

# EL BOLETÍN

INFORMATIVE RILLI ETIN AMIGOS DE SAN CRISTÓRAL AC

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THANKS TO THOSE WHO RENEWED THEIR
MEMBERSHIP AND JOINED US THAT
NIGHT. WE WERE HAPPY TO SEE SO MANY
PEOPLE SUPPORTING THIS COMMUNITY

#### **ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP EVENT**

n Saturday, January 26, we held our Amigos annul membership event. One of our sponsors, Restaura Catering, provided a beautiful space for us to gather and to renew memberships.

Our president, Hiliana Garcia, welcomed us, and Monica Bucio from UNICEF gave a talk about the problems and situations in which working children find themselves in the streets of San Cristóbal. Monica reminded us that the well being of children is not only their parents' responsibility but also the responsibility of all the adults that come in contact with these children.

We enjoyed the music of Rosa Sanchez and her group of musicians who by the end of the evening had everyone dancing.

Thanks to our sponsors we could try Mexican wines from Proyecto 125 (Intervino), and taste some delicious hors d'ouevres prepared with regional ingredients by Restaura Catering such as a pozol cocktail of chocolate and posh, black paella with shrimp from Tonala and regional sausage, cream of chipilin topped with totopos, a turron(nougat) from Teopisca served with tascalate cream, coffee and chocolate, among many other things.

Several of our very talented Amigos' members donated some of their own creative pieces for a raffle and auction: forged iron, paintings, accessories of Mexican design, natural beauty products, and photographs. Two of our Amigos' hotel owners











donated complimentary nights and meals in their hotels.

The event was a fun occasion to gather the Amigos de San Cristobal community, renew memberships and welcome new members. We collected approximately \$39,100 pesos! Thanks to all who renewed their membership and joined us that night.

We were so pleased to see so many young, local businesses helping to support Amigos. We wish to thank Kraig and Kathy Kemper for all their support and help in organizing the event, as well as for their donation of photographs about Chiapanecan culture, also to Mark Harmon for his beautiful ceramic pieces, to Margarita de la Peña for her lovely illustration, to our hosts from Restaura Catering, to Antonio Cruz for the donation of Mexican wines from Intervino, Proyecto 125, to Lucia Baraibar from Joyeria Quinto Sol, to La Pared bookstore, and to Mayambe Restaurant. To all of them we send a most sincere thank you and appreciation.

#### GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING

and visit to the Textile Museum



he General Assembly Meeting of our organization took place on March 21, 2013. It was a pleasant afternoon during which we reviewed the accomplishments of 2012, and we also toured the museum at the Center for Mayan Textiles (Centro de Textiles del Mundo Maya), located at the ex-Convent at the Santo Domingo Church (Templo de Santo Domingo, where the large outdoor textile market is held daily). Our event started with a guided tour of the second story of the textile museum, where there is a magnificent collection of Chiapan textiles. The tour was followed by our annual General Assembly Meeting in the museum's artisan training room, attended by about thirty of our members and donors, as well as various representatives from beneficiaries and recipients of Amigos donations, such as Chantiik, 12 Guayacanes, Melel Xojobal, and Banco de Alimentos.

During this event, some members took advantage of the opportunity to renew their annual memberships.



Amigos President, Hileana Garcia, welcomed our guests and reviewed the activities completed during 2012 and the projects that Amigos will support with grants in 2013.

Among the fundraising events last year, mention should be made of the Annual Members Meeting, held in January at Casa Felipe Flores, where we raised M\$12,587 pesos (U\$1,007 dollars); the Sak Tzevul concert, at La Casa del Pan, where M\$4,350 pesos (U\$348 dollars) was raised; the short film "Amigos: Making a Difference in Chiapas" presented in November, at the Plaza Real restaurant; and the successful annual Amigos Flea Market, held in December, where we raised M\$19,253 pesos (U\$1,540 dollars).

The projects that will benefit from Amigos funding in 2013 are dedicated to health, education, and economic development among the disadvantaged and at-risk population. The organizations that Amigos will give grants to this year include:

Chantiik: The grant will cover self-esteem workshops, gender equality, and prevention of at-





risk street-youth.

La Casa de Flores: To pay for the salary of a fulltime teacher for the children.

Melel Xojobal: To partially cover the salary for of an educator to work with the children.

Colectivo Educacion para la Paz y los Derechos Humanos (CEPAZDH): To produce a 10-minute video and radio spot-announcements about human trafficking and children abuse in Chiapas. The organization will establish alliances with local organizations for outreach to the general public, promoting this prevention campaign in the media, and presenting discussions in schools to raise awareness among students and parents.

