

# Pacific Yearly Meeting Latin American Concerns Committee Report to Annual Session 2021

## **SUMMARY**

In 1997, PYM Annual Session established a standing Latin America Concerns Committee to gather and disseminate information to Pacific and other Yearly Meetings regarding Friends groups and service projects in Latin America with special attention to Casa de los Amigos in Mexico City, El Salvador Project and Guatemala Friends Scholarship Program (Progresia). The intention is to support rather than replace spirit-led projects already supported by Monthly Meetings, Worship Groups and individual Friends. In 2017, the Undocumented Student Program of Sacramento Meeting became the fourth project in LACC.

## **Interest Groups sponsored by LACC at Annual Session 2021**

Sunday, 7/25, 7:00-8:30pm – Sacramento Dreamers and CASA

Tuesday, 7/27, 7:00-8:30pm – El Salvador and Guatemala

## **Casa de Los Amigos**

Casa de los Amigos is a Quaker Center for Peace and International Understanding in Mexico City, and the oldest peace and social justice organization in Mexico. Since 1956, the Casa has offered aid and shelter to the migrant, refugee, scholar and traveler; provided a space for the local Quaker Meeting; and supported countless social movements and organizations.

At this time all programs at the Casa are temporarily suspended as the organization resolves an institutional crisis. In 2018 and 2019 the outgoing executive director falsified board documents to name himself the board president and form a new board, excluding over half of the board members (including local Friends and former volunteers) without their awareness. The group then hired a new director with no experience with Friends or Quaker work and has, since then, occupied the premises.

Over the past year the Board of the Casa has made important steps forward to returning the assets and administration of the organization to its rightful stewards. During that time, the support of Friends has been indispensable. The Board encourages supporters to connect and to learn more by attending our interest group at PYM's annual sessions, emailing us at [asamblea@casadelosamigos.org.mx](mailto:asamblea@casadelosamigos.org.mx), or visiting our website: [www.casadelosamigos.org.mx](http://www.casadelosamigos.org.mx)

## **Palo Alto Friends Meeting "El Salvador Projects"**

Our programs were founded by Carmen Broz in 1989, the same year the El Salvador Projects Committee at Palo Alto Friends Meeting was formed to support Carmen in her leadings as a Released Friend. The programs have always worked in the rural communities of El Salvador and from their founding work in health, early child development, nutrition and education progressed over time to what is now our University Scholarship Program. This facet of the work started in 1999 and with 4 rural communities. In 2021 we provide support to 24 university students, oversee a coed student house in San Salvador and continue to provide small support to the school and community of El Barrio in rural Suchitoto. Their studies include medicine, social work, agronomy, education, law, psychology, engineering, and more. Like the rest of the world our programs adapted to Covid-19, quarantine, school closures and virtual classrooms. We just reopened our coed student house in the city but only 8 of our current 22 residents are using it, this number will increase as students return to regular classrooms in the second semester. With a huge change politically at all levels, our students continue to adapt, waiting to see if a brighter future for El Salvador becomes a reality or if things continue as in the past.

To learn more about the El Salvador Projects:

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- Download our June Newsletter at: [www.pafmelsalvadorprojects.org/project-news-letters](http://www.pafmelsalvadorprojects.org/project-news-letters)
- Visit our website <https://www.pafmelsalvadorprojects.org>
- Follow us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pafmelsalprojects/>

## **Guatemala Friends Scholarship Program-Progresa**

Progresa was founded in 1973 to provide rural Mayans opportunity through education. We are a non-profit in Guatemala and under the care of Redwood Forest Meeting in California. In addition to providing scholarships, we train future leaders, promote community development, and most importantly, provide the means for our students to stay in Guatemala and maintain family and cultural connections. In 2021, we are providing 93 scholarships to students who represent 15 different linguistic groups. Their studies include medicine, nursing, social work, agronomy, education, math and physics, law, psychology, engineering, and more. Through an intense schedule of video conferences, we have been able to address the challenges of the pandemic, hurricanes, flooding, and subsistence farming in the time of climate change in support of our students. Look at our website to learn about Teaching English Experience-- which is usually held in Guatemala, but last year was virtual. It is a great way to meet our students.

- Visit our website [www.guatemalafriends.org](http://www.guatemalafriends.org)
- Video telling the Progresa story by Chances For Children (a family foundation that supports educational programs): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o6pSIgdjm30>
- One of our students, Alonzo Aguilar Raymundo: <https://youtu.be/giK7qsLsn7A>
- Link to Spring Update 2021: <http://www.guatemalafriends.org/latest-news>

## **Undocumented Student Program of Sacramento Meeting**

The Undocumented Student Scholarship Project was founded in 2011 to provide renewable \$1,000 annual scholarships to undergraduate and graduate students at Sacramento State University. Since we began this project, we have provided support to 40 students. Most of the graduates are working in their area of study, such as engineering, business, psychology, and education. As part of our outreach, we hold meeting and an annual dinner for students. We get to know them a little better and help them with other needs whenever possible. In 2021 we had five returning and five new scholarship recipients. Nine were undergraduate and one was finishing a master's degree in counseling. We are grateful for the support that we get from various monthly meetings through Pacific Yearly Meeting, as well as from individuals. The students and their families recognize our efforts and often express their gratitude.

The Latin American Concerns Committee consists of:

- 2022 Linda Rowell, Chico (2015) Co-Clerk
- 2021 Paty Constantino, Mexico City (2020)
- 2023 Sergei Agalzoff, Orange Grove (2020)
- Appointed by Casa de los Amigos- Rogelio Bellamy Roque, Mexico City (2020)
- Appointed by El Salvador Projects - Hulda Muaka, Palo Alto (2019)
- Appointed by Guatemala Scholarship - Donna Smith, Redwood Forest (2014) Co-Clerk
- Appointed by Undocumented Student - Patricia Portillo, Sacramento (2020)