

*La Ingeniera* (woman engineer), a painting by Renacho Melgar honoring Chomingo's grandmother. This honors the ingenuity of bright people caught in poverty.

## **Palo Alto Friends Meeting El Salvador Projects November 2013**

**[www.pafmelsalvadorprojects.org](http://www.pafmelsalvadorprojects.org)**

### **From the Committee Clerk:**

*Friends, this newsletter brings you a wide range of news and reflection.*

The report from our Field Director, Robert Broz

- Describes current developments in an unusual truce involving leaders of criminal gangs and some government officials accompanied by rising violence.
- Gives his perspective on presidential campaign dynamics in El Salvador.
- This uncertain and in some ways unsettling picture of current social and political conditions is followed by Robert's bright and encouraging account of the life and progress of Chomingo, the first art student our Projects have supported in a university program.
- In this issue, we also look forward to Carmen Broz's 90th birthday on December 15, 2013.
- Jamie Newton's article looks back over Carmen's remarkable life and some milestones in the history of the El Salvador Projects.
- We conclude by inviting supporters to be listed on a 90th birthday certificate that will be presented to Carmen.

*As always, we thank you for your faithful support to the El Salvador Projects.*

**—Hulda Muaka**

# Palo Alto Friends Meeting El Salvador Projects

November 2013

[www.pafmelsalvadorprojects.org](http://www.pafmelsalvadorprojects.org)

From the Director, Robert Broz



*“In the midst of darkness, light persists. In the midst of falsehood, truth persists. In the midst of hatred, love persists.”*

—Mahatma Gandhi

In his report for this edition of the newsletter, Field Director Robert Broz describes the social and political conditions that surround our efforts to help young people from rural families in El Salvador gain an education and in other ways improve the quality of their lives. It is complicated and in some ways mysterious, with implications of violence and corruption associated with many policy initiatives and election processes. In this context, we do our best to mind the light, advance truth, and keep love alive. —Editors

The truce between major gang leaders beginning in March 2012 reduced the murder rate, one of the highest in Central America, almost instantly. This is sometimes called “another type of peace agreements,” a reference to the 1992 peace agreements that ended the civil war. It has been criticized by many since imple-

mented in 2012. Most Salvadorans feel that the truce is only benefiting the gangs, given that one of the initial wins for incarcerated gang leaders was to be put back into medium-security prisons to have access to their families and underlings. The gang leaders achieved this by threatening to order their members to disrupt the 2012 legislative elections.

Extortion (the gangs’ main source of income) and drug trafficking have not diminished. On the other hand, local governments have now declared 14 municipalities with Peace Zones where gangs have agreed to lower criminal activities in exchange for which the local governments are to invest in educational programs, vocational training, job creation, and prevention, in hopes of reincorporating gang members into society. Programs that work with at-risk teens and prevention are expected to have long term benefits for the Salvadoran population. On balance, the general feeling in the public is that the gangs and their members are getting the better deal while the rest of the population still lives in fear.

The truce is not backed or supported by the central government. As it continues, rings or gang cliques responsible for criminal activities from murder to extortion are being identified, arrested, and prosecuted. Consequently, gang leaders and negotiation teams accuse the government of wanting to undermine the truce. Recently, the gang leaders backed by the negotiating teams announced that they have given orders to their members to go out and vote in the upcoming 2014 Presidential elections.

Will this be used as a threat as the elections come closer? Will support for one party become part of these new peace talks? Are the gangs being used by the South American drug cartels to gain per-



Turning in guns at the Anniversary Truce



The truce between major gang leaders

manent access to move drugs up through Central America? These are just a few of the questions you hear when the topic comes up. There will be presidential elections on February 2, 2014. The gang problem is and will continue to be part of all candidates' electoral platforms.

It is suspected that the upcoming elections will have a second round. The elections to be held on February 2<sup>nd</sup> are commonly referred to as the first round. For the first time ever, Salvadorans living outside the country will be allowed to vote. Twenty-one million dollars will be invested to get the system up and running, and will be available only in some major cities in the U.S. and Canada. There are some 200,000 Salvadorans there who will be eligible to vote. It is too early to say how these votes may affect the upcoming elections. Since the Salvadorean population living abroad is about as polarized politically as it is here, I doubt that it will sway the election.

