



'Alma & Family'

### **Introduction**

We are writing to you with our latest update at a both rewarding and exciting time for the Foundation.

We have not long returned from a five week visit in June and July. This was our longest visit to date and we really felt the benefit as our understanding of the work becomes clearer and clearer.

Our website [www.educationforthechildren.com](http://www.educationforthechildren.com) is now fully operational and includes pictures of all children and teachers. Please have a look and let us have your feedback. Our sincere thanks go to Robert Hedley and David Littleboy of IT Solutions for the design and creation of the site, completely free of charge. IT Solutions have also generously donated a state of the art laptop which is being used by our Principal and Administrator in Guatemala.

## **School Year 2006**

As you will know, the school year in Guatemala runs from January to October. We have 175 children in our elementary school, Escuela Proyecto La Esperanza, and a further 18 in the state senior school through a dedicated sponsorship programme. Our numbers have, therefore, increased from 90 in 2004 to 153 in 2005 to 193 in 2006. As you will remember, in Guatemala, a child can only graduate from their grade by gaining pass marks in each subject irrespective of age. In 2005 the graduation rate was 86% and we are confident of an improvement this year. Jorge Castillo and his staff are to be congratulated.

Earlier this year we announced a breakthrough for the Foundation when we managed to secure the help of Nuestros Ahijados. Nuestros Ahijados is a well established NGO based in Guatemala offering education, a home building programme and a wonderful health and dental centre.

## **Nuestros Ahijados**

Healthcare and medicine is expensive in Guatemala and completely out of the reach of our children and their families. Due to the kindness and support of Nuestros Ahijados we now have free access to both medical and dental attention for all our children. At first, we were able to take our serious cases and those with chronic complaints. When we had worked through those cases and any emergencies as they happened, we were then able to begin the process of having all our children checked out. In addition to new cases as they crop up, we take two children each weekday to the clinic for free consultations and on a weekly basis, take several children for dental check ups.

It is difficult for us to explain just how much this means to the children. There are many heart warming stories, but two in particular will give you an idea of the effect.

Mildred Yanira, Galindo had suffered from a painful and irritating eye infection for almost 9 months. The family had tried various cheap creams from the local pharmacy without success. We took Yanira to the clinic one Friday in July and by the Monday she was completely cured and has had no trouble since.

Fredy Estuardo and Claudia Lorena, Serech Socorec had developed a nasty fungal skin rash on their faces. We took them to the clinic expecting to be given a simple cream to treat the rash. On examination, it was found that they both had a very serious and dangerous throat infection and the rash was the result of the vapour from their breath. Had the infection gone untreated, it could have been very serious.

Nuestros Ahijados have also promised to include our worst cases in their psychological programme in November. In our 'prepa' grade however, we had a difficult case, Wilson. Nuestros Ahijados agreed to take him immediately and he has commenced regular therapy.

We cannot begin to express our gratitude to Patrick Atkinson and Jannette Cuellar de Reyes and their wonderful organisation. Please check them out at [www.ana.org.gt](http://www.ana.org.gt).

Earlier this year, we received a donation from a very generous American family, of a huge supply of sports equipment. This has had a tremendous effect on our physical education programme.

In the summer, our boys' football team entered the county championships for ages 10-12 for the first time. In a magnificent effort, they qualified from their group and then got as far as the semi final only losing 2-1 to a late goal after dominating the game for long periods. Well done lads. Let's hope you do even better next year!



**'Escuela Proyecto La Esperanza Football Team'**

## **Dedicated Scholarship and Sponsorship Programme**

In an attempt to create a lasting stability for our projects, we are constantly attempting to attract sponsors for our children. Many of you have become involved in this and we hope that you all find this experience as rewarding as we do as you become more familiar with your 'godchildren'.

