

CONTENTS

PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS 2015-2016	p.1
Supporting again	
SISTER CITIES	p.2
Ashville and San Cristóbal	
CONGRATULATIONS DOÑA GLORIA	p.2
Award a path	
QUARTERLY MEETING WITH ORGANIZATIONS	p.4
Improving evaluation	
WITH LOVE FROM NUEVO LEON	p.5
Huellas que Trascienden	
EDITORIAL	p.5
Anniversary	
THANKS EMPRESAS AMIGAS	p.8
Growing	

Contents

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PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS 2015-2016

Supporting again

As every year, Amigos began the process of selecting projects to support the next cycle. The 2016 call was published on August 17 and closed on March 31. We received 17 applications for new financing of equal number of organizations, plus the eleven organizations that we are accompanying this year, as all have expressed their desire to continue to receive our support.

In reviewing a request for funding, Amigos considers the following aspects of a Project and an NGO:

- Impact on beneficiaries (number of beneficiaries and the intensity of the benefit).
- Impact on NGOs (if it strengthens the NGO in the future).
- Stability and reliability of NGOs (eg., number of years of operation, earlier successes).
- Number of times that the NGO has received funding from Amigos.
- NGOs with resources and partnerships with other organizations to reduce costs and maximize project impact.

By building a portfolio of projects, we seek proposals that focus on education, health and economic development; we prefer to fund a project that will additionally receive financial support from other(s) organization(s) and projects where Amigos can finance detailed cost and significant aspects of the project (eg. the salary of

a teacher or a doctor, scholarships workshops, some structure materials, equipment, etc.).

Amigos also prefers to support projects whose results can be quantifiable and tangible for the benefactors who funded.

The Project Committee will analyze each of the proposals and make the final decision in mid-October.

We have very hard work ahead!



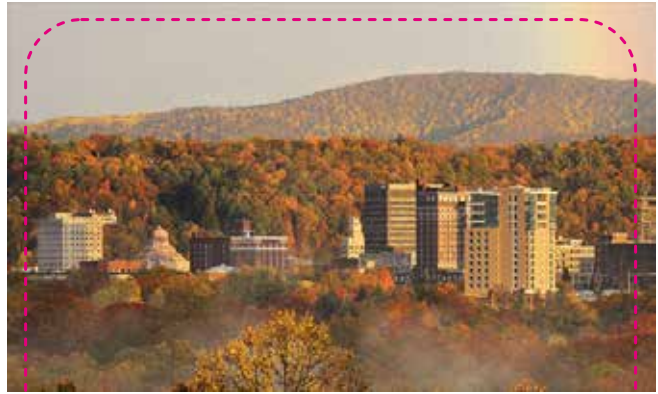
SISTER CITIES

Ashville and San Cristóbal

On Thursday, August 6, the Plaza Real Restaurant in San Cristóbal de Las Casas held a very special meeting, because we were visited by our old friend Mark Harmon and a large group of inhabitants of the beautiful city of Asheville, North Carolina, in the U.S. For several years, Asheville and San Cristóbal are 'sister cities', ie two cities that have decided to sign an agreement of brotherhood, cultural and educational exchanges and cooperation in solving common problems.

Mark is an extraordinary artist who lived in San Cristobal for several years. Part of his heart continues in this city and hence his interest in maintaining ties with our city beyond the memories and anecdotes. It is about building bridges of communication between two societies that profess a deep love for their cities and seek to improve the quality of life in both.

Sister Cities International was created in 1956 by the Eisenhower administration with the idea of improve global understanding and cooperation



between cities. Since then, more than 1,200 communities in the United States have been linked with over 2,100 partners in 117 countries, in the process involving hundreds thousands of volunteers. Sister Cities International is one of the largest volunteer organizations in the world.

Thanks to Mark and his group for being here on a visit, but above all, to keep Chiapas in their heart.

CONGRATULATIONS, DOÑA GLORIA!!

Award a path

On Friday July 3, our dear Gloria Gutierrez, founder and president of the organization **Granja y Talleres para Personas con Capacidades Diferentes** Ángeles de Amor A.C, received the "Raul Jimenez Paniagua" prize, awarded by the Rotary



Club of San Cristóbal de Las Casas, in recognition of her extraordinary humanistic work.