There are currently three presidential candidates, one running for each of the two main parties, and a third running under a coalition of three political parties. The candidate for the FMLN is the current Vice-President and Minister of Education, Sanchez Ceren. His vice presidential running mate is Oscar Ortiz, the very progressive long-term Mayor of Santa Tecla, one of the larger Salvadoran cities. In almost all recent polls, the FMLN shows a 4% lead. As campaign policy, the FMLN mentions job creation to reduce unemployment, better and more accessible education, and reducing crime through prevention programs. FMLN campaign promises include making the very successful program of providing uniforms and school supplies to all public schools K-9<sup>th</sup> graders also available to public high school stu-

dents in 2014. The creation of both a virtual high school and university are mentioned. The FMLN trunes serves municipalities that participate in ALBA (Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas) program, where a percentage of the profits from Venezuelan petroleum products are reinvested in social development projects. If El Salvador joins Venezuela Petrocaribe, these programs would be national and not limited to FMLN-governed municipalities.

The ARENA party currently splits the right-wing votes with the newer GANA party in coalition with two center-right parties.

Each poll just under 30%. The candidates are Norman Quijano for ARENA, elected as mayor of San Salvador in 2012, and the former ARENA President Tony Saca. The mudslinging between the two right-wing candidates and their supporters has made public many acts of corruption over the years of ARENA's control of the central government, and will most likely benefit the FMLN as ARENA and GANA voters realize they have been lied to.

Rumor has it that the ARENA party plans to buy out the coalition, so that Tony Saca would drop out of the race and not participate in the first round elections. This would reduce the elections to the usual very close race between the two major parties making it harder for the FMLN. My view is that regardless of which candidate or party wins in 2014, El Salvador has learned that the FMLN is a party dedicated to improving the country for the majority of the population. The visceral fear that the right-wing population, both poor and rich, has had since the formation of the FMLN has gradually declined, and the 2009 presidential win of Mauricio Funes, the current FMLN President, has changed Salvadoran politics and life forever.

Whatever the election outcomes, **our programs will continue to work, educating young Salvadorans** so that they can make a better living, help their families and communities, and in the future contribute to making El Salvador a better place for all of its citizens. Our programs are supporting twenty university students in 2013. Four of these will finish their studies this year – one in nursing, another in English, the third in information technology, and the fourth as our first art student (see my article about Chomingo in

this newsletter). One graduating student, Ruben, helped us redesign our project website and is helping to publicize our work using social media networks such as Facebook. We continue to support the school where it all started in the community of El Barío, where we provide financial aid to pay two librarians and some class hours for one of our graduates, Maria Flor, who teaches social studies to junior high and high school students at the school. We also did a very focused fundraising campaign at Palo Alto Friends Meeting and were able to raise almost \$900 very quickly for needed school supplies for the K-12 school in El Barío. Thanks to all of you who were so generous!

Coordination with other programs that support education began some years ago in Suchitoto and continues to be effective. This year we have been working hand in hand with the municipal government of Suchitoto, which has also started providing limited financial support to offset the rent of our student house in San Salvador, in addition to the financial support they provide for our annual University Fair held each June. For the second year, a unified application for university financial aid in 2014 is available to students and is in use by four different programs, including ours. With continued financial support from our donors, we expect that the El Salvador Projects of Palo Alto Friends Meeting will be able to support four to six new students in 2014.

Once again, I would like to close my report by thanking all of you who make our work in El Salvador possible. You are the wind beneath our wings!

