



Karitas

"Building Bridges, Celebrating Community"

www.karitasfoundation.org

IN THEIR OWN WORDS / VOICES OF GRATITUDE

Dear Karitas Family and Friends,

Greetings and blessings. The narrators of this year's newsletter are the people who are living the story: choosing to be hopeful, animated by shared vision, creative in planning and dedicated in their collaboration. Amazing people! They are sharing a bit of their personal story, a profile of their communities and projects, and the future they are envisioning together. Spend a moment looking at their faces. Pronounce their names. I wish you could meet them in person. They'd be quick to say, "mi casa es tu casa." Betsy and I have been welcomed to many of their very modest homes. Someone once called it "reverse mission" the line between donor and recipient, so-called giver and receiver blurred. We call donors "financial partners" – because each of you becomes a character in the life-transforming narrative, in-filled by the witness of this remarkable marginal population.

Appreciatively,

Howard

Young men haul pails of cement to our a new roof



Erik and Sarapio on the doorstep of his new home

KARITAS AND EARTHQUAKE RESPONSE Solidarity with devastated villages

After a year of community collaboration, networking and hard work, Karitas and partners are rehabilitating and re-building homes for the families of Xoxocotla

I am Serapio Villa Eulogio. I live on Benito Juárez Street, a private alley, in the village of Xoxocotla, Morelos. I am 66 years old and I used to live in our simple home with five other members of my family. During the earthquake our house was completely destroyed. Maybe you have seen the photo with me and my grandson sitting on a pile of stones, in your last year's newsletter, all that remained of that house. There are Erik and I in the doorway of our new home. On October 8th we had our usual Sunday roof pouring party. Erik took the photo below of the young men hauling cement to the roof. Howard and Betsy joined the afternoon fiesta. We are almost ready to move back in! My neighbors tell me I inspire them and am an example to them: Never give up; unite different generations in the collective work; and, stay together through shared tasks and gatherings.



SAPECO
a micro-economic development project, was Karitas' first venture 25 years ago. Encouraging and nurturing worker/owner cooperatives.

My name is Rodolfo Medina. I started working at one of SAPECO's shops in 1993. I had worked in several other shops in Cuernavaca, but no one gave me the opportunity to advance. I had gone to the US to work, that only lasted four months, when my son became very sick and had to return home. Our son recovered, and I was considering returning to the US to work, but I came to work with the first SAPECO shop instead. In less than a year, they decided to expand to a new location and invited me to be a partner. I worked hard and took advantage of every possibility to learn, not only about being a qualified technician, but also management, sales and accounting abilities. A few years later, with Karitas support and guidance, I began my own shop and was soon able to buy a property. I welcome every opportunity to show appreciation to Karitas. We always invite Erik and his family to all our family events. When the ALEM bus transmission went out, I saw an opportunity to give back and replaced it. (That would have been a four thousand dollar repair. Rodolfo would not accept a cent, not even for the repair parts).

ALEM

its workshop team in wheelchairs, designing, fabricating and repairing wheelchairs, has received literal global recognition through Rotary International.

My name is Rosy (Roselia Roman Sanchez). I was born with congenital scoliosis that keeps me in a wheelchair. Nevertheless, as a child, I would play ball and hide and seek; run and jump and climb trees with my friends. As I grew up, my family expected me to get married by 21, become a mom, and stay at home to raise a family. That's what women do. Not me!

I work at ALEM, a place where people who are physically challenged repair wheelchairs. I am thrilled that our team of twelve will visit 22 locations for three day road trips in 2018, reaching our goal of 5,000 repairs. I am the Coordinator of the Welding Department at ALEM. Visitors or customers cannot believe it when I, a woman, lower my welding helmet and go to work!

I am a woman who is proud of what she does and who she is. Thank you Karitas and ALEM. Thank you each and all. One more thing . . . I have boyfriend!

www.alem.org.mx



Rosy welds carbon steel, stainless steel and aluminum

View our documentary GIFTS OF PARTNERSHIP on www.karitasfoundation.org

LA ESTACIÓN

Karitas continues its 25 years in La Estacion, a squatters' settlement with a daily breakfast program, a pre-school and an active community center

Hello, I am Brenda Cárdenas Solano. I am 24 years old and have participated in this La Estacion project for about 20 years. My mother used to bring us to have breakfast. They made hot breakfasts, as they do now. Eggs, meat, potatoes and orange juice. I used to sit at these same tables. Now, years later, I've been bringing my daughters to breakfast.

I thank Karitas who has sponsored the community breakfast and the children's kindergarten for 19 years, where right now there are 125 children studying. I have also been learning here at the community center, which has also been provided by Karitas, through its many workshops. Since they built it, my colleagues and I have been learning in workshops on self-esteem, raising our children, nutritious meal preparation and dealing with drug and alcohol addiction. We have also learned silk screening, knitting napkins, making shoes and moccasins, baking artistic pastries, making organic soaps and creams in decorated little glass containers – which we can sell at church fairs and sidewalk sales.

