGO Sombrilla International Development Society. Andean Alliance has been working in the area, since 2005. We have a variety of projects underway which are connected to the Yurac Yacu Community Center.

The project includes a preschool program which runs weekday mornings year round, a six week summer school program in January and February, adult training programs and the running of the community centre with a library and access to computers as well as support for literacy skills, outdoor education and a program called "Ania" which connects children and the environment.

We are presently looking for a community, education program worker to commit to a minimum of one year working with the project. We have between 10 and 12 children between 3 and 5 years of age attending the preschool program. This year we had about 20 children participating in the summer school program and we are about to open a library and computer area in our newly built community centre.

The community is 10 km. outside of the city of Huaraz in Ancash Peru. The community is at 3600 m elevation and

is just below the park boundary of Huascarán National Park in the Cordillera Blanca. Volunteer accommodation is in a separate volunteer cabin at the Lazy Dog Inn and most meals will be taken in the dining room at the inn.

Responsibilities:

- Working as a part of the teaching team in the preschool 3 hours per day, Monday through Friday.
- Assisting with planning for the preschool program within the framework of our curriculum; .
- Providing outreach support to other preschools in the area.
- Assisting with planning and leading of regular mother's meetings
- Planning for the 6 week summer school and working with other volunteers to implement the summer school program
- Creating an environment to encourage community involvement in the community centre
- Planning community programming in the community centre, such as a monthly movie night
- Supervising local youth in running the library and the computer centre.

Skills and Qualifications:

- A good working knowledge of Spanish, all teaching is in Spanish
- Training related to teaching young children, education degree or early childhood diploma
- An open mind to educational programs that differ from the Peruvian norm (Waldorf/Montessori)
- Interest in living in a rural environment
- Very good communication skills
- A commitment to spend at least one year with the project

Benefits:

- Room and board will be provided by Andean Alliance
- A monthly honorarium of \$500 per month

To Apply: Send a cover letter and CV and to Diana Morris dbmorrison@andeanalliance.com

For more information: Contact Diana Morris (Andean Alliance) dbmorrison@andeanalliance.com or Sarah Cashmore (Sombrilla) sombrillahome@gmail.com or (780) 988-2976

Sombrilla Calendar of Events

July 29 to August 11 **Change Your World Youth Leadership Tour**

Please follow along with ACGC, Sombrilla and the five Alberta students as we travel to our project in Yurac Yacu, Peru. We will be podcasting and blogging as we go. The website for the podcast is <http://www.acgc.libsyn.com/> and the blog can be found at

<http://www.changeyourworldtour.blogspot.ca/> (this currently has the blog posts from the last tour).

Keep your calendars free for this one!

Saturday September 22, Evening. Sponsored by **ACGC, The Yes Men** will be bringing their own special take on global awareness to Edmonton. The Yes Men are activist film makers. They are controversial, courageous, and comedic. To learn more about the Yes Men check out their films “The Yes Men” and “The Yes Men Fix the World” or peruse their website <http://theyesmen.org>. Sombrilla will be displaying at this event. Look for more information in the fall newsletter.

Friday October 19 **Sombrilla’s 25th Anniversary and AGM**

Mark your calendars! We are planning a fun filled evening of Latin American food and music to celebrate Sombrilla’s 25 years of history. We hope to have with us many old friends from Sombrilla’s past. Details to follow.

Adopt a Community - YURAC YACU



Sombrilla Refugee Support Society, in partnership with Peruvian NGO Andean Alliance, has recently finished raising funds to complete construction of the Yurac Yacu Community Centre. The work on the Community Centre will continue through the summer 2013. We continue to raise funds for educational projects in the community and we will soon be developing a plan for our next Yurac Yacu project. When you contribute monthly through the Adopt a Community fund you will be helping us to continue to support this community.

About once every two months you will receive an update 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.

To make a 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 Using postdated cheques (Please complete the form below and return.)

Yes, I would like to support the Yurac Yacu project through the Adopt a Community fund

Contribution, check one

\$10 per month _____ \$25 per month _____ Other Amount
\$50 per month _____ \$100 per month _____

Name.....

E-mail address:.....

Mailing address.....

Please return to

Sombrilla Refugee Support Society

11424 77 Ave, Edmonton, Alberta, T6G 0L8,

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