Peace to All, **Robert Broz**



One teacher with her share of school supplies

## **Juan Domingo (the artist Chomingo)**

### **A very different scholarship student**

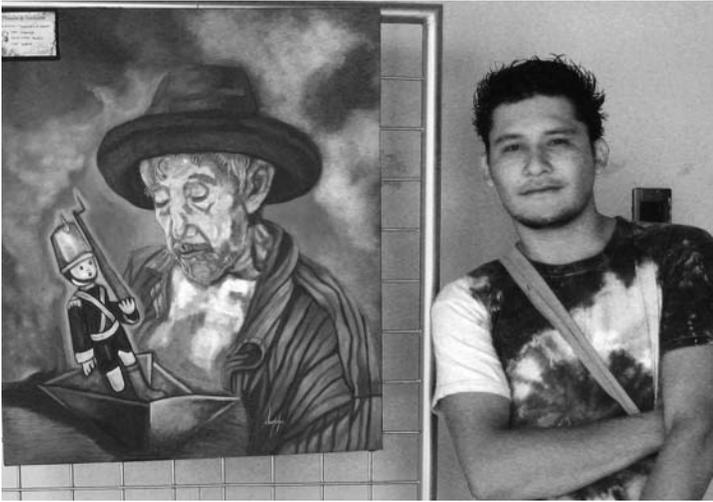
**by Robert Broz**

While I was in the U.S. visiting family and speaking to Quaker meetings in 2007, I met a donor who told me that her mother, an artist, told her before dying to use what was left of her small inheritance funds to help someone in the arts. She asked if we supported art students. I answered that although our support for higher education is open to students in any program, we had never had an artist apply, but that I knew a young artist from the community of El Barío who was determined and talented, who had never received any formal education in art. I walked away with a big smile and a warmed heart, knowing that my talk had inspired at least one person to continue supporting our work in El Salvador.

Upon my return to El Salvador I visited him to see if he had any interest in art training. For most students, the National Center for Arts (CENAR) is the most accessible and affordable. Juan Domingo, who signs his work as Chomingo, was very interested, especially when I told him that the donor wanted the support to be a donation – not one of the interest-free student loans we normally provide for post secondary studies – and that the recipient would agree to repay the funds he received through community service by contributing his skills as an artist. He already had been involved in numerous public murals and socially responsible projects within the community and was glad to continue to support such projects whenever he could.

Juan Domingo is the younger of two brothers. I don't know who his parents are, or were. They may have been killed in the civil war or immigrated to the U.S., or perhaps they simply abandoned Juan Domingo and his older brother, David. They were raised by their grandmother, who passed away in March of this year. David and Juan Domingo worked the land, earning the little money the family needed to get by. This was a serious consideration for Juan Domingo when he made the decision to study, knowing that his brother David would have to work harder.

Now 26 years old, Juan Domingo is finishing his fourth and final year at the CENAR in



Chomingo exhibits a recent painting.  
He excels in portraiture.

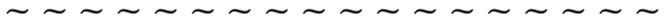
San Salvador with our support. His art progresses and evolves constantly, and to me he seems to be always in search of his inner spirit and leading.

Over the past four years Chomingo has had several gallery openings, most in group shows with other young artists, both locally in Suchitoto and in San Salvador. He also continues to work on public murals with local non-profits, communities, and the Suchitoto city hall, mostly social issues such as women's and children's rights, protecting the environment, and youth initiatives against crime and violence.

The death of his grandmother sent Juan Domingo into a bout of depression, but he changed the negative energy of his depression into creativity in his art. He told me "even out of bad, good can arise."

When my mother Carmen Broz started the Palo Alto Friends Meeting's El Salvador Projects, she intended to support only 2-3 year study programs in practical fields as a means to reduce poverty. This was effective. The majority of the initial students who studied to become nurses, teachers, and technicians in chemical and industrial engineering are now living productive lives. My mother now tells my children that one's future is directly related to the amount one studies, saying to my 15-year old that his future income will be based on whether he continues on after high school with a two-year technical program, an undergraduate program, a master's degree or a doctorate. I have seen this direct correlation in our graduates' income. Our first graduates, with only a two to three year post-secondary education, make an average of around

\$700/month after 11-12 years. Our current graduates generally find jobs starting in the same range, with the benefit of a 6-year undergraduate program at the National University or one of the private universities. Juan Domingo has already sold paintings for \$100-\$400, and he is also now paid for some of the projects for local non-profits. Art may not be the most direct way to end poverty, but I feel that we need to support more than strictly practical training. We should consider all areas of higher education, so that young people from rural El Salvador can follow their hearts to seek the future they envision for themselves and make their best contributions to a better future for this troubled planet we all share.



**Human Rights Advisory**  
**from South Bay Sanctuary Covenant, Palo Alto**

The Archbishop of El Salvador, Monseñor Escobar Alas, suddenly closed Tutela Legal, the human rights organization begun under the auspices of Archbishop Oscar Romero. Tutela Legal has been a model of human rights data collection and the provision of services to the poor since its formation at the beginning of El Salvador's civil war. Lawyers have used Tutela's data in every single court victory against human rights abusers from El Salvador, including the recent court decision to send to prison Colonel Inocente Orlando Montano, who is now facing extradition to Spain and criminal charges in the UCA massacre of six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her daughter.