Ángeles de Amor promotes the integration of people with disabilities in educational and employment activities for social integration. The organization began operations in 2005 at the initiative of Doña Gloria, who decided to dedicate her life to people over 18 years with various disabilities, as are those that receive



less attention from public and private institutions. Aided by her friends (now members of the organization), Doña Gloria started working at home, offering emotional support, education and workshops mainly crafts and cooking to a group that grew over the years. We must say that most of the beneficiaries are from poor families, so the fees they pay are symbolic.

The organization was legally established in March 2008. Two years later, in 2010, Doña Gloria got half a hectare of land on loan, current headquarters of the organization, where workshops and various activities are held. The common thread throughout their work is to get society to reassess the disabled as worthy, capable and worthy of love and respect humans.

In Amigos de San Cristóbal we are very proud of Doña Gloria and very fortunate to support the work of Ángeles de Amor. We invite you to know it *in situ*.

Ángeles de Amor is located in Peje de Oro Extension 25, Barrio de Cuxtitali in San Cristóbal de Las Casas.



QUARTERLY MEETING WITH ORGANIZATIONS

How to improve the evaluation of our projects

On 10 August, Amigos de San Cristóbal held its second quarterly meeting with social organizations whose projects we support. We had representatives from Ángeles de Amor, Mujeres y Maíz Criollo, Asociación de Productores "La Jornada", Madre Tierra México, Voces Mesoamericanas, CEPAZDH, La Casa de Las Flores and Yirtrak.

On this occasion, we have the invaluable support of Deborah Colvin, a member of the Project Committee, who made a great presentation on how to improve the assessment of project outcomes and thus know if our work is making the impact we seek.

Among other things, Deborah said: "Sometimes I can detect that things are changing, but how can I express it to the funding, or family, or the community, or my participants? They are precision levels to make things more concrete. We must realistically search, the data showing progress".

Deborah also argued about the importance of progress that reports and results have in the execution of projects. In this regard she said: "The report should serve for a large kind of public, not only for us, not only for funding ... The reports must be used to self-criticism, for fundraising and to trace who we were, who we are now. The reports are not done all the time, but if you have the discipline to constantly documenting the results you may have more elements to see if they are meeting the targets set."

We appreciate the presence of organizations that attended the event, but especially the valuable contribution of Deborah, of which we all learned a lot.



WITH LOVE FROM NUEVO LEON

Huellas que Trascienden

Tuesday August 4 we had the opportunity to meet the young businessman from Monterrey Mauricio Raigosa and know the wonderful work that he promotes from the organization Huellas que Trascienden. The aim is to combat poverty transforming the talent of the indigenous women of Chiapas in income for their households.

The job is based on five activities:

1. Delivery of in-kind support for women to start a productive project.
2. Concurrently with it the delivery of the workshop "A business that transcends" for twelve weeks in the mother tongues of women (Tzeltal and Tzotzil), to guide them in starting their projects.

3. Monitoring projects through consulting up to three years.

4. Support for the beneficiaries to sell their products at a fair market without intermediaries.

5. The promotion of cultural tourism in their communities so that, in addition to cash flow that this entails for women, visitors can learn for themselves the experience and identify themselves with it, weaving ties of solidarity and cooperation.

We invite you to join Mauricio's project: donate, volunteer or do we buy the products of these extraordinary women, on sale at the offices of Huellas que Trascienden, located in Francisco I. Madero 16 (Pasaje Mazariegos) stand 23, Downtown, San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Tel. 967 631 7229.



EDITORIAL

Anniversary

On Saturday 26 September we'll be remembering a year after the disappearance of 43 students of the Normal Rural School "Raúl Isidro Burgos" in Ayotzinapa, Guerrero. These boys were in the municipality of Iguala with the aim to travel to Mexico City and be present in the

I can say right now, wherever you are my brother, is he having the force and have the hope that we will soon find him. And if my brother is back alive, I will be very happy, with my son, my wife, my family. I thank God and all those who have supported us. Even if he was killed, i'm just grateful to all these people. But I must be positive until there is evidence. And here I must be with parents and fight, to find them ...

