



Centro de Aprendizaje de San Antonio Palopó
¡La educación hace el cambio!

Innovative Communities.org

Issue 3

Report from San Antonio

Volume 3

The end of the year is coming soon, and a lot has happened in San Antonio Palopó, Guatemala. The **La Casita Team** is getting pretty excited because early next year, after a 6-year absence partly due to COVID, our little volunteer group is heading down south to visit **La Casita**, the small but mighty learning hub in the centre of this little town.

Here are a few highlights:

January – After finally realizing that the small, dangerously crowded kitchen building was no longer adequate for all the food preparation (lunches for the Ancianas, snacks for the kids, special event meals), we launched an ambitious building project to replace it. A grant from the Glasswaters Foundation plus a very generous donation was enough to get the project off the ground. When it's finished (hopefully in December) it will not be just a kitchen, but also a space for a computer school below and an open covered roof-top for additional classes.

February – School opened after the long (Dec-Jan) holiday, and learning assistance groups began. A mothers' workshop was held to provide tips on how they could support their children's education.

March – Teachers from the two elementary schools were invited to separate workshops outlining the services offered at



La Casita. A substantial lunch was included. These successful events lead to a boom in students attending the Casita.

May – On May 12, Mothers Day in Guatemala, the Mayor of San Antonio arrived to have lunch with the *Ancianas* and presented each of them with a gift from the municipality.

La Casita Programs & Classes

Library

Tutorial Time

Computer Literacy

Entrepreneurial classes

Parent Consultation

English Classes

Special Events

Vacation School

Ancianas

Lunch

Social time

Scholarship Students

Financial aid

Computer and

Library research

Volunteer time



June – A family planning workshop was offered to parents. This is an extremely delicate subject in Guatemala, but the staff were able to contact an expert presenter, and the workshop was a great success. We hope it achieved its aims!

Meanwhile, also in June, construction began on the kitchen building.

July – An anti-bullying workshop was held for the students.

September – Ana Olivia, the part-time coordinator (and also sewing teacher) at *La Casita*, graduated from university with a degree in social work. She was supported throughout her university study by one of our scholarships.

November - *La Casita* Vacation School starts up, helping children use their school vacation time to maintain and improve on what they've learned throughout the year with fun, games-based activities.

And those are just the 'extras'

Meanwhile, the regular work of *La Casita* continues. Two enthusiastic young teachers provided learning assistance for groups of children, and – with the help of scholarship students – gave computer classes, extra help with homework, and library assistance. Healthy snacks are distributed. Kids take sewing classes; mothers start up a sewing group.



The *Ancianas*, 25 poor, elderly widows, arrive twice a week for a hearty lunch and a time of crafts, games and lots of laughter.

There's a small staff carrying out all these functions: 2 teachers, a half-time coordinator, a part-time cook, a gardener/night watchman who also teaches the children about gardening. And as well there's a highly-motivated team of 12 scholarship students who help out at *La Casita* in various ways – tutoring, serving lunches, gardening – as a way of 'giving back' to the community.

THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS ...

We are able to continue and expand these programs ... enabling young people to become leaders in their community and to find new ways of tackling economic issues and the effects of climate change.

Thank you, from the La Casita Team: Susan Gage, Mary Lynch, Kathy Coster, Linda Stanton, Sue Bailey, and Penny Patterson. When you donate to ICO every dollar goes to the project; we are all volunteers, and there are no administrative costs.

You may write a cheque to Innovative Communities Foundation (write "San Antonio Education Community" or "Casita Kitchen Building" on the Memo line) and send it to: ICO Foundation 300-722 Cormorant St., Victoria, BC V8W 1P8

Or donate online at:
Innovativecommunities.org/Guatemala/san-antonion-education



For more information check out our Blog at: icoatitlan.blogspot.com