The timing of this closing is especially worrisome: it appears to be a response to the growing campaign, internally and internationally, to end impunity in El Salvador. Given the recent challenges to impunity—the Amnesty Law is now in El Salvador's Supreme Court, Tutela Legal has filed the El Mozote massacre case, and the UCA/Jesuit case in Spain is closer on the horizons—we expect more actions of this sort in the future. It is urgent to protect Tutela's personnel and archives and guarantee free access to this information for both legal and historical reasons. It is also urgent to protect other organizations that are challenging impunity and will face increasing pressure. Perhaps the readers will find a way to lodge their objections with the Church offices in San Salvador.

## Carmen Broz at 90

### Reflections by Jamie Newton



Carmen as a young woman in San Salvador

On a bright day in March 2004, Carmen Moran Broz sat in the community house of El Barío with villagers who were teachers or otherwise actively engaged with the school. As the conversation moved from greetings and pleasantries to such serious issues as academic administration, how to establish a new teaching position, and strategies for seeking government funding, I realized that Carmen was truly in her element. Listening attentively as teachers and parents shared their concerns, facilitating dialogue, speaking with a quality of authority that arose from long experience and profound convictions, Carmen gently guided the group's transition from anxious uncertainty to a plan they could carry out with confidence.

After several years' absence from El Salvador, Carmen had returned with a small group of supporters with whom she visited the villages where our Projects were active. My wife, Marion, and I were privileged to be in this "delegation" – the first of what she hoped would become a regular part of our work, bringing many

visitors who would observe firsthand the needs of rural Salvadorans, witness the effectiveness of the work she had set in motion, and become more committed to sustaining and strengthening the Projects. (In fact, this vision has evolved into the service-learning trips that in recent years have brought youth and adults to learn, work, and form friendships in the villages we serve in El Salvador.)

Then 80 years old, Carmen traveled with our group from El Barío in central El Salvador to El Gigante and Sueños en Jocoaitique in the northeastern province of Morazán, and to the volcanic basin near San Salvador where Apulo nestles dangerously close to the edge of a flood-prone lake. She walked with us and Salvadoran friends Romelia Chicas and Silvia Saenz through downtown San Salvador in the annual procession of remembrance for Archbishop Oscar Romero, whose assassination in 1980 had convinced many that the long civil war was unavoidable. Romelia, at left in the photo, lost all of her immediate family in the civil war. One of the first university students our Projects sponsored, she is now a school principal.

As I reflect back on the sixty years of friendship Marion and I have shared with Carmen and her family since we were all active in the Quaker Meeting in Phoenix, Arizona, it is evident to



At age 80, Carmen marched in the 2004 procession to honor Archbishop Romero. Left to right: Romelia Chicas, Marion Newton, Carmen Broz, Jamie Newton and Sylvia Saenz.

me that Carmen's whole life prepared her for the work we carry on today with the leadership of Carmen's son Robert, our Field Director.

Carmen was born in 1923 in Sonsonate, El Salvador. Her mother died when she was four years old, and as a nine-year old she lived through the genocidal matanza that killed many thousands of indigenous Salvadorans. At her

older sister's insistence, her father enrolled Carmen in a boarding school where she received a strong education from Catholic nuns. At 20, she accompanied the family of a former teacher to the U.S. to care for the children. She remained to earn a bachelor's degree in economics from the University of California at Berkeley.

Carmen encountered Quakerism through a work camp of the American Friends Service Committee in Nayarit, Mexico. That led to an opportunity for scholarship support to earn a master's degree in Social and Technical Assistance at Haverford College, where the renowned Quaker philosopher Douglas Steere introduced Carmen to Dorothy Day of the Catholic Worker service organization. After Haverford, Carmen lived and worked for a time with Dorothy Day at the Catholic Worker House on Christie Street in New York. In an autobiographical statement, Carmen wrote: "It was here where Dorothy's example and/or words imprinted in the deepest part of my soul that the only meaning in our lives is to serve our brothers and sisters. She taught me also how to beg, a great gift that has served me well to raise funds for El Salvador Projects." Carmen began her teaching career in the 1950s and raised her four sons, ultimately becoming a reading specialist in the Millbrae elementary schools, near San Francisco.

