

Quarterly Bulletin of the Maya Childcare Trust

Progress Report

Over the past three months there have been several exciting developments:

The Maya Childcare Trust is now a fully registered charity. Amongst other things, this allows us to reclaim the tax paid on all gift-aided donations, giving us an extra 28p for every £1.00 donated.

The generosity and fundraising efforts of many groups and individuals have been enormously encouraging. Further information about some of these efforts can be found on page 3. We now have a number of regular supporters contributing to our monthly income through standing order donations which is enough to cover all our expenses during this early stage of development. We hope to have resources available to equip the Centre once we reach that stage of the development. We are continuing to raise the funds necessary to pay rent and salaries for additional staff

throughout the first year. We appreciate and would like to thank you for all your donations.

On 1 September Rachael and Pati began working full time in Quetzaltenango to develop and legalise the childcare centre there. They have a shared vision and different gifts that create a very productive working relationship and both are very much enjoying their collaboration in this project. So far, they have drawn up a plan of work for the rest of this year; gathered together a board of trustees; put in place a system of financial and administrative records; and have begun the process of legalisation with a solicitor.



Rachael & Pati's plans for the next three months

In the coming months our hope is, as far as possible, to complete this process of legalisation in Guatemala. We are currently investigating the various possibilities for housing the Centre, and this may take some time. We plan to put together a manual containing all the relevant policies and

procedures to be adopted by the Centre, explaining the Centre's philosophy, and outlining both the nutritional and educational programmes. We are also working to develop links with other local organisations.

There is a lot of work to be done and many decisions to be made but our initial investigations have been promising and local people have been very supportive.

Meet the Directors of the Acorn Childcare Centre

PATRICIA SARAT



Pati grew up in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala. She has a BA in business administration and has been involved in a range of projects devoted to securing children's rights. She enjoys working with people from other countries and has represented Guatemalan NGOs at a number of UN conferences in New York. She has gained considerable experience in supervision, administration, finance, and strategic planning for NGOs, directing a number of human rights projects. She has also recently spent some time in Canada developing her English

while working for 'Healing Our Spirit BC Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Society'. She is very enthusiastic about developing the Centro Infantil Bellota.

"Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share my experience and to learn from you."

RACHAEL KER



After graduating from university, Rachael went to work as the volunteer co-ordinator for a women's shelter in Quetzaltenango. She spent most of her time putting together and running a children's programme for those in the refuge with their mothers. This work made her acutely aware of the need for childcare and family support in Guatemala. To help improve her Spanish she met regularly with Pati, and they alternated between English and Spanish language learning. They also exchanged ideas about social development in Guatemala and discovered a very similar outlook. After 15 months, Rachael returned to Northern Ireland and

worked for a number of months with a Barnardo's nursery school. She trained as a primary school teacher and then worked as a senior therapeutic support worker at the Mulberry Bush School in Oxfordshire. She never managed to shake off the desire to return to Quetzaltenango and establish a childcare centre there.

"The support I have received to make this project possible is overwhelming. I am so excited to be here and am constantly moved by the generosity shown by so many people."

If you have any comments or suggestions about this bulletin, or would like to contact us on another matter, please contact our secretary using the contact details on the back page.



Fundraiser at the Mulberry Bush School



On Friday 15th July, friends and staff of the Mulberry Bush School gathered for an enjoyable evening of fundraising. The School, based at Standlake, Oxfordshire, organised an impressive range of activities on behalf of the Trust. These activities contributed to a final total of over £2300 towards our work in Guatemala. Our warmest thanks go to members of the School for all their hard work and support.

A special note of thanks must be reserved for everyone who gave so generously at the event. Many people gave time, ideas and entertainment as well as donations, for the auction of promises, some participants even gave their liberty!

Thank you to everyone who helped to make the evening so enjoyable.

Out of the Blue

Oxford's all-male a-cappella group 'Out of the Blue' very kindly donated the profits of their fantastic performances at this summer's Edinburgh Festival to the Maya Childcare Trust. For more information about the group see: <http://users.ox.ac.uk/~ootb>.

Other support from Standlake

Our thanks go also to St Giles Church, Standlake, for their generous support and to Standlake Women's Institute for contributing the profits of their cake sale to the Trust.

Congratulations & Thanks!

We would like to congratulate Sally and Luke Wallich-Clifford who were married in Edinburgh in July, and then celebrated their wedding again in Llayre in Wales in August. Sally and Luke named the Maya Childcare Trust as their charity of choice for donations and also contributed a retiring offering to the work of the Trust. Many thanks to their family and friends for their generosity!

Thank You!

Without your help and generous support we would be unable to turn the Trust's plans into realistic action for children in Guatemala.

Our warmest thanks are given to all those people who have helped to make the first few months of fund raising so successful.

Guatemala in focus: Quetzaltenango

Quetzaltenango's size, industrial, cultural and commercial activity make it the second most important city in Guatemala. Its reputation as a centre for Spanish language tuition attracts hundreds of foreigners every year. In the town centre and dotted around the city pieces of colonial architecture have been preserved. Colourful concrete houses, many of which still appear to be under construction, spill out from the centre and begin to creep up the hillsides. The backdrop of hills and volcanoes provide an area of green and something of natural beauty that can always be seen from the dusty streets. Traditional Mayan clothing, busy markets and a range of crafts and woven goods provide an abundance of colour; and popular, usually rather sentimental, music pours out from radios in shops and on buses everywhere.

The city is growing rapidly. Many factors contribute to this growth. The signing of the peace accords in 1996 brought an end to 36 years of violent civil war, allowing a greater degree of development. Economic pressures draw an increasing number of people from rural areas to the city in search of employment. Cultural expectations and limited education about family planning have also have an impact.

The population of the country has swollen from 6,054,227 in 1981 to 11,237,196 in 2002, and the population of Quetzaltenango (region) has increased from 366,949 in 1981 to 624,716 in 2002. The average number of children for each woman of childbearing age in Quetzaltenango is 4.5. (National Institute of Statistics, Guatemala)

There are no social security benefits for single mothers and the lack of childcare provision is a significant issue.

QUETZALTENANGO FACTFILE:

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| Region: | Quetzaltenango ('Xela') is the main city in the region of Quetzaltenango |
| City Population: | 127,569 |
| Altitude: | 2,333m (8,000ft) above sea level |
| Weather/Climate: | Dry season: November – April; Wet season: May – October Warm days; cold nights. Daylight approx. 6am – 6pm all year |
| Languages: | Spanish, Quiche', Mam |
| Major religion: | Christianity, indigenous Mayan beliefs |

You have received this Bulletin because you are listed on our database as a supporter of the Trust. The Trustees believe that this quarterly communication is an important way of letting you know how your donations are being used. If you would prefer to be removed from our mailing list please either email us at: info@mayachildcare.org or write to our Secretary, **Mr Andrew Ker, 24 Ravensdale, Newtownabbey, Co. Antrim BT36 6FA.**