

Dear Friends – What you’ll find in this newsletter: We’ll begin with a personal statement that teenager Yoselín Ramos read when Carmen and a delegation of Project supporters visited her community in the northeastern province of Morazán in March, 2004. Next will be a report from our Clerk, Lynn Mitchell, followed by a letter from founder Carmen Broz and a report from Robert Broz, Field Director. That is followed by Committee member Marion Newton’s summary of the *Club Leo* book collection project. Treasurer Bill Bauriedel concludes with a brief financial statement.

A scholarship student speaks for herself: Yoselín Ramos, El Gigante cooperative, Morazán

I am in my first year of technical high school. I’m a person who sets tasks and objectives for herself. One of my objectives is to excel academically, to learn a little more every day. I have always dreamed of becoming an excellent doctor with the help of my parents, the strength of God, and the good fortune of the support I’ve been offered by many people. As a young woman I want very much to help my parents in the future, and also to contribute to the development of our country.

With all my heart I thank everyone who has helped me all these years. I promise not to let them down. My intentions have always been to have good relations with the whole community. I thank Carmen Broz infinitely for having a heart so full of humility and love toward everyone, and for thinking of us every day. I recognize her great effort, and therefore I promise to be intelligent in this respect and to put great value on my education, since my future and that of society in general depends on this.

Thank you, Carmen Broz, and may God bless you.



Report from Lynn Mitchell, Clerk, El Salvador Projects Committee

Dear Friends:

As many of you know, Carmen recently moved to Friends House in Santa Rosa. (See her letter, below.) Although we miss her dearly, we stay in close contact by telephone, email, and with frequent visits. You can reach Carmen at:

Carmen Broz, 684 Benicia Drive Apt. 3, Santa Rosa, CA 95409-3058
 Tel: 707-576-6673 Email: cbroz@friendshouse.org



Some highlights of the recent work of the El Salvador Projects Committee follow.

Vision Retreat: On January 19, just before Carmen moved to Santa Rosa, we had a wonderful Vision Retreat at Frank and Josephine Duvencck’s house at Hidden Villa near Palo Alto, formerly the Duvencck ranch and now a center for education in human relations and sustainable environmental practices. This was the second in our series of special meetings to envision right development of the Projects in the future. The day began with silent worship followed by Quaker dialogue on the question, “What motivates and nourishes me in my work with the El Salvador Projects?”. We realize that we are moving through a period of transition. The Projects originated as a form of support for the inspired work of a released Friend, Carmen Broz. Now we are building a sustainable organization that can guide the evolution of the Projects in a manner that reflects the values and purposes to which we

are dedicated. At the same time, we are all convinced that it is vital to retain the direct, personal character of the Projects. Some of the topics we considered at the retreat are:

- Continuing to develop our Projects as a model of a way to end poverty through personal action with specific communities. We hope to encourage other faith-based organizations to adopt a village school, orphanage, or hospital.
- Continuing and expanding fund raising, so that we can fulfill our commitments to support education in rural villages.
- Publicizing the Projects in the Palo Alto area, and more broadly with the help of supporters elsewhere.
- Featuring a student success story in each newsletter to help all supporters share our awareness of the real human meaning of this work.

Clarification – University students receive *loans*: We've all been in the habit of referring to support for university students as *scholarships*. In fact, Carmen has reminded us, from the outset university students have been told that the funds they received were loans, to be repaid either with money or community service. The students have signed an *acuerdo* (an agreement), with no fixed repayment schedule and no standards for appropriate community service. With each student known personally to Carmen and Robert, these arrangements were individual and informal. The new local committee of representatives of the four supported communities (see Robert's report, below) will draft a new, more standardized *acuerdo*, and we expect to systematically track monetary repayments and service.

Some of our Committee members were unaware until recently that there was a repayment understanding, and most Project supporters probably think the "scholarships" were gifts. We apologize for this misunderstanding. It may be that some of the confusion around "scholarship vs loan" was linguistic. The Spanish word *beca* can be translated either as *scholarship* or as *loan*. We want you to know that the students have always recognized that they were receiving loans. As Carmen explained to the Committee, "When the program for higher education occurred to me, I never thought that we could afford to give money away to any one, knowing that the needs in El Salvador are so great. Those who receive our aid are privileged, and it would be unfair otherwise to those who cannot participate in the program for lack of funds."

