



Progresas

Guatemala Friends Scholarship Program



We believe in people
We build community
We promote leadership



2021 a year to consolidate who we are

On behalf of all the students and collaborators of PROGRESA, I want to greet each of our donors and thank them for another year of support. 2021 continued to be a year of great challenges for our students and everyone. Several students were infected with Covid19, some lost a loved one and many continued to experience difficulties with virtual education due to the lack of good electricity and internet services.

However, despite all this, this year we consolidated many good things that started last year with the pandemic. We supported 87 students, of whom 18 graduated this year or are very close to achieving it. We organized more than 20 short workshops with topics on education, health, productivity and others.

In addition, we managed to get two organizations to offer 2 certified courses to those who wanted to receive them. We improve our emotional accompaniment to students, despite not being able to see them personally. Our staff provided more than 800 accompaniment sessions to the students through video calls. Now most of our students call us "Familia Progresas" or "Comunidad Progresas".

All of this and much more was only possible thanks to the support of each of you, our loyal donors. In 2022 we hope to support 100 people and give them the opportunity to accompany them in their struggle to achieve their dreams. We trust that you will continue to support this project that is changing the lives of many people. On behalf of the entire Progresas Family, thank you very much!

What your support is helping to achieve in Guatemala.

We want to dedicate this newsletter to share with you what Progresas is achieving, not only with the students but also what they are already doing for their communities and the country. We have always believed that by helping a person, we are planting a seed that sooner or later will bear fruit. As we have always said, many of our students are the first professionals in their families and communities. This has a direct impact, since several upon graduating have helped a brother or other relative to study. Others have taken professional service to places where it did not exist before and all have served as an inspiration for others in their community to strive for their professional development. But also, our students and alumni are carrying out concrete development actions in their community. We want to share with you some stories of the community services that current students are performing, despite Covid19. We will also show you examples of what our alumni are doing in and for their communities. We hope that you, our donors, see that your donations have not only supported one person, but have multiplied many others.



Community service: our students serving their communities.

All our students performed a community service of at least 40 hours in their towns and villages. With the guidance of our office staff, all the students looked for safe initiatives that provided support to specific groups. Here are some examples of these projects.

Wilmer Aram Ajú is a Bachelor of Art student with an emphasis on music and comes from Santa Lucía Utatlán, Sololá. For many years Aram has felt a strong commitment to the rescue of Mayan music. His training as a teacher has taught him that many boys and girls grow up without the opportunity to explore their roots and that the presence of Western culture takes away their mother tongue, music and appreciation for life. This year Aram focused his community service on developing the first art vacation school focused on Mayan art, in Santa Lucía Utatlán, his town. With this little school, Aram aims to bring the boys and girls of his town closer to Mayan music, dance and theater. The objective is that children have the experience of knowing their roots from the artistic field and as a way of expression.



For some years Aram has built different Mayan musical instruments out of clay and now he wants the children of the school to learn to build their own musical instruments as well. Starting this little school has been a great challenge for Aram, mainly because he needs many materials and resources for it. Thanks to his enthusiasm and involvement with other groups and individuals, Aram got another art school to donate some books and supplies. In addition, other groups, including one in Mexico, have offered support as well. Perhaps this is the beginning of a larger project, all with the idea of preserving Mayan music and art.



Alejandra Beatríz Gómez, is 24 years old, lives in El Paraíso village in Nebaj, Quiché and is studying the fifth year of clinical psychology. This year, because it is not advisable to work with large groups, Alejandra decided to provide personalized therapies to a 10-year-old girl with Down Syndrome who lives in her village. As Alejandra explained to us, the people in her village do not know what exactly this syndrome is, and they think it is a disease and even some kind of curse. For almost three months, Alejandra provided therapies to the girl to stimulate her motor skills, self-esteem and independence. A good part of the process was also talking with the girl's parents and explaining to them what this condition consists of and how they can help their daughter to better integrate into a normal life. All of this was done in the Ixil language, which is the main language of this family.

Alejandra told us that the latter was the most difficult because in rural areas there are many wrong beliefs about these condition and little is recognized about the importance of psychological help. However, at the end of her community service time, the girl's parents asked her to continue with the sessions because they saw positive changes in the girl. Alejandra feels very happy about this because she considers that with her service a positive change has begun in this girl and her family.