Banco de Alimientos de Los Altos de Chiapas, BACH (Chiapas Highlands Food Bank): To cover the wage of a nutritionist in charge of directing the training of local families —reaching more than 7,000 family units— with the objective of preventing general malnutrition.

Hogar Comunitario Yach'il Antzetic (Community Home Yach'il Antzetic): To cover the costs of food and lodging that will enable 20 women to temporarily reside in the Home during their pregnancy and the birth of their child.

**12 Guayacanes:** To develop a new project in fish production and the installation of security lighting for the outdoor exhibit/demonstration area.

Mujeres y Maiz – Comedor "La Milpa" (Women & Corn – "The Cornfield" Dining Room): To ensure adequate nutrition for 10 students who will eat at "La Milpa" and thereby support the training of disadvantaged women in business skills.

The Financial Report was presented by Yatziri Zepeda, Director of Amigos, as was the explanation of goals and objectives for the 2013-2014 fiscal period. Yatziri also introduced the new Administrative Coordinator, Beatriz Álvarez, who assisted with the logistics and registration of the event.

#### FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 2012:

FUNDS RECEIVED		
Individual donations and contributions	M\$887,091 pesos (U\$70,967 dollars)	
Local events	M\$34,657 pesos (U\$2,772 dollars)	
1embership Fees	M\$28,400 pesos (U\$2,272 dollars)	
Donation form Kellog Foundation for Director's salary and communications for the period Nov. 2012-Oct. 2013	M\$289,905 pesos (U\$23,192 dollars)	
TOTAL	M\$1,240.053 pesos (U\$99,204 dollars)	





The anticipated income (and expenditure) for 2013 is M\$785,600 pesos (U\$62,848 dollars).

This income will be from donations, collections, membership fees, and funding from

the Kellogg Foundation to cover the Director's salary and communications related tasks. It will be assigned to cover grants and operating expenses.



#### The goals and objectives for 2013-2014 are summarized as follows:

2012 Goals/Objectives	Results	2013 Goals/Objectives
120 members	120 members	132 members
Increase donations to M\$500,000 pesos (U\$40,000)	\$887,091 (U\$70,967)	M\$396,000* (U\$31,680)
Obtain M\$100,000 (U\$8,000) via local events	M\$34,657 (U\$2,773)	M\$60,000 (U\$4,800)
Project support grants total M\$450,000 (U\$36,000)	M\$342,000 (U\$27,360)	M\$360,000 (U\$28,800)
Accomplish a minimum of 2 visit to each supported project	12 visits	2 visits to each project
Send 3 mailings for direct solicitation of funds/donations	2 mailings	3 mailings
Finalize our tax exempt status	Still in the process	Finalize our tax exempt status
Send 4 issues of the Amigos Bulletin and 4 Updates for members,donors, and project recipients	Sent 2 Bulletins and 2 Updates	Send 4 issues of the Amigos Bulletin and 4 Updates for members,donors, and project recipients



**CLARIFICATION**: this year we had extraordinary income from (not only) the video (we hope we can repeat that), but also a special incredibly generous donation from a donor in Germany and his foundation.











During the meeting break, we enjoyed excellent Chiapan coffee donated by Erns Riedwyl at Restaurante Casa Real, and delicious homebaked cookies prepared by members Alison Abbott and Ann Conway.

During this General Assembly Meeting, the election of a new Board was held, resulting in our Board now including: Israel Amezcua, Lucia Baraibar, Ann Conway, Brian Fuller, Nancy Orr, and Alma Silva Gutierrez.

Adriana Aguerrebere, read (with a simultaneous translation) the biographies of the Board members for 2013, including an emotionally moving mention of the resignation of our friend and colleague Alison Abbott, who is leaving her volunteer administrative position with Amigos, after many years.

We also expressed our appreciation to Bruce G. Ferguson for his work and contributions towards our many projects.

#### THE RECENTLY ELECTED BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Profiles

srael Amezcua has over 12 years of experience working collaboratively with government agencies, NGOs and communities on resolving environmental problems through both voluntary and policy solutions in southern Mexico. Israel is the Deputy Director of the Climate Change Program at Pronatura Sur.





