THANKS TO YOU, Child Aid Teacher Training Comes to the Entire School District of San Andrés Semetabaj!

The predominantly Mayan school district of San Andrés Semetabaj is similar to the other districts comprising small, rural communities hugging the mountainsides around Lake Atitlan. Houses have roofs made of corrugated sheet metal and walls of cinder blocks. Many families’ houses have only dirt floors and almost half do not have running water or refrigerators. Most of the mothers have at most a year or two of elementary school; the same is true of about half the fathers. It is thus unsurprising that rates of chronic malnutrition and stunting in these communities are some of the highest in the world.

The poverty in which these children live is the legacy of historical factors, such as war and exploitation, as well as the extreme wealth inequality and corruption that plague Guatemala, hitting hardest in indigenous communities.

The data above come from detailed information currently being collected and shared by the Guatemalan Ministry of Education in a useful effort at transparency. But the District Superintendent of San Andrés Semetabaj, Ever Matzar, knows it in his bones. He daily faces the challenges of poorly trained teachers who struggle with reading and writing themselves, working in schools with few books or materials. He knows that only 40% of students who start school get to 6th grade, and almost half of those have repeated at least one grade along the way.

It is for all these reasons that Matzar agreed to bring Child Aid’s programs into all the schools of his district. Feedback from teachers, after nearly a year of participation, has been overwhelmingly enthusiastic.

The San Andés Semetabaj coat of arms.

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It is for all these reasons that Matzar agreed to bring Child Aid’s programs into all the schools of his district. Feedback from teachers, after nearly a year of participation, has been overwhelmingly enthusiastic. The teachers feel supported by Child Aid trainers, who visit them in their classrooms, provide personal coaching, and give them helpful, respectful feedback. The approval and support of the District Superintendent helps ensure their attendance and full participation, while the intensive coaching after workshops is giving them confidence in their new abilities to transform their classrooms, and keep their charges in school.
raised the money with a dollar drive in 3rd-5th grades and a 5th grader, Rebeca, a Guatemalan American, donated half of her poster contest prize money. We selected the books, because they are the same ones we read! We loved doing this for you!

BEST WISHES,
4th Grade Golden Project

Charms, Inc., of the 7th grade class of the Girls’ Middle School, CA, donates portion of profits

Dear Child Aid,

SURPRISE FROM NYC!
Our PS 51 4th grade Golden Project is proud to present you with this gift. We raised the money with a dollar drive in 3rd-5th grades and a 5th grader, Rebeca, a Guatemalan American, donated half of her poster contest prize money. We selected the books, because they are the same ones we read! We loved doing this for you!

BEST WISHES,
4th Grade Golden Project

Dear Child Aid,

Hi! We are Charms Inc., a 7th grade entrepreneurial team from the Girls’ Middle School. Our Entrepreneurial class is designed to [teach us] to start and manage our own company and business … After the year is over, we choose a charity to donate 20% of our profit to, and we chose Child Aid!

We believe your charity is a perfect fit for us because you help kids get a better education, and we believe that others should get an opportunity to get a great education.

Keep up the great work,
Kyra, Gitika, Claire, & April

Eight-year-old Lily who was born in Guatemala conducts a lemonade fundraiser (“Lemon-aid for Child Aid!”) with her American family

Dear Child Aid,

Lily and her family hosted a lemonade fundraiser last summer, at a time when Guatemalan minors illegally crossing the border to the US, many unaccompanied, were making headlines. Lily’s mother said, “We wanted to donate the money to a charity helping the children who are migrating illegally, but then we thought, better to give to an organization like Child Aid, whose work could prevent this situation from arising in the first place.”
Your Donations Put Books in the Hands of Children throughout Guatemala!

With workshops and book donations, Child Aid supports community libraries throughout Guatemala. At a book distribution event this May, we increased our network: 13 new libraries and 17 new schools attended the workshop, receiving 2,500 books each. Many participants wrote to thank Child Aid, and to share the significance the books will have for their communities. We would like to share a few of these letters of gratitude with you, our donors, because YOU make these events possible!

