

Mentor

Newsletter for UVG's donor community

Why UVG students are important to development

For a long time donors and international development agencies have been focusing exclusively on primary education. However, Technical Institutes and Universities must not be neglected for they have an important role to play in the fight against poverty, particularly in rural areas of Guatemala.



Institutions of Higher-education are highly relevant for the development of a country. First of all, they train the next generation of teachers, leaders, experts, researchers and extension specialists. Moreover, their professional skills and research are needed for boosting rural economies. Home grown specialists are important for raising productivity, coping with climate change and improving educational standards— and life in general. UVG students are aware of this, and our graduates also have an entrepreneurial mindset geared to the sectors in which our country has competitive advantages.

But UVG doesn't only form well-trained graduates. Though our involvement with extension programs and projects at UVG, students in our 3 campuses are also aware of the necessity to help their community, and to preserve their environment, their cultural traditions and heritage. This is reflected in our Profesorado students who are in-service teachers with a commitment to improving national education.

These personal and national challenges interrelate as we strive to find the resources needed for students committed to educate themselves in our university. As our Rector Roberto Moreno says "the few students that have made it to the university are the survivors of a system that has left thousands of youngsters behind." With the help of our donors we have provided 1255 university scholarships during 2007. We cannot thank you enough.

Please give to a 2008 scholarship this holiday season

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Mayra Osorio de Suchini:

A mother, a wife, a teacher and a student.

Mayra Osorio de Suchini, was the first graduate from the Profesorado Program in Primary Education in 2001 "It's a privilege and a reason for personal satisfaction; I'm a pioneer of an educational project that improves the quality of education in elementary schools in my home town, Santa Lucía Cotzumalguapa."



"As a teacher I've always believed in life improvement through education. Being a scholarship student at UVG Proesur was a tremendous challenge because during that time in life I was also an in-service teacher, a mother of three children and a wife. Looking back, I didn't think it was a burden but rather a dream come true, because it demanded the best of me in all aspects of my life."

"Educators have to permanently improve their teaching methods", Mayra says "One of the greatest achievements of my career is that I've been able to share this knowledge through educational projects within the teaching community in Santa Lucia. This experience also made me an ideal candidate to work at Colegio Americano del Sur —where I'm currently a teacher".

"UVG's philosophy "transcending excellence" is now part of my personal motto. I've taken advantage of another scholarship and now I'm taking a university Degree in Education, and further down the road I'll be pursuing the Masters Program in Education Management. I'm devoted to my teaching career. I do it for me and for the development of education in my country."

Alejandro Ordoñez: preserving the threads of our identity.



Through the project Hilos de Identidad (Threads of Identity), the Ixchel Museum of Indigenous Textiles in Guatemala City is relying on a UVG-Altiplano student to document traditional ceremonial dresses and suits around lake Atitlán in Sololá. The documentation project will provide a descriptive guide of one of the most important cultural manifestations among indigenous women, which is the crafting and use of their traditional textiles.

Alejandro Ordoñez, a 19 year old student at ALTIPLANO, feels proud to be collaborating with the Ixchel Museum. "I'm proud to be a part of this thesis project. I've already documented 10 villages. I have learned many important things about the significance of the Maya traditional dress for each village. The women and the elders of the communities I've visited provided information that is not found in books. Indigenous communities preserve their culture through their textiles and language. I appreciate this opportunity not only for its academic value but because its part of my cultural heritage."

Alejandro is originally from San Lucas Tolimán, one of the 12 villages around the lake. This year he graduated in Tourism thanks to a scholarship that covered 70% of his tuition at ALTIPLANO. "I've seen the necessities of my community, there are not that many opportunities for higher education, and that's why this scholarship was so important for my future. I don't plan to stop here; I want to pursue a career in Food Science at UVG's Central Campus next year." Alejandro is now looking for a scholarship or a sponsor to help him once he moves to Guatemala City. Most of the students that come to study in the city have difficulties covering their living expenses.

Alejandro, according to his teachers, is an A student, who has a lot of potential to achieve what he sets his mind to. "I always wanted to do something that had to do with Maya traditional dress, —says Alejandro—but I needed an institution to back me up. UVGA promotes cultural projects through its extension program at the Cultural Council of Sololá. I was lucky to find academic support in the Museum and Barbara Knoke, who reviewed my thesis."



When asked what his favorite Maya traditional dress is, Alejandro says its really hard to pick just one. "They are all very special, but I was drawn to the one from San Juan La Laguna. The details in the textile show a spiral that represents the beginning and the end of life. There are twenty of these spirals, and they represent the days in the Mayan calendar. Four more squares have been added recently to commemorate the day of their patron saint. The colors represent nature and the rainbow. The details of each Maya outfit I've documented represent their environment and details that are part of their daily life as well as their past."

Fundación Juan Bautista Gutierrez: a scholarship model to follow



As parents we trust that the best inheritance we can give our children is education. In a country like Guatemala, this wish may not come true for this new generation, because of an education system that denies people the access of education. The few that complete a high school education and make it to the university are survivors of a system that has left thousands of youngsters behind. Economic and family pressures are the reasons for desertion. If students want to study they must go through multiple obstacles.

