



## **2021--A New Year Full of Challenges and Dreams**

In Guatemala, the academic year begins at the end of January as does our work with our students. It's been marked by challenges which the COVID pandemic continues to impose. But there's also much enthusiasm and optimism. This year we are supporting 93 students, about 10 more than in 2020, and each one is an inspiration. You can see their names and other personal information on our Student Roster at the end of this bulletin.

Except for students in final stages of medical school who are doing their hospital residencies in person and their theory classes virtually, classes continue on-line. So, there's the challenge of having to study isolated from classmates and being dependent on technological resources, e.g. internet access and a computer. On the face of it, these things would seem to facilitate learning, but for many of our students it is complicated because they live in very remote areas where internet service is of poor quality. In addition, the economic effects of the pandemic have hit the poorest people the hardest, making it difficult for each student to acquire a computer in order to adequately study. That's why our program has had to help with the purchase of computers for several students -- something we did not do in the past due to the huge expense. But now it's become necessary.

Because of the isolation caused by the pandemic, our program continues to offer emotional support to the students.

There are monthly sessions with each one of them, during which we not only learn about their academic progress, but also listen to more about their lives, personal problems, family problems, their dreams, etc. On occasion, our conversations have been almost like psychotherapy sessions as we listened to some very serious emotional trauma. Now we are realizing this support is also necessary for our students. Rarely do they have anyone with whom they can share their problems--someone who understands without passing judgement. This year we decided to supplement this work with virtual activities including personal sharing in addition to motivational and personal development opportunities. Also, we continue offering workshops every two weeks during which our own students, invited guests, and our staff are present. All of this is meant to continue to offer a sense of community and support for the students. They've told us that all of it has been valuable for them. We know there are many challenges, but we believe in our students and in the support from each one of you. Each time that you decide to donate to our program, you support not only a student, but also families and entire communities because our students are multipliers of the investment made in them. During upcoming months, we will explore new ideas with the students and with you, our donors, so watch for more news. Thank you for helping us create new leaders and agents of change for Guatemala!!

## Our students, our inspiration. Get to know some of them.

**Wilmer Aram Ajú**, is a 28-year-old young man, from Santa Lucía Utatlán, Sololá, and this year he is studying the fourth year of musical education. His passion for music and the efforts he has made to achieve his dreams are inspiring. From a very young age, he wanted to study music, but his poverty prevented him from doing so. His father abandoned him and his mother when he was a baby, so his mother was the only support for him. In high school, he wanted to start studying music, but it was very expensive, so he had to choose something different and more accessible for him. Thus, he studied to be a bookkeeper, and upon graduation he began working as a cashier. With his first salary, he managed to buy a guitar and thus began his learning of music. He learned to play other instruments on his own, and a few years later he met some Mayan music researchers,



which fascinated him and awakened in him the desire to learn more about his own culture through art. Finally, at the age of 25, he was able to enter college to study music, and there he continued to learn more about Mayan music. Now, Aram not only performs Mayan music but also makes traditional musical instruments such as ocarinas and flutes. In addition, he gives workshops on Mayan music and art to young people from different groups. He believes that music is an important means of expression and a way to keep the Mayan culture alive. His dreams are to specialize in Mayan music, create a cultural center to promote culture, and make music accessible to everyone.

We want to find a sponsor for Aram who can support him in his efforts to spread the Mayan culture through art. The estimated costs of it per year are \$1,100. If you want to support him, please write to us. Thank you very much!

**Candy Gabriela Saquic**, is from Chichicastenango, in the department of El Quiché. She is 19 years old and comes from a humble family in rural Guatemala. She is currently studying the first year of Professional Nursing at Rafael Landívar University which is approximately two hours away. Due to the situation of the pandemic, her year will be virtual, but when she returns to face-to-face classes, she will have to travel every weekend to receive her classes.

Candy's main reason for studying nursing is that she has realized the lack of health personnel that exists within the communities. When she was young, her father suffered an accident, and due to not having adequate services, he was left with a permanent impairment in one of his legs. Despite this, her parents sent her and her 3 brothers to school, but a university education was beyond their means. In these months, Candy has shown great enthusiasm for her classes. She has learned many new things and has become more committed to the dream of supporting the people in her community through her knowledge of health.

We are also looking for a sponsor for Candy this school year. Her costs for this year will be approximately \$1100, although it could be a little more if she returns to face-to-face classes.



### **Visit our new fan page on Facebook!**

We have created a fan page on Facebook in order to be more effective as an organization. You can find us as **“Asociación Progresá Quakers”**, just click on the “Like” button to see our content. Our current Facebook wall “Progresá Quakers” will be closed to the general public by September 1<sup>st</sup>.