Testimony of the brother of one of the missing students in Iguala

commemoration of the massacre of Tlatelolco. The official version of what happened in Iguala, to which the authorities responsible for the investigation have called "historical truth" is that the boys were 'raised' by municipal police of Iguala and delivered to the local criminal gang *Guerreros Unidos*, for reasons



yet unclear. Criminals would have killed the boys, then burned their bodies and the ashes thrown to a garbage dump in the neighboring municipality of Cocula, on September 27, a day after they were delivered. That is, to the authorities the students are dead, but it is impossible to identify the remains precisely because they were burned.

Last 6 September, the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (IMCI) of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (CIDH for its acronym in Spanish), whose participation as an aid in the investigation was initiated by the parents of the students (although the Mexican federal government made the formal invitation), presented the report *Ayotzinapa Research and initial conclusions of the disappearances and murders of normalistas of Ayotzinapa, result of six months of research on the case*. Their findings,

based on a comprehensive literature review, interviews and analysis of top experts, contrast significantly with the official version and shed new light on what may have happened to the students. The report is not exhaustive, as indicated by the members of the IMCI. New investigations to reach conclusive findings are necessary, making essential the permanence of specialists in the country. But for now, for the IMCI the assertion that the students were murdered and their bodies burned, is unsustainable, so they must continue as missing. For a disappearance acquires the carácter of *enforced* it must be involved, directly or indirectly, a State authority. According to the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, proclaimed by the General Assembly of the United Nations in its resolution 47/133 of 18 December 1992, as a set of principles to be applied by all States, an enforced disappearances occurs:

"... When people are arrested, detained or transferred against their will or they result deprived of their liberty otherwise by officials of different branches or levels, by organized groups or private individuals acting on behalf of the Government or with its direct or indirect support, consent or assent, and then they refuse to disclose the fate or whereabouts of those persons or to acknowledge





their deprivation of liberty, putting them outside the protection of the law. "

In the case of the students of Ayotzinapa, the research of both the Attorney General's Office and the IMCI indicate the participation of municipal and ministerial police in the brutal assault, which also caused 6 dead and 20 wounded. The IMCI has also documented the presence of federal police, of members of the 27 Infantry Battalion of the Mexican Army and of military intelligence agents. It is unclear, however, what these troops were doing there or why they not intervened to prevent the violence. What we do know is that multiple instances of the federal government, including the famous C4, followed the path of the students since they left Tixtla, municipality where the community of Ayotzinapa is located.

Enforced disappearance is a crime of continuous nature, that is, while the disappeared person remains in this condition the crime continues. Therefore, it does not prescribed and is considered a crime against humanity that extends to the family and loved ones of the victim. By ignoring the whereabouts of the missing person, parents, siblings and friends experience a permanent grief that does not allow them to move forward with their lives.

Unfortunately, Mexico has a long history of disappearances, which have increased alarmingly in recent years. Neither the authorities agree on

the figures, but according to the latest information from the Interior Ministry, the cases since the sixties, add at least 25 thousand disappearances. It is not known how many of these cases involve an enforced disappearance. But we must be clear about one thing: no action can justify such barbarity. Not valid explain, much less justify, the

disappearance of the students of Ayotzinapa by their ideology or political stance. As a society we can not allow the rule of law is violated in such way. The law must not, under any circumstances, be applied on a discretionary basis, using criteria other than legal. Even worse if this discretion means violating the rights and guarantees enshrined in our Constitution, because in such case we are all in serious danger.

No one deserves to be a victim of a crime such as enforced disappearance. Anyone. Least the Ayotzinapa young students who were working on a more promising future. The Mexicans have a right to know the truth and the obligation to demand it, so that justice is the norm and not the exception.

We remain hopeful that these young boys, who are also ours, will be back soon alive as they were taken away ...



THANKS EMPRESAS AMIGAS

Growing

We already have 26 Empresas Amigas. Thanks to these responsible partners, officers, employees, and all members and donors loyal to Amigos, to have confidence in our project.

