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*Esperanza de Guatemala is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.*

**MISSION STATEMENT**

*Esperanza de Guatemala works to create life-changing opportunities in rural Guatemalan communities.*

**2021 Annual Report**

**January 26, 2022**

**PRESIDENT’S REPORT** *(submitted by Medora Hix)*

We began 2021 with expectation that the availability of COVID-19 vaccines might mean getting back to most, if not all, pre-pandemic conditions, though we thought that they would be late getting to those we serve in rural Guatemala. What happened was a no and a yes. The pandemic continues to rage, albeit with lessened effects for those who are vaccinated, and yes, the vaccine finally got to the mountains of Guatemala for those who live near a city, though the disease took the lives of many people in the village of Nimasac, as elsewhere.

It has been over two years since those of us in the US could travel to Guatemala and this situation will remain so for some time. Some things are necessarily still on hold, such as incorporating in Guatemala, but our mission has continued. We have continued to have a positive impact, helping to create life-giving opportunities for those in rural Guatemalan communities.

Two things stand out. We continued to provide food relief during these pandemic times, and we continued to offer scholarships to 21 students with our partner, Cary Presbyterian Church. In addition, we explored the possibility of relocating the computer center to be more accessible to students and the whole community, and we learned about inadequate availability of technology, creating great challenges to schools and students alike. After further examination of the current situation in Nimasac for clean water, we have shifted priority to providing education and awareness about the *need* for clean water before simply providing a home system, as well as making plans to work with Nimasac’s newly formed sewer committee. Please read more about these areas of service in this report.

Operating a nonprofit requires implementing activities that help move the organization’s mission forward. This year we added a YouTube channel and posted videos and stories of the work on our website. Here is one I’d like to share about the need and impact of our work in Nimasac:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9_KLLf-aSp8&t=31s>

Please view them all, either at [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDatP4hEWzabEjiZkdZWpQ/videos?view=0&sort=da&flow=grid](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDatP4hEW-zabEjiZkdZWpQ/videos?view=0&sort=da&flow=grid) or in the Stories section of [www.esperanzadeguatemala.org](http://www.esperanzadeguatemala.org/). They are inspiring!

The Board conducted several strategic planning sessions during which program areas and goals were identified for the next several years:

# Program Areas

* *Health & Well Being*: Water purification
* *Education and Technology (Education & Economic Development)*
* *Access and use of technology in the community:*
	+ *In the local school*
	+ *In the community at large*
	+ *More involvement with scholarships*

# Goals

* *Financial:*  Reach a level of financial stability that enables service and maintenance of staff, and funds projects adequately
* *Infrastructure:* Clearly articulate relationship and partnership with Cary Presbyterian church
* *Consider further staffing models for the future*

We also worked on Search Engine Optimization (SEO) so that Esperanza can be more easily found online. We had successful fundraising campaigns to bring in dollars to provide food relief, and extra scholarship support and awareness of improving the lives of Nimasac families through our “Build a Better Future, One Student at a Time” campaign.

In closing, I want to share comments from two of our supporters,

“*We donate to Esperanza because we know that our money is going directly to the people who need it. The average family income in Guatemala is around $12,000/year, and even less in more rural areas. Even a small donation goes a long way to providing basic necessities.” JB/TB* and

“*Our early support of Esperanza de Guatemala largely resulted from our desire to support family members who were among the original team of caring volunteers’ intent upon helping a community far less materially fortunate and in far more need than any of us in the US are likely to experience.*

*We are pleased to continue to support this work focused on achieving better community circumstances through educational opportunities and better health specifically by fulfilling a basic human need - consistently safe and available drinking water.” FFB/SSB*

**PROJECT UPDATES**

***Water Access/Purification*** *(submitted by Duane Hix)*

The water committee acknowledges that only a portion of its agenda was accomplished in 2021. This was due largely to three factors: (1) the inability to personally visit Nimasac because of the continuing pandemic travel restrictions; (2) the report from Nimasac that the current water committee of the town was not functioning effectively, advising us to wait; and (3) the Board’s growing understanding of the need to conduct a full hygiene and water use educational campaign for the town prior to providing a vehicle for clean water.

This situation has meant that distribution of individual home-based filtration systems is on hold until we can establish the necessary contract with an agent. We did establish, however, that an onsite centralized filtration system at the wells or pumping stations is highly improbable given the differing well locations, space limitations and confirmation that this is practically unknown in Guatemala.

We did receive assurance from departmental officials that no oversight and regulation from higher levels of government is needed for water projects such as in Nimasac, that this is left to local authorities.

Near the end of 2021, through a conversation with the elementary school principal, we learned that a committee for sewer construction had been formed in the town. We will continue to monitor this development and explore ways we might assist.