**ISRAEL AMEZGUA** 

second-year Amigos board member, Lucía is a San Cristóbal native. She studied both law and political science, but it was her courses in jewelry design that led to her full-time work. She is general director of the jewelry businesses Puerta Azul de Chiapas and Quinto Sol Joyería (where many local Amigos members pay their dues). With this experience, plus her experience as director of the San Cristóbal Tourism Office, past member of the Mexican Businesswomen's Association (AMMJE), and now a member of the State Council of COPARMEX, Lucía brings a business perspective to the Amigos board.



native Californian and past resident of Colorado, Ann pursued three successful careers: in education, with Citigroup, and as a manager and country director with Peace Corps, before moving to San Cristóbal three years ago. This is her third year on the board, and Ann is also chair of the Project Committee. Ann and her husband John will open their boutique hotel La Joya Hotel San Cristóbal over the summer 2013.





rian is a native of Connecticut, USA and has experience working with (omit: for) NGOs across four continents. He holds an MPA degree in International Development and is currently Programs Director for Foundation Escalera, working to improve education for children in Chiapas.

ancy was among the founders of Amigos de San Cristobal and has been an active member, participating in our various events, holding gatherings in the bed and breakfast Casa Felipe Flores which she and her husband David Orr own and operate, and sitting on the Projects Committee for the last three years. Nancy was born in Corpus Christi, Texas, and graduated from the University of Texas at Austin. She worked in many volunteer positions for not-for-profit organizations in Indianapolis and Chicago for over 30 years. She and David have five children and have called San Cristobal de Las Casas home for more than 20 years.

SILVA SILVA

s the cofounder and president of Desarrollo Educativo Sueniños, Alma will continue to offer the NGO perspective in her third year on the Amigos board. Originally from Mazatlán, Sinaloa, Alma attended university in Austria, where she met her husband, Christian Szinicz. They are the proud parents of two children, ages 3 and 6, and they recently moved into a new home in Barrio Santa Lucía.



#### A FEW CHANGES...



**OUR DEEPEST GRATITUDE GOES** to the board members who finish their work this year: Bruce G. Ferguson and Alison Abbot for the tireless voluntary work they have been doing for Amigos, their commitment, and their hope to improve the conditions of our community.



**GOOD LUCK TO OUR DIRECTOR.** We want to wish the best of luck to Yatziri Zepeda in her new adventure. Yatziri has found personal and professional opportunities overseas and she will be leaving the organization in June. We want to thank her for all her work during this short but enriching period for the organization.





n April the 11th the Board of Directors met to elect Lucía Baraibar as our new president. We are deeply grateful to Hileana García for her fantastic work and commitment to the organization over all these years. THANK YOU Hileana for your dedication and leadership which has helped us to become what we are today. We wish you all the best!

We welcome Lucía and we are certain that under her leadership, the organization

We welcome Lucía and we are certain that under her leadership, the organization will continue to grow.

#### **PROJECT'S PROGRESS**

A few testimonies

o show the progress of some projects awarded grants by Amigos in 2012, we asked the organizations to send us a short story about a person benefiting from their Amigos grant. We believe this is the best illustration of the program's support and its effectiveness.



#### BANCO DE ALIMENTOS DE LOS ALTOS DE CHIAPAS AC (BACH)

raciela Gomez Valazquez lives in the neighborhood Relicario and her testimony relays the joy she feels for the help received from BACH.

"They really help me so that I can get groceries because I have two children that I like to send off to school with a good breakfast or snack, which, really, if I were to try to buy it it would be out of my reach financially."

Graciela also told us that BACH sometimes brings shoes and other items such as clothing or dish soap.

The part of the training and awareness is also very important for Graciela:

"The workshops that they teach are very nice. They teach us how to eat healthy food, they weigh us, they give us brochures to read so we can be vigilant about whether we are in good health ... On the other hand they also teach us to sow carrots, tomatoes, peppers, onions and lettuce. The truth is I am very happy because I feel useful, a part of the collaborative efforts of the Food Bank volunteers."



Taking the weight and size to beneficiaries



Delivering food with nutritional balance



Talks about nutrition



#### 12 GUAYACANES DEL SUR

oniface Lopez Espinosa is part of the group that is working on the plot in (omit: of) the neighborhood Rodulfo Figueroa:

"Thanks to your support we are improving our plot more. They have helped me learn to work collectively and cooperate, and I have come to

love them as brothers / sisters ". Boniface is an elderly lady and she was not finding a way to feed her family because, according to what she told us, everything is very expensive; but with the support of Amigos de San Cristobal, she can produce vegetables, mushrooms, chicken and fish with her peers and companions. "Now I have food and can

continue to support my family and we eat organic foods to improve our nutrition. With the installation of lights/electricity —one of the benefits of the project—I am no longer afraid to remain at my friends' houses during the night. I feel proud as we are an example to our community and our region."