In the summer of 1986, six years before the 1992 peace accords settled the civil war, Carmen joined an international delegation sponsored by the SHARE Foundation to accompany peasant families intent on reclaiming their agricultural lands in the El Barío



Carmen hugs Lt. Paloma-1986

area, after massacres and intense bombing by the military had made them refugees for years. With supplies loaded on buses and trucks, they camped overnight in the bombed-out town of Aguacayo, between Suchitoto and El Barío. While attending mass in the ruined church of Aguacayo the next morning, they were suddenly surrounded by soldiers of the Atlacatl Division, known for its massacres of campesinos (rural people). In this tense and dangerous situation, Carmen found it possible to move from fear and anger to recognition of common humanity with some of the soldiers.

Carmen and the other internationals were jailed and expelled from El Salvador the next day, but remarkably, the campesinos were allowed to continue to El Barío. There they reestablished their agricultural pursuits and created the village that today is home to the El Barío School, built initially with funds from a grant that Carmen and Robert Broz wrote with the villagers, now educating some 500 students from El Barío and surrounding villages.

Carmen retired from her teaching career in 1986. Banned from El Salvador as *persona no grata* until she acquired a new passport without that forbidding imprint several years later, she worked with the SHARE Foundation in Nicaragua, teaching reading and helping communities develop clean water supplies. Returning to El Salvador in 1989, with the civil war at its peak of violent intensity, she worked to establish nursery schools with Montessori methods and good nutrition. After the Peace Accords were signed in 1992, her emphasis shifted to providing medical care to remote villages in northern Morazán. By the time a nongovernmental organization launched a program to offer clinics in that region, Carmen had concluded that "Education is the fastest way to end poverty." Redirecting financial support that continued to flow from Palo Alto Friends and a small but growing number of kindred spirits elsewhere in the U.S., Carmen administered funds for school uniforms, shoes, and books to enable campesino children to attend school – a life-changing opportunity in rural zones where previously very few people had advanced beyond the second or third grade, and the majority of adults were functionally illiterate.

As the children of rural families moved toward high school age and governmental funding for elementary education in rural areas began, the El Salvador Projects increasingly emphasized support

for secondary education for promising students. Eventually, the first of those students graduated, and some came to Carmen to ask her what could come next. They wanted advanced education – and Carmen determined that she would help them gain it, knowing that when one person in even a large Salvadoran family is well educated and employed it is very unlikely that anyone in that family will ever again be destitute.

As Carmen approached her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday, she recognized that she no longer had the energy to travel across the country, maintain working relationships with people in numerous locations, speak to American supporters to report on the work and raise funds to continue it, and otherwise manage the Projects. Fortunately, her son Robert had fallen in love with El Salvador when he came to visit her, and over a period of years he had become familiar with the villages and had increasingly assumed responsibility for work his mother could not easily do. The El Salvador Projects Committee was relieved and grateful when Robert agreed to assume the position of Field Director.

I have said that Carmen's whole life prepared her for this work. When Carmen returned to the war-torn country of her origin, she brought with her deep cultural knowledge, professional training as a teacher, and the strength of character and spiritual foundation of decades of Quaker faith and practice. Robert Broz continues this work with personal qualities and training that are uniquely appropriate – cultural insight gained through years of residence in El Salvador, with a Salvadoran wife and children and active engagement with both rural communities and the town of Suchitoto, a college degree in agriculture, and the experience of growing up with



Carmen at 88 in Santa Rosa

Quaker values and practices.

On December 15, 2013, all of us who love Carmen Broz will celebrate her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, wherever we are in the world. With Carmen, we share the satisfaction that comes from knowing that so many people have benefited directly and indirectly from the El Salvador Projects she launched in the midst of terror and conflict. In 2013, more than 100 young Salvadorans have been aided in their quest for higher education, including more than 40 with 2-year degrees in such practical areas as teaching, nursing, pharmacy, and other technical areas, and 13 with four-year or higher degrees. The Projects currently support 21 university students. Our educational emphasis is supplemented by smaller programs to provide reading glasses and crafts training to seniors in rural areas, to help families acquire highly efficient, low-smoke woodburning cooking stoves, and to promote access to education in other ways (such as an annual University Fair that acquaints prospective students with programs and financial support).

Carmen Broz now resides in a cottage in Santa Rosa, California, where she works in her cherished garden, reads extensively, and welcomes visits from her friends.