***COVID Relief*** *(submitted by Josetta McLaughlin)*

Esperanza de Guatemala provided food assistance to the Nimasac, Guatemala community during

2021 by extending the 2020 COVID Relief Initiative. The purpose for creating the COVID Relief Initiative was to address food insecurity among families in the Nimasac community due to the impacts of the COVID pandemic. COVID Relief Initiatives #3 and #4 were completed in April 2021 and October 2021 respectively.

For COVID Relief Initiative #3, cash reserves of $3,000 plus $2,000 from gifts received from donors to support food relief were authorized by the Esperanza de Guatemala Board of Directors to support the mission. Additional funds were authorized to compensate the Guatemalan staff who purchased, organized, and distributed 6,000 pounds of food to the people of Nimasac. On April 10, forty pounds of food was provided to each of 152 families which included families that had not received packages in 2020.

For COVID Relief Initiative #4, up to $4,500 was approved for purchase of goods and supplies for families in the Nimasac community plus compensation for the Esperanza staff who organized and distributed the packages. On October 16,115 Nimasac families received packets each containing forty pounds of food and three masks. The October 2021 initiative was also expanded to include new recipients, in particular widows and the elderly.

The April and October 2021 COVID relief initiatives were managed by Guatemalan staff and local contacts. Martin Maldonaldo (IT manager) managed food purchase, organization, and delivery; Estefani Jacobs (business manager) assisted with purchases and distribution; and Martin Sop (Esperanza’s mission trip manager) sewed the masks. The local coordination and distribution of supplies was managed by Francisco Cux Tuy, former Scholarship Recipient and member of the Nimasac community.

With the extension of the COVID Relief Initiative into 2021, Esperanza de Guatemala built on its commitment to serve the community of Nimasac, Guatemala. In 2020 and 2021, a total of 18,000 pounds of food (corn, rice, beans, sugar, cereal, and oil) was successfully distributed to families who were dealing with food insecurity. It is likely that the COVID pandemic and food insecurity will continue and that need for assistance will continue. With the support of donors, grants, and a committed Guatemalan staff, Esperanza de Guatemala is positioned and fortunate to be able to work in partnership with the families of Nimasac to provide much needed assistance to their community.

Please view this video for to hear directly from our friends in Nimasac. <https://www.esperanzadeguatemala.org/post/heartfelt-gratitude>

***Scholarship Program*** *(submitted by Medora Hix & Rhonda Carlile)*

The Cary Presbyterian Church Scholarship Team in partnership with Esperanza continued to provide scholarships to students in the Nimasac community that allowed twenty-one students for the 2021 school year to continue their education beyond the elementary school level provided in the public schools. These included two local students in middle school, three public high school students, nine private high school students, and four mature students in vocational schools. Four students graduated from their respective programs including one student with a nursing degree. Some students will not continue in 2022 for a variety of reasons.

Esperanza spearheaded fundraising for this project and had a successful Giving Tuesday campaign and CPC Alternative Gift Market. Both focused on Education Scholarships and raised enough money to fund all thirty-one scholarship requests for 2022. This was ten more than the overall number last year and eighteen new, first-time students.

The Esperanza staff in Guatemala continued to facilitate scholarship payments in 2021 and worked diligently to identify and support potential applicants for 2022.

**STRATEGY** *(submitted by Rhonda Carlile)*

# CPC/Esperanza Relationship

For some time, there had been a concern that the relationship between Cary Presbyterian Church (CPC) and Esperanza was not clearly understood by CPC members and/or other donors.

Therefore, at its March meeting the board determined that a task force should be convened to define and articulate the partnership between CPC and Esperanza in regard to work in rural Guatemalan communities, specifically the projects and responsibilities of each and the relationship thereof. The task force consisted of members of the CPC Missions Team and two Esperanza board members. Two meetings were held during which stakeholders were identified, concerns listed, and possible redistribution of responsibilities proposed. The consensus was that those who contribute want to support the mission and have no problem with the internal practices of the two entities. It was agreed that the task force had convened to determine if a problem existed and that it had decided that there was no benefit to making any changes at this time.

**COMPLIANCE** *(submitted by Barbara Carew)*

Benevity, Candid (formerly Guide Star) Gold Seal of Transparency, and PCI Compliance accounts were all updated.

**FINANCIAL REPORT** *(submitted by Barbara Carew)*

Esperanza finished the year with total gifts of $23,284. We had minimal operating expenses (4.4%), and project/program expenses of $8,759, resulting in net income of $13,806. The majority of the net income will be reserved for our on-going projects relating to water/sewer and education. At the end of 2021, we had total designated and undesignated reserves of $63,484.

See Addendums #1 and #2 for year-end financial statements.

**2021 Board of Directors**

Medora Hix, President

Sherry Bradsher, Vice-President

Rhonda Carlile, Secretary

Barbara Carew, Treasurer

Dr. Jim Tompkins, Director

John Hansen, Director

Josetta McLaughlin, Director