In our last report, we told you of our desire to find sponsorship for all our children, thereby securing their future, before moving to our next project. It is with much humility and no little amount of satisfaction that we can report that we have reached our target 3 months ahead of schedule. It is also fantastic to be able to tell you that a small number of multiple sponsors have agreed to sponsor the costs of some of our teachers in the place of the children who were being allocated to them. As a result of this, despite still having some children who require sponsors, we feel we have the solid base of guaranteed annual income to ensure the future funding of our elementary school.

## **New Project 2007**

Just as there are so many charities worthy of your support, there are so many causes worthy of our support in our chosen area. It is no exaggeration to say that we could replicate our first project 100 times over without leaving the environs of Antigua Guatemala and Jocotenango. When it became obvious that we would be able to expand our efforts, we were faced with the dilemma of which project to take on.

As fate often conspires, on our visit to Guatemala in June and July of 2006, we became aware of two important issues;

When children in Guatemala graduate from elementary or primary school, they enter a senior school called 'Basico'. We have been informed there is a possibility that the local education authority is considering closing one of the Basico schools in our area. This would make it very difficult for us to find places for our 2006 year 6 graduates next year.

Secondly, despite the many successes of our most able students, we were finding that some of our 18 students in Basico were underperforming. Our children come from a background of extreme poverty and live in houses not conducive to studying. The resultant lack of encouragement from home, together with the need to be more self motivated in the senior school environment, puts our children at an added disadvantage.

We have tried to improve the situation by bringing the under performing students into our school for one to one help in the afternoons. Going forward this will be inadequate especially as the numbers rise with the 2006 graduates.

For the two reasons stated above, we believe we should expand our activities by opening our own Basico school. This will ensure that there will be places for all our graduates and will also allow us to give the necessary level of discipline and encouragement to our students.

The school, as you would expect, will be fully compliant and authorised by the Ministry of Education and will teach the full National Curriculum.

As a result of our decision to open the new school, we have re-organised our existing scholarships and therefore have children in Escuela Proyecto La Esperanza that still require sponsorship, this along with the new intake for 2007 and the new Basico students means we still require the following;

### **Escuela Proyecto La Esperanza**

Children left to sponsor @ £200 per annum (£16.67 per month) = **55 Children**

Teachers left to sponsor @ £2,400 per annum (£200 per month) = **3 Teachers**

### **New Basico School**

Graduates left to sponsor @ £375 per annum (£31.25 per month) = **59 Scholarships**

Our target is to attract this support during the remainder of this year and early next year. We hope you will help us spread the word of our Foundation and help us to attract like minded kind hearted individuals

### **Events**

Since we last reported to you, we have held a number of successful fundraising events. In February, Gillian Sanderson organised a singing night in Nottingham at Bentons Brasserie, £655 was raised and we thank Gillian for her efforts.

In May, Scion Film Partners organised a fantastic champagne reception at the Cannes Film Festival. In a breathtaking location we raised just under £9,000. Our thanks go to Martin Taylor, Nimesh Kamath, Julia Blackman and Jeff Abberley.

In June, Tommy Johnson organised a golf day at Cotgrave near Nottingham, 21 teams took part with PJD Engineering winning first prize. Thanks to Tommy and also to Colin Tunnicliffe and Pete Douglas for their tremendous help. We raised £9,570.

In August, we were invited to showcase our Foundation at a special charity event in Jersey organised by the 'Le Tournoi' charity. We benefited from a raffle and mini auction and raised £3,800. We have been invited back in October to the gala dinner of the spectacular Le Tournoi Regatta and again hope to raise the profile of the Foundation as well as funds for our expansion. We hope to develop a long term and mutually beneficial relationship with 'Le Tournoi'. Their help to date has been magnificent and they clearly believe in what we are trying to accomplish. Special thanks go to John Hanley, Andy Le Seelleur and their colleagues.

On Friday 17<sup>th</sup> November, we will be having our annual dinner dance at the Hilton East Midlands Airport. The event is being co-ordinated by Tommy Johnson and Emma Denman and we hope you will be able to attend. Please contact Tommy or Emma on 0115 8526688 for details.