(Spanish letters translated by Child Aid staff)

From San Sebastián Coatán, Huehuetenango:

My thanks to you for your valuable cooperation donating books here in the village of San José, municipality of San Sebastián Coatán, of the department of Huehuetenango. Thank you for inviting us; know that we are very grateful to you, and grateful to the organizers of this charity that promotes the development of education....

Yours faithfully,
Bartolomé Bartolomé Martín
San Sebastián Coatán

From the department of Santa Rosa:

I send you warm greetings, and congratulate you on such a grand collaboration with the Community Libraries Project of Guatemala.

The books are already in the community libraries, thanks to the attention and good work of the CHILD AID workers, who are pillars that give opportunities to many children and adults – people who were marginalized by not having the resources to gain access to a decent education. Thanks to your support today, we have thousands of diverse books, and children, students, and many others will be able to access them.

I thank you for the opportunity you give us to form a better society.

Yours faithfully,
Brayans Pineda
Promotor Proyecto Bibliotecas Comunitarias De Guatemala

From the Guatemalan Highlands:

I just learned from our Project Coordinator that your organization donated over 2,500 books to our organization! This is an amazing addition to our project. We feel so fortunate to have connected with Child Aid. We hope to inspire the love of reading in the children in San Antonio Aguas Calientes....

Thank you so much for the books!
Cindy Schneider
Nueva Generación

Many photos were sent along with thanks from a principal in Huehuetenango.

From San Antonio Huista, Huehuetenango:

Greetings from Professor Luis Felipe!

I would like to share with you the success of the donation of books from CHILD AID to the National Institute of Diversified Education.

The photos you see are of the children and primary school teachers who are impressed with the results of this book donation. We will give continuity to this first step, and are planning another such event that will include the parents. I hope you like this idea, and will collaborate with us again. This library will be shared with many children.

With gratitude,
Professor Luis Felipe Lucas López
Principal, Instituto Nacional de Educación Diversificada

Girls enjoy new books in San Antonio Huista, Huehuetenango.
Transparency is very important to us at Child Aid. Our Charity Navigator Four-Star rating reflects this commitment: our Accountability & Transparency score is 100%. Child Aid is also a GuideStar Exchange Gold Level Participant, which indicates the highest level of transparency possible for nonprofit organizations.

Child Aid’s score for financials on Charity Navigator is 99%. Our financial rating benefited from the large number of books donated to us last year. Organizations that receive gift-in-kind donations, like food banks, have an advantage over organizations that don’t rely on such gifts. In years when fewer books are donated to us, our Charity Navigator score suffers slightly. The number of books we received last year was close to 70,000; their gift-in-kind value was $1,222,578. Thank you, International Book Bank & International Book Project!

And thanks to YOU, our donors, who made it possible for us to deliver books to schools and libraries, and to help the librarians and teachers in our program use them to excite children about reading.

New Video: Inside Child Aid
You Have Made an Effective Program Possible

Our latest video brings you closer than ever to the process of Child Aid training and techniques, and shows you why more and more schools are requesting our programs! Watch it here: child-aid.org/video_teacher_training/ (in Spanish: child-aid.org/espanol/noticias-y-medios/fotos-y-video/). It describes the chronic shortage of trained, skilled teachers in primary schools, and contains footage of typical Guatemalan schools with dirt floors and corrugated metal walls, and children learning by rote in dusty, crowded classrooms. Teachers in these classrooms have received little training, and often themselves read at only a 6th-grade level.

Child Aid’s programs are based on a simple idea: to have a lasting impact on education in Guatemala, you must have skillful and effective teachers. Child Aid-trained teachers transform their classrooms.

Graciela Pichiya, a Kaqchikel senior staff member who speaks several Mayan languages on top of Spanish, notes: “Every day there are more schools that want our help, because the teachers and principals realize that it is something new and interesting that we’re doing...I feel that this is an innovative idea, and worth betting on, to improve education in Guatemala!”

Literacy Trainer and Supervisor Jeremias Morales reviews techniques with a teacher in the classroom. Literacy Trainer Marilena Ixen answers a teacher’s questions as they prepare a lesson. Because of your contributions, teachers like this one are transforming their classrooms.