Carmen Broz awaiting deportation in the Suchitoto jail (an old colonial building) in 1986. Photo by staff photographer of San Jose Mercury News copied in pencil



## CARMEN, MI QUERIDA

Thirteen years older than I when we met,  
Carmen was destined to be  
my future mentor at Quaker meeting.  
I remember her asking us to help orphans  
in her home town, Sosonate, in El Salvador.  
At fifty-five, greying, she spoke  
with an accent, soft and fluid.

Years later, I attended Mass with her  
in San Salvador's basilica,  
sitting by an open door,  
where street noise threatened  
to overwhelm the service in Spanish.  
By then, she was seventy.

Today, she is nearly ninety.  
She's back in California, not too far from me.

Though I'm a Quaker,  
on one particular morning in Palo Alto  
I decide to visit a Gregorian Mass.  
It's all in Latin, which is hard  
to find performed anymore,  
ever since the encyclical of Pope John XXIII  
in the 1960s made it optional.

Bathed in Plainsong and Latin, I pray.  
Through the incense, she appears to me,  
quite unbidden,  
a girl of fifteen.  
In El Salvador, she would have  
mouthed in Latin these very words.  
At Mass, she would arise,  
smoothing her long, dark hair,  
darting her dark eyes, with  
her sweet and somewhat mischievous smile.  
She would have said these very prayers.

Yes, she would have said these very prayers  
before she quit her tortured country in 1940,  
before she became an American,  
before she became a Quaker,  
worshiping in silence,  
before she returned to help her native country,  
before she retired and came back to us.

*Pax vobiscum  
e con spiritum tuum.*

Peace be with you  
And with thy spirit



Tower of the small cathedral in Suchitoto,  
where Robert Broz lives.  
Painting and poem by Trudy Reagan.

## Please help us celebrate Carmen's 90<sup>th</sup> with a gift to sustain the Projects!

When Carmen Broz reaches her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on December 15, 2013, we will present her with a certificate that will list all of the supporters who have contributed during Carmen's ninetieth year. The certificate will feature photographs and summaries of memorable events and major achievements from Carmen's decades of courageous service in El Salvador.

Some of you have been supporters for many years, and some have come into this endeavor more recently. Carmen will see the names of individuals and groups whose faith and generosity made it possible...

- Ø to nourish and care for young children of poor families during the civil war,
- Ø to offer medical care to mothers and babies in remote areas,
- Ø to provide clothing, books, and transportation so that children who lacked those simple essentials could attend elementary and secondary school,
- Ø to give glasses to seniors and organize skills training to help them gain independence, and
- Ø to enable determined young people from rural villages to graduate from higher education programs and find good jobs in El Salvador to support their families.

Some of your names will be familiar to Carmen; names of newer contributors will tell her that people who have never met her are now keeping her vision and her mission alive. Every name will shine with love and celebration of Carmen's long and exceptional life.

Please remember that with the exception of our Field Director, Robert Broz, who receives a modest stipend that enables him to continue his essential role in El Salvador coordinating the Projects, everyone involved in this program is a volunteer. More than 90% of every dollar you contribute goes directly to the work of helping poor Salvadorans lift themselves from poverty, through education and the other initiatives you read about in our newsletters. Truly, you make it all possible!

### Yes! I want to help Salvadorans improve their lives and celebrate Carmen's birthday!

Mail donations to: Palo Alto Friends Meeting - El Salvador Projects,  
957 Colorado Avenue, Palo Alto, CA 94303

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

\$25    \$50    \$75    \$100    \$250    \$500    \$1000

other \_\_\_\_\_

- Check here if you want your gift to support a college student.  
(Please specify on your check memo line "College Loans.")

#### **2013 donations will appear on a certificate that will be presented to 90-year-old Carmen.**

Donations under \$250 will normally be used for General Programs, and donations of \$250 or more will be used for university student loans (unless you state another preference).

Please make checks to PAFM - E.S. Projects. Your contribution is tax-deductible.

F R I E N D   U S   O N   F A C E B O O K !

Search on: Palo-Alto-Friends-Meeting-El-Salvador-Projects

**HOW TO DONATE READING GLASSES AND LAPTOP COMPUTERS:** We need reading glasses (any magnification) to expand life opportunities for elderly people and others with visual impairments. For student use, we need laptop computers (Windows PC with Pentium 4 CPU or better – in working order except that a defective keyboard or display is acceptable). Please send glasses and laptops to: David Hinson (Tel. 650-857-0232), 3298 Ramona, Palo Alto, CA 94306.