## Benefits we are already reaping through our students:

At Progresia we believe that by investing in the education of individuals we increase assistance to others. Our community service program has accomplished hundreds of projects benefiting many communities. And, many students carry out these activities on their own which achieves important change and fills us with satisfaction. Here we share a few examples:

**Jairo Andree Lemus Marchorro** is 23, and this is his second year studying anthropology. He lives in Mixco, a city immediately adjacent to the greater Guatemala City metro area. Although he is Ladino, i.e. not indigenous, he has become very interested in studying and preserving the Poqomam culture which is the ethnic group in his city. Photography is one of his passions, and he has documented many of the city's cultural events through photography. A few weeks ago, he was recognized for his collaboration with two cultural journals: *Traditions of Guatemala* and *Popular Tradition*. In one of these, he offered a photographic series on the Cofradía de la Virgen Rezadora de Riyu' which is an expression of Poqomam culture. (*Cofradía* is a sisterhood or brotherhood, often with religious overtones.) In another, he contributed a series showing traditional Poqomam dress, particularly of the men which has almost completely disappeared. Jairo emphasizes that there's an opportunity for youth to document and record important historical processes of this community through creating photographic evidence.



Jairo with his Poqomam costume celebrating the Cofradía.



**Efraín Mendoza Pablo** is 26 and is in the fifth year of a math and physics major. Efraín lives in Comunidad Primavera de Ixcán which was formed by people in resistance, i.e. families who survived the civil war by hiding in the mountains without giving up their lands. Efraín is very talented musically including as a composer, often singing about social themes and making social criticisms. He has participated in a variety of events with communities who continue the struggle for social justice particularly around defending their lands and natural resources. He believes that his artistry helps youth know about and get involved in defending their rights. He is also a phenomenal mathematician. This year the university recognized him for his excellent academic performance in 2020. The best part is that Efraín has offered various supportive math and physics programs for students in his very remote community.

**Osman Edgardo Alarcón Berganza** is 26 and is from a community in Ipala, Chiquimula in eastern Guatemala. He is in the fourth year of a political science degree. Besides studying politics, he has become very interested in environmentalism and conservation. So, along with a group of fellow students, he participated in a UNICEF social action project through a program known as Upshift. It involves development of techniques and skills for social innovation. Osman and his group proposed creating a gaming app with environmental themes through which children learn characteristics of local plants, how to create a virtual "nursery", and how to maintain ecological balance. They were awarded a small prize of \$2000 to develop the app. Osman hopes that the kids learn the importance of preserving native plants. He also hopes to motivate them to create nurseries and to support conservation and the environment.



## Our Graduates: Stories which make us proud and motivate us:

**Martín Morales Salazar** is from the Quiché Department and was in the program from 2018-19 studying bilingual/intercultural education. This was a major effort for his family which is very large. Nevertheless, with much happiness, he succeeded in graduating last month. Recently, he finished working for the Guatemalan Academy of Mayan Languages, and now he works for ASUVI, the United for Life Association where he is a partner. ASUVI is dedicated to promoting development projects in the most neglected communities in Quiché and Totonicapán Departments. Martín works on getting water filters into various schools in these provinces, insuring the students' right to drinkable water at school. With the schools closed due to the pandemic crisis, ASUVI helps the community install pipes for clean water to community members' homes.

Martín is committed to the dream of bringing drinkable water to all schools in his province, thereby, insuring the health of thousands of children. His future plan is to do a Master's Degree in Project Planning and Evaluation.



**Yessenia Sales Morales**, is 26 and from San Ildefonso Ixtahuacán. She received financial aid through our program from 2016-2020 to study social work. A few weeks ago, we received the happy news about her graduation along with her gratitude for our support. Although she just graduated, she's been working for some years on development in her community through an organization called Afopadi. It focuses on leadership training in management and empowerment of women and youth. Recently, it provided support for a construction project of water cisterns, by creating agreements with community leaders to help them educate the people on the conscientious use of water.

All of this was done in the Mayan language of Mam because many leaders do not speak Spanish. Our congratulations to Yessenia!



**Edgar Crisanto Xiquín**, is from San Juan Sacatepéquez, a town near Guatemala City. In 1999 and 2000, he was provided with a scholarship for secondary studies to become an electrical technician. His story is a clear example of what Progreso has achieved and wants to achieve with our students. He comes from a simple family background and was the first in his family to finish secondary education. Upon graduation, he got some temporary jobs but nothing particularly remarkable. That motivated him to work as an independent contractor and, after a while, he was able to establish his own electrical service business which allowed him to help his two younger siblings to continue studying.