Given this situation, is very important to recognize effective strategies that contribute to promote the education of new professionals. Fundación Juan Bautista Gutierrez provided 11 university scholarships for 2008. The competitors for this scholarship had to demonstrate high proficiency, outstanding grades, values and attitudes, as well as provide information on their socio-economic hardship.

252 students applied for the scholarship program and only six women and five men made it to the end. They will be able to study in the field and university that they choose.

The Foundation has given a special opportunity to many talented students that otherwise wouldn't not be able to study without their support. The lives of graduates from this program are now committed to give back to Guatemala the excellent opportunity they were benefited with.

Universidad del Valle de Guatemala has hosted 31 of the students supported by the Foundation. 9 of the 11 of this years scholarship recipients chose to study at UVG in 2008.

Although the financial help is a key element, its important to show that the authorities of Fundación Juan Bautista Gutiérrez, especially Isabel Bosch, has taken personal interest in monitoring each one of the students with enthusiasm, love and dedication for their development and success. For all these reasons the program is a model to follow. Congratulations!

Roberto Moreno Godoy, Rector of UVG.

Fundación Marfá visits UVG



Cristina Martinez and Xavier Coronas from Fundación Marfá, a Spanish NGO that Barcelona, came to UVG in November to visit Andres Herrera, an engineering student from a full scholarship from their foundation. Andrés achieved excellent grades, on his first year with a Marfá Scholarship.

Cristina and Xavier also came to Guatemala to interview low income students with exceptional grades that want to pursue a career at UVG. Thanks to donors like Fundación Marfá, we hope to provide more educational opportunities for students in 2008.

DONOR PROFILE

Laura Hastings: its all about making a difference in someone's life.



On August 2007, Laura Hastings visited the UVG Community to experience what she calls "the best trip I have ever taken". She went back to her home in Connecticut and asked us if she could come back to Guatemala and serve in any way possible to our educational community "It's all about making a difference in someone's life. At my age you sometimes feel not wanted and needed, but I didn't experience that at all in Guatemala. I came back to the States so happy. I felt younger. People even said I looked different."

As to my background, I was born in Milano Italy in 1939. My parents were Jewish. When the racial laws came out, my Dad, a doctor, could no longer practice. Thanks to my mother, we left Italy and came to the States in March, 1940. We left all our Italian family behind. Once in the States, we changed our name and religion. I grew up Catholic in an Italian, Greek, Armenian neighborhood. I spoke Italian at home and English with my friends. I knew nothing of my background until very late in life and only then very little. There is still a lot I do not know and won't ever know because those that knew are deceased."

"I was fluent in Italian, so I majored in Spanish and minored in French at Simmons College in Boston. After that, I decided to go for a master's in Spanish. I spent a year in Spain studying the language and taking classes through Middlebury College at their facility as well as at the University of Madrid. Because I didn't have much money, I had a scholarship which entailed teaching English at night to Spanish adults, it was a great opportunity and I loved doing that so much that I decided I wanted to teach, because I felt I was good at it."

Laura went to Harvard for a master's degree in teaching. After that, she taught for 28 years and she says she loved every minute of it. "In short, I'm at my best when I with people. I love giving of myself. I don't care if I never get anything back. I feel fortunate in finding out what my passions are. Now that I'm not teaching full time, I enjoy taking piano lessons. I find music very relaxing."

Laura Hastings knows the importance a scholarship made in her life and now she collaborates with the fund-raising efforts of UVG by providing scholarships for students for 2008. Thank you Laura, and congratulations on a lifetime of achievements.

First Ixil Graduates:



Four years ago, four women and three men from the Ixil community, left their hometown Nebaj, for the first time to study with a scholarship at UVG-Altiplano.

In November, thanks to their sponsors—Women's Enterprise y Fundación Agros—the seven Ixil students became the first university graduates in their communities. Four of them hold a Technical Degree in Tourism and three in Agroforestry.

Nebaj, was greatly impacted by the armed conflict in Guatemala. The Ixil's educational opportunities in this distant region are limited. More students from Nebaj are now in search of sponsors. Contact us for more information.

Please give to a 2008 scholarship this Holiday Season.

YOU CAN MAKE YOUR DONATIONS TO: THE U. S. FOUNDATION OF THE VALLEY OF GUATEMALA, FOR OUR SCHOLARSHIP FUND. THE USFUVG MAINTAINS A NON-PROFIT TAX STATUS AND YOUR GIFTS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE.

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Please don't hesitate to contact us in Guatemala by telephone or e-mail at: algonzalez@uvg.edu.gt if you need further information.

Universidad del Valle de Guatemala
Department of Development and External Programs
17 avenida 10-97 zona 15 Vista Hermosa III,
Guatemala, Ciudad. 01015
Phone : (502)2364-7494
Fax: (502) 23690686

UVG's 2007 GOAL IS 121 NEW SCHOLARSHIPS
\$1,500 will provide an ITEC rural scholarship for one year.
\$4,400 will provide a Central Campus scholarship for one year.

Thank you for showing interest in our scholarship programs

Visit our website! www.uvg.edu.gt

For an in-depth view of our different campus facilities, our students, Guatemala and the villages and communities that we work with, visit our English language web-site www.studyabroad.uvg.edu.gt.

This newsletter was designed and written by Lissy Gonzalez, Coordinator of UVG's Office of External Programs in Guatemala City.