Field Director, Robert Broz: Robert will be visiting the U.S. from April through June. Accompanied by a Committee member, he will travel to many of the monthly meetings in College Park Quarterly Meeting to talk about the projects and show pictures. I'll be contacting the Meeting Clerks to see when they would like to have him visit.

Trips to the El Salvador Projects for Friendly teens and their parents : A trip arranged through Palo Alto Meeting is planned for **summer 2006**, to be coordinated and led by Barbara Babin, a former Clerk of the Meeting who speaks Spanish.

First Day School in Palo Alto: As we continue to teach First Day School once a month, the children are learning some Spanish including a song, colors, numbers, and phrases to begin a conversation.

Computer Lab in El Barío: Paul Engstrom got 12 donated Computer hard-drives for the computer lab and arranged to have them delivered to Robert.

Thank you all for your on-going interest and support. I hope that many of you will have a chance to meet with Robert and one of the Committee members this Spring as they visit different Meetings. There is nothing like the experience of actually visiting the projects, but hearing Robert's anecdotes and seeing pictures conveys a lot!

Sincerely, Lynn Mitchell, Clerk

A letter from Carmen Broz



Dear Friends:

I send you *saludos*, my greetings, from my new residence at Friends House in Santa Rosa, California. The time came when it seemed wise to leave the house in Millbrae that has been my US home for many years and “retire” to an apartment with a rose garden, conveniences, and the stimulating company of a wonderful community of Friends and other kindred spirits. As you know, I am much less actively involved in the day-to-day oversight of the El Salvador Projects than I once was. I’m grateful that my son, Robert, directs the projects with such enthusiasm and skill from his home in Suchitoto, El Salvador. The El Salvador Projects Committee of the Palo Alto Friends

Meeting is a committed support group of creative, caring people, many of whom have visited the Projects and feel enduring personal bonds with the people whose lives the Projects enrich and expand. I continue to consult with the Committee frequently, and I participate in the series of Vision Meetings we are holding to thoughtfully build the foundations for the future of our work in El Salvador.

You’ve probably heard me say that *education changes the face of a nation*. Although El Salvador is very small, we know that it will take decades of education and cooperative effort to overcome the country’s heritage of generations of colonialism and exploitation. We should never be discouraged, for we see the justification of all we have attempted in the faces of children who know that the path is open to them for education through the university level, and in the faces of parents who can truly believe that as survivors of war and oppression they are witnessing the emergence of a promising future for their children. The strongest lesson I’ve learned in my years of work in El Salvador is that we really can end poverty through education, and it can be done inexpensively if we put our hearts into it. Wherever we make a start, we see the results immediately.

I will close this letter as I have in the past. Thank you for your continuing support. Without your help nothing would have been accomplished.

With much love and gratitude, Carmen

Robert Broz with high school graduates in El Barío, January 2005

Report from Robert Broz, Field Director

Dear friends and supporters of the El Salvador Projects:

Once again I have the pleasure of writing to you about life in El Salvador and progress in our projects.



Political, economic, and social progress in El Salvador sometimes seems to occur very slowly. National policy has not changed noticeably in the last year. The right-wing government still follows in the footsteps of the U.S., with troops in Iraq, support for free trade agreements (CAFTA), and a tax structure favoring big business and the rich. Middle and left-wing political parties actively protest social and economic injustice, but the poor remain poor and the rich keep getting richer.

El Salvador for many years now has been selling out to the international clothing industry as one of the best new sweatshop locations in Latin America. Many free trade zones exist where controls to protect the rights of the labor force are absent. We regularly hear about factories that close suddenly, without paying employees and warehouse rent. The same foreign owners then open under a new name. When they have economic problems, they repeat this. Some labor unions are trying to make changes to protect the rights of the workers, but are given no support from the government. When these groups organize, the foreign owners commonly fire all their workers to prevent the labor union from organizing – very similar to what the U.S. went through in the 1950s and 1960s, including the violence. It is not uncommon to read that labor union leaders die mysteriously or have been killed.

Education, on the other hand is improving, even though funding by the government is very low. For example, the school in El Barío received funding for two more teachers this year and is also on the list to receive a science lab. This I see as very positive. Before, schools in known left-wing areas of the country were ignored and given no financial aid: only urban schools were supported.