Then he was able to buy some land and build a small house for himself and his parents. Later he could offer employment to others in his community. In 2006, he married and now has three children. His wife studied fashion and dressmaking, and, with Edgar's help, started a small clothing and accessories production shop. Edgar told us he is very grateful to Progreso and especially to Lester Lacelle because the opportunity he received changed his life, that of his family and for others in his community.

## 2021 Progresa Student Roster

### UNIVERSITY LEVEL (87 Students)

Major / Names	Age	Language
<b>Medicine</b>		
1 Alma Irene López Mendoza	18	Jakalteco
2 Ana María Ortiz García	25	Spanish
3 Brenda Leticia Saloj Palax	22	Kaqchikel
4 Cristian I. Monterroso de León	20	Spanish
5 Daril Zulyvan Ovalle Rodríguez	20	Spanish
6 Elder Fernando Tuyuc Semeya	21	Kaqchikel
7 Emerson David Vivar Valdéz	24	Spanish
8 Emily Yiuliana Simón Ajú	19	Kaqchikel
9 Jairo Amariel Xocop Chuta	24	Kaqchikel
10 Juan Pablo Tecún Bolon	26	Spanish
11 Leslye Elizabeth Cárcamo E.	20	Spanish
12 María Julia Pineda Meléndres	22	Spanish
13 Rut Yessenia Ibaté Cuá	23	Kaqchikel
14 Verónica Cristina Saquic Ola	20	K'iche'
15 Yóscelin F. Hernández Delgado	27	Poptí
<b>Nursing</b>		
1 Elgar Dionel López López	24	Achi
2 Concepción Damián Chicajau	25	Tz'utujil
3 Juan Alex Humberto Jor Xol	22	Q'eqchi'
4 Candy Gabriela Saquic Conoz	20	K'iche'
5 Juana Hermelinda Chaj Pastor	25	K'iche'
6 María Baltazar Baltazar	27	Chuj
7 Rosario Evarista Say García	19	K'iche'
8 Luisa Florinda Tzunux Joj	24	K'iche'
9 Nelson Ernesto Sam Caal	20	Q'eqchi'
10 Rut Noemí Román Tahuico	20	Achi
<b>Social work</b>		
1 Magdalena Toma y Toma	31	Ixil
2 Consuelo Carrillo Sánchez	32	Ixil
3 Juana Ofelia Cocom Tzoc	28	K'iche'
4 Julia Nicolasa Santiago Pérez	30	Ixil
5 María Elena Ixchel Patux Acual	23	Kaqchikel
6 Nora Verónica Sabán Car	24	Kaqchikel
7 Pamela Macedonia Toledo F.	22	Sacapulteko
8 Petrona Ixcoy Baten	22	K'iche'
9 Sara Leticia Socón Morales	27	Kaqchikel

Major / Names	Age	Language
<b>Agronomy</b>		
1 Elizabeth Noemí Ajanel López	22	K'iche'
2 Jacobo Roderico López	28	Spanish
3 Juan José Luis Toyon Tum	31	Mam
4 Karen Esther Quib Bol	23	Q'eqchi'
5 Marta Lidia López Hernández	26	Awakateko
6 Simeón Cosigua Saloj	28	Kaqchikel
7 Rosa Amalia Vásquez González	24	Achi
8 Alvaro R. Franklin Ichich Can	21	Q'eqchi'
<b>B.S. in education</b>		
1 Vilma Leticia Chón Tul	31	Q'eqchi'
2 Santos Simeona Pu Castro	27	K'iche'
3 Zulmy V. González Canahui	23	Spanish
4 Ana María López Colaj	35	Kaqchikel
5 Dina Patricia Parabal Morales	30	Kaqchikel
6 María Teresa Joj Lux	30	K'iche'
<b>Law</b>		
1 Jhony E. Otoy Sajbochol	24	Kaqchikel
2 Brenda Yuliza Jocholá Boch	25	Kaqchikel
3 Bryan Regilson Mac Pacay	20	Poqomchi'
4 Edgar Francisco Cop Santay	26	K'iche'
<b>Math and physics</b>		
1 Alonzo Magnolio Aguilar R.	32	Q'anjob'al
2 Orfany Odilí Salazar Velíz	23	Spanish
3 Efraín Mendoza Pablo	26	Mam
4 Fidel Alexander Lúe Són	26	Kaqchikel
<b>Psychology</b>		
1 Griselda Elizabeth Sol Cajbón	37	Kaqchikel
2 Alejandra B. Gómez Guzmán	28	Ixil
3 Vilma del Rosario Mayén	26	Spanish
4 Yuri Nicolasa Coché Pablo	24	Tz'utujil
<b>Criminology</b>		
1 Lizmenia Angeles Avila Ortiz	21	Spanish
2 María Isabel Saloj Raxic	19	Kaqchikel
3 Dominga Janelly Tomás Felipe	19	Sacapulteko
<b>Accounting (CPA)</b>		
1 Irma Elizabeth Tuyuc Salazar	26	Kaqchikel
2 María Elisa Tziná Sapalú	23	Tz'utujil

