

PUEBLOPARTISANS

Winter 2008-2009

Children of Tanhoc lining up outside the community school for a free health clinic. Find out more at: www.pueblopartisans.org



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Seasons Greetings from Poptún, Guatemala Reflections on the past year

By Amy Backes, Country representative

My second year has begun in this beautiful area, and I couldn't be more excited about our program. Living and working with the indigenous Maya has greatly expanded my mind's view of education, health, and the environment.

Pueblo Partisans and the Cooperative of Tanhoc celebrated their third year together on November 21, 2008. This year, 123 people graduated from grades in elementary school, middle school, and high school- an

increase of 60% since the project started in 2005. Francisco Cuz Chen, our rural coordinator, brought adult literacy training classes to Tanhoc, providing 23 adults with the opportunity to begin to read and write.

During this past year, Tanhoc and two other agricultural cooperatives in the area gathered to discuss their similarities, their differences, and ways in which they can work with each other to improve their lives. Both men and women traveled great

distances to take part in these workshops, each visiting the other's cooperative land. The women used this opportunity to express a desire to create a women's group, to work together to improve their economy and opportunities for education. They were able to share their ideas with other women in similar situations and bring a sense of autonomy, reminding each other of their capacities and abilities.

Pueblo Partisans is approaching an exciting year, as

we continue to offer more opportunities for education in Tanhoc. In 2009, we will have a full-time bilingual (Q'eqchi' and Spanish) teacher in Tanhoc, giving adult literacy and middle school classes to a population that otherwise has little or no access to these possibilities. We are also offering scholarships to several students to help them achieve their goals of graduating from high school or from a local university.

Pueblo Partisans will host a health education tour with nursing students from the University of Victoria. This group will join me, the in-country representative and professional registered nurse, and focus on teaching local health promoters first aid classes; something that several agricultural cooperatives in the area have requested.

Our program hopes to expand its horizons, by involving more cooperatives in this year's annual workshop; sharing struggles and successes that have happened in the past year.

Building on this year's



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“I want to continue on to university and help the people of my community, maybe even in something as important as protection of the environment.”

Milton Anselmo Maquin Tzul, 2008 scholarship recipient.

suggestions, we will be more focused on the women's group, as we help fulfill their self identified needs.

Our rural coordinator will be working with local organizations to help reforest areas near water sources, so as to prevent more damage from erosion. He will also be focusing on areas of agricultural diversification and amplifying the

residents' diets and economy. His focus on conservation will include preserving Tanhoc's existing Mayan ruin sites, and creating an educational park identifying important plants, trees, and further educating the population about the effects of deforestation.

From Tanhoc, may you all enjoy your holiday season. We appreciate your support.

Now your donation costs less!

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