#### **CHANTIIK TAJ TAJINKUTIK**

his organization sends us the story of Angelica\*, a 16-year old girl who participates in the "positive self-worth workshops, and the risks of the street and gender".

The girl always walked very close to her older sister as they went out each day to offer their crafts through the streets of San Cristobal.

If some interested clients approached, Angelica always tried to hide behind her sister, hoping that they wouldn't speak to her and she would never look up from the ground. One day they were invited to learn sales and bartering in an organization that they know and trust. They are able to grow in their capacity to learn, and with the support of Amigos de San Cristobal, to work with regard to their feelings, emotions and rights.

People know Angelica now, she smiles and greets them with her chin high, knowing that as an individual she is valuable and able to dream and to work to achieve those dreams.

\* The name of the minor has been changed..



Boys and girls working in one of the workshops







## MELEL XOJOBAL

ernandez Gomez has a family of four children and their mother. He is a native of San Juan Chamula and arrived in San Cristobal seven years ago. Until 2012, none of them attended school. With the help of Melel Xojobal, the mother was able to process and obtain their birth certificates, which are essential

for entry into the school system. In addition, two of his sons and his daughter (who receives a scholarship) have entered elementary school, where they attend classes in the afternoon. They continue to work. In the morning they make their crafts and between seven and midnight sell them in the city center.



#### SUPPORT OF THE FORTALECE PROJECT

Helping Amigos obtain a Tax-exempt Status

Many thanks to "Project Fortalece" for legal and tax advice. Participated in the workshop several organizations in Chiapas.

migos recently received a grant that has enabled us to receive advice in obtaining tax-exempt status. This will allow Mexican donors to claim their donations to Amigos as tax-exempt. The process is being carried out by students at the University Iberoamericana under the supervision of Lic. Angeles Anaya. Through this process the law students will learn the legal and fiscal framework

for Philanthropy and Social Investment and in the future will be able to advise other non-profit organizations. The process is helping Amigos continue along the path of becoming a well-organized and well-managed institution. Any A.C. that is interested in obtaining tax-exempt status can obtain further information at www.proyectofortalece.org.

We believe that the legal process is the last part of a process of institutionalization solid and well made.

#### CELEBRATING

485 years of the foundation of San Cristóbal

his year 2013 marks the 485th anniversary of the founding of San Cristóbal de Las Casas. The city was founded on March 31, 1528 by Captain Diego de Mazariegos, and was one of the first settlements in the Latin Americas by the Spaniards. By order of King Charles V, it was named Ciudad Real. It was built on a marshy valley

wilderness that the natives called Gueyzacatlán- the place where the grass grows high. The city was laid out according to the model city of Ciudad Real, Extremadura, in the ancient kingdom of Castilla La Mancha, Spain, with its main church in the central square plaza. Through the years, the city has held various names.

The city's present name

was given in 1829 in honor of San Cristobal Mártir, protector of travelers and in 1844 de Las Casas was added, in memory of Brother Bartolome de Las Casas, the first Catholic bishop who arrived in Chiapas. The is why "Las", is written with the capital "L".

It was the capital of the Province of Las Chiapas from the colonial era until the mandate of Governor Emilio Rabasa (1891 - 1894), when for political reasons, he then removed the government of the state to Tuxtla Gutierrez, unleashing a fierce rivalry between the two cities that ended in a fratricidal armed confrontation.

Today, San Cristóbal is a cosmopolitan city considered the main tourist resort of Chiapas and is included in the "Magical Cities" program by the Secretary of Tourism in Mexico; its architecture

and cultural traditions have made the city worthy of this distinction.

The city also witnessed the passage of various cultures that have decided to settle and form a multicultural amalgam that is enriched day by day. Tzeltales, Tzotziles, Lacandones, Tojolabales, Chiapanecos, Mexicanos, Europeans, Asians, North Americans; today we are all part of this merging of cultures that come together in this great city

that has welcomed us with open arms. Congratulations San Cristóbal on one more year!

\* Part of this article comes from texts by Jan de Vos.

#### **DONOR LIST 2012**

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e are deeply grateful to all our donors in 2012. Thanks to their support, these fantastic innovative projects are a reality, benefiting hundreds of people in our community.



- Charles Geiger
- Linda Bornholdt
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- James Loma Griffith
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- Ventana Charitable Foundation
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