



El Maestro en Casa, Inc.

ADULT OUTREACH EDUCATION
Ciudad Cívica, Intibucá, Honduras
501 (c)(3) Public Charity EIN 26-3900669

December 28, 2010

Dear Friends and generous supporters,

Another school year has ended and I can finally sit back and think, “Wow, look what we did!” During the school year—which you may remember is Feb. to Nov.—we’re so bogged down in trying to keep students motivated, fixing motorcycles, worrying about money, and keeping up with all the administrative details, that we sometimes lose sight of why we’re working so hard. But graduation day always brings it all back to us as we hand out diplomas to students who wouldn’t have finished primary school, or middle school, or high school without our program. All our graduations are special, but this one seemed particularly sweet to me because so many of our earliest graduates came to watch their siblings or their children graduate. One young man, Martin Reyes Vasquez, who had come to watch his brother graduate from high school and a younger sister from 9th grade, stood up at the end of the ceremony to announce that he was also a graduate of our program and in 2 weeks he would graduate from the Pan American Agricultural College, one of the most prestigious colleges in the Americas, as an agricultural engineer. He recalled how I had taught his mother to read, and that 6 of his 7 siblings have studied with us, and insisted that all the graduates now have the education necessary to succeed in their lives if they continue to work hard and are determined to overcome the obstacles of poverty and prejudice. Martin is definitely an inspiration to our students, and I confess that I find him pretty amazing too! He’s hoping to get a master’s degree somewhere in the US, but he’ll definitely return to Honduras when he’s finished because he’s a very grounded young man and is determined to use his education to benefit his community.

In reviewing the year, I was pleased to see that the two new student groups we started this year finished up very successfully. About 75% of each group will continue next year, and we expect to register a good number of new students in each group as well. We also are forming another new group in a remote community about 2 hours away by motorcycle. This time World Vision, who also works in the region, has offered to help with school supplies, and the municipal council has offered space in the community center, school desks, and 2,000 lempiras (\$100) a month to help with our teachers’ expenses. This is a HUGE breakthrough for us. We’ve never had support from any local government, so hopefully we can establish a precedent for our other student groups, since we are doing the government’s job by providing education in isolated communities. Also, the support from World Vision will relieve some of our budget pressures, and will look good on grant proposals!

The prospects for next year are also much brighter than we’ve seen for the past 2 years. Peace Corps is assigning a volunteer to our program in August, who will teach in our center and in some of our community groups, as well as work with curriculum development. The Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is also considering assigning us a volunteer to work with our math program. You may remember that one of their volunteers, Ayano, started a weaving course this year, and will continue with us next year, perhaps including a felting course. Two more of their volunteers, a midwife and a public health worker, are collaborating on another workshop for pregnant women in February.

On the financial front, we’ve just received more good news. Cup for Education (www.cupforeducation.org), a foundation that works in coffee-producing regions, will sponsor one of our teachers, and MEDICO (www.medico.org), a foundation that sends medical, dental and eye brigades to the same area where we have student groups, has very generously contributed \$3,000. We’ve also received many generous individual contributions, for which we are profoundly grateful because they help keep us afloat. But I must mention a very special contribution from the Sunday school class of Brandon Congregational Church. Brandon is a small town and the congregation is small, but the Sunday school was able to raise \$121.50! Those kids are awesome!!

On the administrative front, I’d like to welcome two new members to our board of directors. Adrienne Larkin is a Californian with a home on the island of Roatan in Honduras. Our paths first crossed at the annual

Conference on Honduras, and she was so eager to do something meaningful that I decided to round up her energy and put it to good use in El Maestro en Casa. The other new member, Emily Rasmussen, is a Vermonter with magic fundraising powers. We came across each other when I was investigating the immigrant network here in Vermont. So now we are a board of lucky 7—still all women!

As always, I am truly grateful for your support—it's your contributions that keep our program going. We still haven't solved our motorcycle problem, so any ideas about how we can score a new motorcycle are most welcome.

A happy, peaceful and fulfilling New Year to all!!

Susan

GRADUATION DAY



Me with a high school grad, Pascual, who also served as our watchman



Martin (L), past high school grad and now a graduate of the Pan American Agricultural College, with 2 high school grads, Ronal and Jose Luis



Two 9th grade grads with their dad



6th grade grad with his brother



High School Class of 2010



Our greenhouse, up and running and producing about 50 lbs. of strawberries a week