Early next year we will be holding a charity event in Dublin. We have had fantastic support in the past from Ireland and on this occasion, Neill Hughes has instigated the event for our benefit. Again, the event will be organised by Tommy and Emma. Special thanks to Neill, Micky McElligott and James Byrne for their help.

### **Planned visits to Guatemala**

So far this year, we have visited in March for 2 weeks and in the summer for 5 weeks. A party of 5 will visit for 2 weeks in October and will be present at the graduation of 2006. As we write to you, we are also holding our breath as Hurricane Season is in full flow. To date we have not had a repeat of last year's Hurricane Stan which devastated the area and we pray this continues.

Given the work to be carried out in preparing the new school, we will be trying to visit in December and will certainly visit again in January 2007 for the first 3 weeks to oversee the opening of the new school.

This month, Robert Hedley of IT Solutions will be visiting Guatemala totally at his own expense to review and improve our office IT and our educational programmes. We do have 30 computer units but they are slow and inefficient and lack some of the necessary software. Robert has also agreed to prepare the new school for IT and try to pull together a remotely operated and maintained internet facility. This is a magnificent gesture and will result in much improved facilities and educational possibilities for our children.

We encourage all of you to visit our project and we would be happy to co-ordinate your travel arrangements and have you shown around. Please do contact us if you would like to go.

## **The Team**

As we grow, we are becoming a victim of our success in that the administration both in the UK and Guatemala grows with us. We are registered charities in both countries and this brings certain obvious reporting requirements. Each event and the task of maintaining the scholarship programme also take a considerable amount of time.

Until now, we have been able to just about manage this through the hard work of our volunteers. Going forward however, it is clear that we need more structured help.

With effect from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2006, Emma Denman has agreed to work full time for the Foundation. We are grateful to Emma for her hard work and in particular, to the large reduction in salary she accepted in order to work for us.

With the added pressure of now having two schools to fund we are also very lucky to have enlisted the help of Tommy Johnson as our events co-ordinator and head of fundraising. Tommy, who is one of the most liked and respected men from football, is an ideal ambassador for the Foundation and we welcome him to the team. Tommy will not receive a salary from the Foundation, however in recognition of his work and commitment we will pay Tommy a small portion of what he raises for the foundation to cover his time and expenses. This will ensure he is not out of pocket but also ensures the foundation is guaranteed to benefit. We are so grateful to him as he, in his words, 'gives a bit back'.

## **Ideas for Christmas**

As Christmas approaches, we will be thinking of what to buy for our loved ones, In recent times there has been a growing trend of making a donation to a favourite charity instead of buying a gift which may or may not be appreciated. Although not a new idea, we would like to make this available through the Foundation. A range of options are available and details are attached at the end of this report.

## **Summary**

We hope you enjoyed reading about what has been happening recently and we hope you approve of how we are spending your money. We never forget how important you are and our responsibility to keep you informed. We never tire of talking about the Foundation and would love to hear from you with your comments or suggestions. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

One again, thank you so much for your support.



'Nancy & Eva'

### **Christmas Gifts**

How can you send a gift to your sponsor child during the Christmas period?

At the beginning of November, you can send your card to the office in Nottingham. We will then arrange for your card to be translated and taken out to Guatemala. At the Christmas party your card will then be handed out to your sponsor child.

If you would like to buy a Christmas present for your sponsor child, please send us up to the amount of \$20 and we will use this to buy a present for your sponsor child. If you send more, the extra will be used to buy gifts for the children whose sponsors were not able to send anything and for those children who do not have a sponsor. We will buy the gifts locally in Guatemala. The gifts will then be handed out to the children at the Christmas party and we will organise photographs so you can see what has been bought.

It is much easier for us if you send money as opposed to presents as we probably wouldn't be able to get them there in time.

If you can include anything extra for those children without a sponsor, please do.