## SECONDARY LEVEL (6 Students)

Major / Names	Age	Language
<b>Secondary teaching</b>		
1 Alba Azucena Chitic Guarcas	23	Kaqchikel
2 José Tzib Tut	33	Q'eqchi'
<b>Music teaching</b>		
1 Wilmer Aram Ajú	28	K'iche'
2 Yoselin Yesenia Larias Larios	21	K'iche'
<b>Systems engineering</b>		
1 Gela Karina Chumil Cosiguá	20	Kaqchikel
2 Mariano Jesús Sunuc Tuyuc	21	Kaqchikel
<b>Forestry</b>		
1 Obdulio Riha' Cho Coc	19	Q'eqchi'
2 Yeniffer G. Chiquin Carbonell	20	Q'eqchi'
<b>Industrial psychology</b>		
1 Gloria Noemí Quel López	21	Spanish
2 Lesly Patricia Valle Hernández	25	Spanish
<b>Anthropology</b>		
1 Jairo Andreé Lemus Marchorro	23	Poqomam
<b>Biology</b>		
1 Thelma Y. Tacán Cochoy	20	K'iche'
<b>Political science</b>		
1 Osman E. Alarcón Berganza	26	Spanish
<b>Special education</b>		
1 Manuela Wendy Ramirez Cotiy	30	K'iche'
<b>Physiotherapy</b>		
1 Elida Gabriela Teletor Jiménez	20	Achi
<b>Business administration</b>		
1 Juana Janeth Ramírez Pablo	22	Tz'utujil
<b>Chemistry and pharmacy</b>		
1 Kevyn Francisco Sánchez	29	Spanish
<b>Sociolinguistics</b>		
1 Beberlin Paola Aju Upun	21	Kaqchikel
<b>Sociology</b>		
1 Ana Lucrecia Popol Estrada	27	Kaqchikel
<b>Electric engineering</b>		
1 Nahúm Abisaí Xirum	18	Spanish
<b>Veterinary medicine</b>		
1 Samuel Eduardo López Yaxcal	26	Q'eqchi'
<b>Animal husbandry</b>		
1 Adilene Analí Mérida González	27	Mam

Major / Names	Age	Language
<b>Pre-primary teaching</b>		
1 Glenda M. Marroquín Parada	18	Spanish
2 Glenda E. Patzan Vasquez	19	Kaqchikel
3 Irma Marisol Joj Cac	18	K'iche'
<b>Agronomy</b>		
1 Eddy Gabriel Car Chocoj	18	Kaqchikel
2 Evelyn Yesenia Méndez Díaz	17	Mam
<b>Bookkeeping</b>		
1 Aura Gricelda Granados Jacobo	19	Spanish

### Some data about our 2021 students

- ▶ This year we are supporting 64 women (69%) and 29 men (31%). This is very important for us and our mission, since women have had less access to higher education.
- ▶ 74 students (80%) speak a Mayan language and Spanish. They belong to 15 different linguistic groups.
- ▶ 19 students (20%) speak Spanish only; at least 5 of them, however, are indigenous, too. This means the real number of indigenous students is at least 79, which represents 85% of our student population.
- ▶ We are supporting 87 students at the university level, in 27 different majors. The most popular majors are medicine, nursing, social work, agronomy, and B.S. in education.
- ▶ Only 6 students are at the secondary level in three different majors or specializations. 5 of these students are women.

This year we accepted 100 students in our program, but several of them were not able to enter college due to different reasons. In spite of this, we have about 10 students more than in 2020.

### Many thanks for your donations, which makes all this work possible!

You can make out your checks to: Redwood Forest Friends Meeting and write "Guatemala Scholarship Program" in the memo section of your check. Mail your donations to:

Redwood Forest Friends Meeting  
Attn: Guatemala Scholarship Program  
P.O. Box 1831, Santa Rosa, CA 95402

You can also make donations via PayPal or with your credit/debit card at:

<http://www.guatemalafriends.org/donate>