



Karitas

"Building Bridges, Celebrating Community"

www.karitasfoundation.org

ENRICHING THE PRESENT / TRANSFORMING FUTURES

Dear Friends of Karitas,

I have been looking for a word. A single word that might profile the impact of Karitas, particularly in this past year. It came to me as I was falling asleep last night. The word is CATALYST. The origin of the word is from chemistry: "a substance that creates or increases a chemical reaction between other substances." But it is the more everyday definition that I have in mind: "a person or group that precipitates activity by two or more other persons or groups that causes positive change." Synonyms include: activate, transform, impetus, incentive and motivation. Being a catalyst has become pivotal in a number of occasions this year.

Karitas a catalyst for a German corporation funding a second pure water project . . . for the mayor of Cuernavaca to make a substantial contribution to ALEM . . . two popular Mexican actors, Diego Luna and Gael García, to accelerate post-earthquake home rebuilding . . . numerous Rotary club initiatives . . . 186 wheelchairs for children with cerebral palsy . . . Fire trucks from Minneapolis . . .

An equation comes to mind: Presence + Partnership + Trust. We have been a presence in these communities for 25 years. We have always worked in partnership, more *with* than *for*. Across these decades a deep trust has formed.

If we were to write of everything Karitas has done in the past year, we'd need four more pages. Count it as an honor and a source of deep meaning and satisfaction to be partners in this endeavor.

Con cariño
Howard

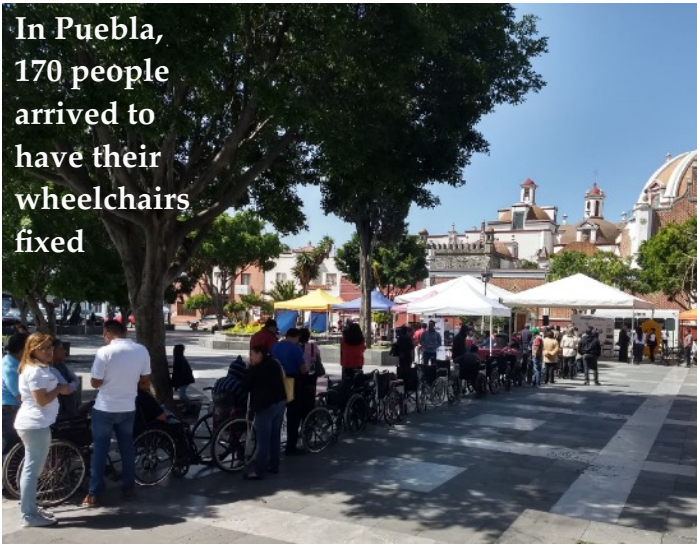


PURE WATER, UN-IMAGINABLE...UNTIL NOW

Thanks to the enthusiastic partnership of Karitas, the Phoenix-Camelback Rotary Club and their district, and the Cuernavaca Juarez Rotary Club the "Channeling the Water Project" has installed a rainwater harvest, storage and purification system at the elementary school of Santo Domingo Ocotitlan. The photo above shows the complexity of the installation! Before this project the five ancient public water pumps designed to provide water for the community managed an average of just two hours a week! This new system captures and stores rooftop water in the rainy season, enough to feed the purification system year round. Each child can return home at the end of school with a day's supply of pure water at home.

Other communities are so excited about the results of this project it is poised to be replicated in a third (perhaps fourth or fifth) regional school district. The Karitas / Rotary partnership is actively linking clubs in both the U.S. and Mexico.

In Puebla,
170 people
arrived to
have their
wheelchairs
fixed



SAPECO

NATURE ENTREPRENEURS

From Earth to Market

SAPECO, the first of now five Karitas projects, has the longest acronym: Servicio Asesoría para Pequeñas Empresas y Cooperativas (Small Business & Cooperative Advisory Service). The first worker owner cooperative, Frisan Automotriz, a transmission repair shop, opened 25 years ago. We are unsure of the number, but there are more than 25 micro-economic businesses operating. More recently exciting “micro-micro” opportunities have emerged. We’re calling them “nature entrepreneurs.” And many are children! They harvest nearby nature resources and grow them into small businesses. Several are “works in progress.”

Worm Composting, Bountiful Harvests and Caminando Unidos

To increase productivity its gardens, the young people in Caminando Unidos began to produce worm compost. It produces more compost faster – its high value with potentially profitable commercial production. These same schools in the same towns are exploring such a venture. A lower cost venture, the primary question is the proximity of potential markets for the compost.

ALEM

If we would have planned it, it would be smaller

ALEM: Ten years ago I watched as eight young people in wheelchairs, circled up, then dropped from their chairs to the floor. In the middle was a broken wheelchair and a mechanic. First he taught them to dismantle that wheelchair, using an array of coffee cans and jars to hold the hardware being removed. Then he helped them identify the problem with the chair and how to fix it. In an hour all the containers were empty and the chair was reassembled. They had repaired their first wheelchair. They chose the name ALEM, an acronym in Spanish: *Autonomy, Freedom in Movement*.