At the local level, city governments are where most progress is made. This occurs in both right- and left-wing cities. In towns and cities where the mayor and the city council are active, progress is steady. For example, Suchitoto, where I reside: Over the years the city has been able to get drinking water and electricity to over 95% of the population. Most of the rural roads have been repaired, making traveling much easier even for the very poor.

But even in cities like Suchitoto problems occur, like the strike of city workers in January. About 80% of our city workers went on strike because of a salary dispute, because a high pay raise was given to only a few workers while most lower-level employees were given none. The strike has ended, negotiations are still in progress, but the situation is tense. I will keep you updated. By this you can see that El Salvador still has a long way to go in its social, economic, and political struggle.

Although many parts of the world, such as the Middle East, Africa, and Asia, suffer worse situations than El Salvador, it is important to understand how our projects are helping, and how small amounts of money make significant change.

Our projects in 2005

Following suggestions by the El Salvador Projects Committee of the Palo Alto Friends Meeting, a few changes are being made. These are changes to strengthen local management of our projects, changes which we hope will make our projects run better and aid us in preparation and

management, both locally and in the US. We continue working in four communities, supporting mostly education of the middle school, high school, and university level students.

In January we had our first meeting of the new local project committee, composed of members from each supported community. From El Barío we have two members. Reyna Isabel, who has aided me for the last two years in decision making and project management, will continue as our treasurer. Consuelo, who has worked with the school in El Barío for the last seven years, will also represent El Barío and will be our local contact with its school and community.

From the Christian- based community in Apulo we have two members, Francisca and Diana. They were recommended by Sister Monica in 2004 to help manage funds from various institutions, including funds for high school scholarships provided by our projects. From the cooperatives in Morazán, Cristóbal will represent Los Sueños de Jocoaitique, and Rafael will represent the cooperative El Gigante. Both new members have worked over the years with the educational committees in their communities. Also representing Los Sueños is Romelia Chicas. Like Reyna Isabel, she is one of our university graduates and her experience as a student loan recipient will be of great value to us.

At this committee’s first meeting in Suchitoto on January 23rd, we discussed its many basic aspects and its membership. We also started discussion about the general functioning of our projects and the committee members’ responsibilities. I was named as President or coordinator, Romelia as Secretary, and Reyna as Treasurer. We have planned three more regular meetings throughout 2005, and we've decided to meet in each community: April 3rd in Morazán, July 30th in Apulo, and October 30th in El Barío. We also discussed our 2005 budget and committee expenses for the year. Our budget is as follows:

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| 1) Scholarships, Sueños de Jocoaitique | \$1,700.00 |
| 2) Scholarships, El Gigante | \$1,400.00 |
| 3) Scholarships, Apulo | \$1,000.00 |
| 4) Teachers Salary, El Barío | \$4,114.00 |
| 5) Field worker’s salary | \$7,200.00 |
| 6) Committee Expenses | \$530.00 |
| 7) University student loan project | \$14,440.00 (16 students x \$900) |
| Total estimated budget | \$30,344.00 |

In subsequent meetings we will continue evaluating local project management, determine the budget for 2006, and change the way in which we decide what projects to support and where money will best be used.

In January and February I met with each of the supported groups at our first of three annual meetings. We discussed the functioning of our new committee, this year’s budget for each community, the grades of new and continuing students, communal and individual responsibilities, and changes in project policy in 2005. The budget in El Gigante was adjusted from \$1000 to \$1400, and in Sueños from \$1400 to \$1700. In the meeting with our university students we were able to determine this year’s student list, adjust the monthly stipend, and gather letters the students have written to their sponsors. In the El Barío meeting, I was able to meet the new teacher we will be paying. He has many years of experience, and I feel that he will be well worth the investment. The new principal, Guadalupe, asked to see if we could finance the purchase of an overhead projector, which we will discuss in our next committee meeting. Guadalupe is one of the popular teachers and graduates of our projects. I was also invited to a second meeting in El Barío where, to my surprise, Frank Cummings was present. He is an East Coast Quaker who now lives in Suchitoto with his wife, Carol, and has been working in a neighboring community for many years. Also attending was Sister Patty, who also supports educational projects in the area.