I am very grateful because thanks to these workshops I have extra family income that has improved the quality of life for my family. I am very grateful to Karitas and I thank you all.



Brenda and her two daughters



Camelia (35), Emiliano (39),
Emiliano (13) Iván (8)

AN EDUCATION INITIATIVE

La Jugarreta is our Education Initiative project partner in Tepoztlán, where there are now fifteen student participants and their families.

We are the Flores Rivera family, we live in the neighborhood of San José, in the municipality of Tepoztlán, State of Morelos. My husband, Emiliano, is a bricklayer, I am a housewife. My son Emiliano jr. is in his second year of secondary school. We have been participating in the Education Initiative Program for a year and half. He placed third in overall school performance in his group. Since he joined the program, he is less shy and has learned to work on a team. He has more friends. We like the program because it supports the young people with math and English workshops, which are very important. As Emiliano Jr. says, “I am in my second year of high school and the program allows me to take chemistry and math classes when I need support.” Moms and dads receive parenting workshops, where I learned to really listen to my sons. It has been very useful to improve my relationship with my children. The support of Karitas has been important for Emiliano, economically and for his development. Also for the whole family. It is a great help that you are giving us. Thank you.

Consider becoming a financial partner, with the emphasis on “partner,” rather than merely donor or contributor. We love it when a relationship forms between those who offer financial support and the people being supported. A spirit of engagement and reciprocity.

I am Nevan. Joining a mission delegation, I visited all Karitas projects, the people's imagination and collaboration touching my heart. In my Muslim faith there is a tradition called *Zakat*: Every household asked to give two and a half percent of its accumulated wealth to the poor, needy and others. All things, money and wealth, originate from God so we are only hold them as custodians in this life and we are required to return them to the larger community.

My name is Eaven, I live in Northern California and am forty years old. I was raised in a church with a robust mission commitment. My youth group work trips had a lasting impression, giving back to those in need with time and money. Blessed with vocational success, I've found an effective pathway towards helping those in need through supporting Karitas and their mission. My company makes matching grants to accompany employee donations.

We are Steve and Janet, long-time financial partners of Karitas. As business people we appreciate their goal-focused success: short term benefits improving physical lives and long term success raising pride and self-worth. Jewish tradition calls it *Tikkun Olam*: "repairing the world." A call to generosity responding to the needs of fellow human beings who are struggling, making the world a better place for all. Karitas embodies this directive better than any NGO with which we have partnered. Please join us in this mission.

We are the Kunda family: Tim, Susie, Madeleine and Olivia. Joining a Family Mission delegation 17 years ago, our daughters 6 and 8, we had a deeply moving experience. Our hearts were particularly claimed by the little pre-school in La Estacion. Joined by a small circle of friends, we initiated the work in La Estacion, helping the breakfast program begin and working to re-claim the failing pre-school. We continue to financially support this wonderful project.

DONOR TESTIMONIES

I am Ellen Moeller, a member of St. John's Presbyterian Church, and participated in a Mission Delegation two years ago. La Estacion kids jumped into my lap; obviously poor and struggling families welcomed us into their homes with warm hospitality; children and their families in the Education Initiative prepared a bountiful picnic for us. My life will be forever different because of that trip. We have been delighted to help financially support the Karitas Foundation.

We are Roberto and Tamara Newell who live in Mexico City and Cuernavaca. We have appreciated the work of Karitas for two decades. Members of our church have been volunteers at Caminando Unidos, everything from raised bed gardening to extensive dental work, English classes and teaching carpentry skills. It has been the Education Initiative that claimed our financial partnership. We love watching the work of Karitas continue to deepen and expand.

I am Elizabeth Anton a steady, decades-long donor to the work of Karitas in Mexico. I read every word of the bi-monthly mini-newsletters and look forward to the annual year-end edition. This work is thrilling to me! Being in my ninth decade, I have decided to plan for a gift-continuation plan. A fund has been set aside to be administrated by my children but to include Karitas in its distributions.



Dear Partners in Action,

Another year of the privilege to serve. It seems like as top structures of our world are decaying and crumbling, the very bottom is solidifying, uniting and finding a voice. We have been and are a channel to support the growth and well-being of those who are struggling, yet we may also be a channel for their wisdom to reach us in these challenging times that call for a more integrated approach to life and the structures of society. I think our work is not just about investing in their future and well-being, but it is about investing in the survival and well-being of all of us.

Erik Friend

BECOME A FINANCIAL PARTNER

Open our website: karitasfoundation.org and click the Donate button. You can donate by Paypal or credit card. Send a check to Karitas, 1275 Rose Lane, Berwyn, PA 19312

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