Fast forward a decade. A first year they repaired 100 chairs. A few years later a thousand. Last year 3,000, with 4,000 the goal for this year. The repair cost is \$30: \$15 for labor paid by the client and \$15 for parts paid by Karitas. Do the math: 100 chairs/\$1500 budget for parts . . . 1,000/\$15,000 . . . 3,000/\$45,000 . . . 4,000/\$60,000. Our expense budget, the total gifts of our financial partners, cannot continue to fund the parts budget past 3,000. To add to the “problem” Rotary International is poised to provide a \$75,000 grant to train and tool a new team to reach Mexico City and the surrounding area – more than doubling the population we serve. An awesome possibility, but more of the “problem.” We need \$50,000 in new donors if we are to underwrite the present, and then fund the potential increase in this mission to the poor of repairing their wheels. I wish you could see the smiles on the faces of 4 to 94 year olds as they are back on the road.

www.alem.org.mx



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



La Estación

CELEBRATING OUR VERY FIRST PROJECT

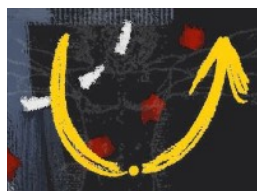
The story is worth re-telling, as it is so typical our other project's founding stories. In 2001 four families formed a Family Mission Trip – kid ages 6-15. One morning we visited La Estacion, a huge squatters' settlement in downtown Cuernavaca. We entered Maria's house – a structure of plywood, sheet metal, a bed spring wired together to make a "house." It was "home" to Maria and her four kids. The three older kids made money washing window at traffic lights or carrying bricks for a mason, she shared. Tim spotted a length of rope tied to the foot or a bed and asked Maria about it. Her head tipped down and she said nothing at first. Then, with embarrassment in her voice, she explained. "Sometimes I get a chance to do some house cleaning or ironing. Just for a few hours. So I tie the leg of my four year old to the rope, and leave her water and snacks." Later, as we walked back, Tim said, "My heart has been aching. Now it's broken open." When Tim got home he raised \$12,000 from his tennis group to add a playground to the pre-school and explore starting to provide breakfast for the children. Karitas underwrites most of the cost of the pre-school teachers, the enrollment at 150. And the breakfast program now feed 150 kids a hearty breakfast. Fresvinda Arellano, who supervises our work in La Estacion, recently wrote, "I lead the community center, Patios de la Estación, a community that continually struggles to get ahead. I have shared moments of happiness and sadness with the community to which I have great respect and admiration because they are people who give everything for everyone."

SPREADING THE WORD Karitas goes international

In partnership with the people, as always, across our twenty-five years of presence in Mexico, we have evolved a philosophy and methodology that we believe is unique and effective. The power of empowerment and partnership. Working "with" more than "for" people and communities. Affirming and supporting the power of hope and vision, the power of creativity and collaboration, the power of initiative and its fruits. We are continually casting seeds more broadly and gathering greater and greater harvests.

And the reach of our influence continues to broaden as well. Always by invitation, together with The Pachamama Alliance and Rotary International, Erik and a team have led workshops and seminars in Peru and Chile, Brazil and Colombia, Ecuador and Guatemala . . . and most recently in China! We are humbled and animated by these opportunities.

u.lab



Pachamama Alliance



Catalyzing transformation through intentional conversations together with Pachamama Alliance in Brazil

AN EDUCATION INITIATIVE

Keeping At-Risk Kids in School

Seven years ago a circle of mothers came to us to express appreciation for ways in which we were significantly improving their life in the *present*. “But if our kids continue to quit school at age 12, the *future* will be unchanged.” Virtually all poor children quit school at age twelve to augment family income: washing windshields at stop lights or carrying bricks for a bricklayer. So we began an Education Initiative, a comprehensive plan, not only to guide those kids into Middle School, but tutor, enrich family life, develop character, built community. We started with twenty kids, ten each in two marginal communities. No project has ever had 100% success! All

twenty of those kids are through Middle School, into High School, a number tracking to university! The cost is \$2,500/ student/year: 20 kids/ \$50,000, 30 kids/ \$75,000. The current Caritas budget can only fund 20. We are seeking \$50,000 in new donors to move the population served to 40 kids.



Quantifiable results



Ahuehuetitla

Participation in one of the two communities

20 mujeres Mothers that participated in the Constructive Child Raising Workshop

45 participante: Use the shower and dress up for school

100 Breakfasts and Lunches

90 participantes
 • In the Creative Transformation curriculum
 • That brush their teeth after each meal
 • That take time for meditation

30 participantes Music and Cognitive Development Workshop

Take part in the Agriculture Workshop and Expressing Emotions Through Art **25** participantes

Dear Partners in Action,

The popular communities in Latin America live in a web of interconnection and solidarity that is desperately needed everywhere in today’s world. It seems we are in the midst of a paradigm shift, an awakening. In our efforts we give importance to helping communities find their own goals and solutions, with impressive results, we are also learning and finding life through them. It may be that the people’s wisdom of the materially poor and indigenous communities holds the key to solving some of our planet’s most pressing issues: Environmental degradation, social decay, loneliness, and disconnection.

I am deeply honored to be used as a channel for the better future that wants to be born, and I am grateful to all of you, our supporters, that make it possible. I reaffirm my commitment and dedication to this task.

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 Caritas, 1275 Rose Lane, Berwyn, PA 19312

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