We were asked for financial support for an English teacher and for the computer lab. We all agreed to look at the school's budget for 2005, but in the meantime we could easily help out in the selection and evaluation of candidates for the English teacher position. With regard to the computer lab, all present agreed to see what could be done to get more computers to El Barío. One of the Palo Alto Friends meeting committee members, Paul Engstrom, was able to get 12 hard drives and they are now on the way to El Salvador. With these drives we should be able to get around 8 computers up and running. This meeting was very positive and gives us the chance to coordinate El Barío with these other groups, something that has been discussed for the last two years here in Suchitoto.

This year we will have only 16 university students, due to the high number of dropouts in 2004 and low number of applications for 2005. The dropout rate in 2004 was higher than in past years, and it was caused by different factors in each case. One student dropped out due to bad grades, another because she became pregnant, and two others decided to look for work due to the economic situation of their families. These are common reasons for dropouts, even in developed countries, and I think we will have to expect increases and decreases in the dropout rate from year to year.

One important topic that must be addressed is financial aid for all BS and BA students for their professional training or thesis work. Due to government reforms in education, students in these 5-year programs now have to either obtain professional experience or defend and publish a thesis. This involves paying tuition for a sixth year at the university. When our projects were started this was not a requirement. In 2005 we will have three students who will be finishing their 5th year, and they are very concerned about what to do in 2006. I have explained that our sponsors were told that their obligations were only for 5 years. However, it would be a shame if these students are unable to finish their studies after so much effort and sacrifice.

We also discussed repayment options for graduating students, including one new option: In those cases where a younger sibling is put through the university by the family of a graduated student, we will now accept this as repayment, one year of full time studies provided for one year of studies received. We feel that this is a very direct way in which a student can return the financial aid received.

Repayment by graduated students has been low, even though most of our students have found work. We have six students who have started to make payments, and another four who have paid their loans with social work as unpaid teachers (two of these now have paying teacher jobs in El Barío). Currently two graduates are helping their siblings with university costs and another has started her social work in 2005. This year our 2003 graduates should begin to repay their loans after the standard grace period of one year.

In Palo Alto as well as here we are discussing the need to be flexible with regard to the repayment of student loans. We all know that some students may not be able to repay or even provide communal service, as life is hard here even for professionals. The economy on a world-wide scale is bad, and in many cases students may not find employment. We hope that in 2005 we are able to set guidelines for the repayment of student loans by our graduating students.

I hope that this short report aids in your decision to continue supporting our projects.

With best wishes, Robert Broz

The Club Leo book collection project – a report from Marion Newton



A year ago this March when my husband Jamie and I went to El Salvador to visit the projects as part of the Palo Alto Meeting delegation, I was inspired by the dedication and enthusiasm both teachers and students had for education. They truly understood Carmen’s vision that education is the way to end poverty, the way to peace.

In the schools and community centers that we visited, I saw few children’s books compared to the abundance of books we are familiar with in our schools and libraries. As a kindergarten teacher, I make Scholastic book orders for my class each month. Scholastic has a variety of catalogues to order from. One of them, “Club Leo,” carries books in Spanish. (*Leo* means *I read* in Spanish, and the catalog is also recognizable by its Leo the Lion motif.) I decided to make a small order from Club Leo with each order my class made this year to build up a collection of Spanish books to send to the communities of El Barío, El Gigante, and Sueños en Jocoaitique where we visited. It is enjoyable to watch the box fill with Spanish language books through the small monthly orders and generous donations of good used Spanish-language children’s books by Project supporters. We look forward to sending the books down to the communities of the El Salvador Projects this summer to be read and enjoyed by all.

Report from our Treasurer, Bill Bauriedel

Through the generosity of friends like you, the El Salvador projects are making a big difference to the students we are helping and to the communities we serve. Last year we received gifts totaling \$34,190 from 184 individuals, Friends Meetings, and a few other churches and organizations. We currently send our newsletters to 510 addresses. Our 36% rate of contributions is possible only because you believe in what we are doing. If you are among our past donors we ask that you continue your support, and if you haven't yet given a gift to support the Projects we hope you will consider helping us this year.



- A gift of \$35 will pay for shoes and a school uniform for one elementary school student.
- \$200 per year will educate a high school student.
- \$1000 will send a student to the public university for a year. (That \$1000 includes tuition, room, and books.) The \$1000 is considered a loan which we ask the students to repay financially when they find employment, and/or through equivalent community service. In this way, we can leverage our support to reach more students in years to come, and at the same time help build a sense of personal responsibility and pride in our students.

From all of us on the Committee to each of you, *thank you* for your continuing support of the El Salvador Projects!