Yoscelin Fabiola Hernández, is studying the sixth year of medicine and is originally from Jacaltenango, Huehuetenango. This year, she began her final medical practice and is working in a Health Center in the Poluguá village, in Momostenango, Totonicapán. Due to its geographical location, this health center cares for patients from several nearby villages but does not have a permanent doctor. For this reason, she sees 3-4 times more patients than other fellow students of hers elsewhere. After a few weeks in this place, Yoscelin realized that the health center attends patients every day of the week, but during the weekend (Saturday and Sunday) there is never a doctor attending. For that reason, she decided to offer her community service by treating patients over the weekend.



In the first two days of service, Yoscelin had very few patients, but in the following weeks she increased the number of consultations because people already know that she is attending on those days. Yoscelin told us how happy she was to see the happiness and gratitude of the people in the community. On some occasions she has received some fruits or vegetables that the villagers harvest in gratitude for her service. She says that she has seldom seen gestures of gratitude as genuine as the ones she has seen in this service and that this has filled her heart with much joy and she now knows more than ever that being a doctor is her real passion.

Daril Zulyvan Ovalle Rodríguez, from Quetzaltenango, is studying the second year of medicine. During the first months of this year, Daril received first aid training from the Guatemalan Red Cross, in order to carry out his community service in this institution. His service was carried out during the month of November, answering emergency calls and any type of help, practicing CPR, etc. in the Quetzaltenango area. Daril comments that, being part of the Red Cross, he has been able to cover different types of emergencies, he has also been able to cover more territory together with the team that accompanies him. He has also acquired a lot of knowledge about how to proceed in the various situations that have arisen.



The objectives of this project are to provide rapid medical assistance in situations of burns, fractures, cardiac arrest, trauma, etc. It has also allowed him to raise awareness about accident prevention measures and even participated in vaccination days against covid 19. This experience has given Daril a lot of practical knowledge for his future career as a doctor.



Glenda Esmeralda Patzán Vásquez, is from a village in Sumpango Sacatepéquez, she performed her community service called “Reinforcement for the Warriors” in Las Flores village in the municipality of Sumpango, Sacatepéquez. She supported the Vida Limitada foundation that is dedicated to supporting children with HIV who also have children who are in the process of adoption. Among her activities was to reinforce the areas of mathematics, communication and language, natural sciences, social sciences and computers, to children from pre-primary to sixth grade. She likewise worked various types of crafts with them.

Esmeralda writes the following: “It was quite a beautiful experience, I was quite interested in helping to improve the quality of life of each child, knowing a little about their lives, what they have suffered. Above all, I was excited to know that everyone has different dreams and goals to achieve and I always try to motivate them. My greatest satisfaction is knowing that in one way or another I marked his life in a positive way”.

Juana Janeth Ramírez Pablo from Santiago Atitlán, is a senior in marketing, a rare career for an indigenous girl. Since she was a teenager, Janeth was attracted to creating audiovisual material and began to work as a volunteer in a local TV channel in her town. There she began to learn basic things from holding lights, storing cables, to learning about using cameras and writing interview scripts.

This year and as part of her community service, Janeth is working on promotional audiovisual material for Progresá. In November, she visited several students with the Progresá staff to interview them about their experience in the program.



It was an enriching experience for everyone to be able to document the experience of our students in this way. We are excited to receive the final product and share it with all of our friends and donors. So very soon we will show you the videos and hopefully this will help more people see the impact of our project on the lives of our students.

Bringing development through their professional service: our exbecarios contribution.

Maintaining contact with more than one thousand exbecarios (former students) is very difficult due to our small staff and resources. But, every time we are able to contact some of them, our heart is filled with inspiration and we confirm that there is no better investment than education. Here some stories.

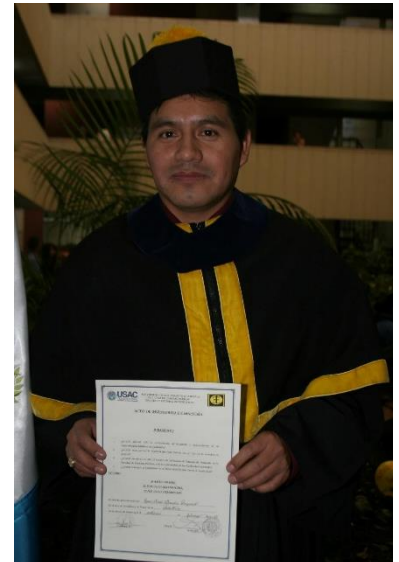


Ana Valeska Mateo, from Santa Eulalia, Huehuetenango, was supported by Progresa to study professional nursing and managed to graduate in 2016. Ana has worked in different places, both in the public health system, as well as in NGOs that work on health issues, mainly preventive.

Currently she works as a nurse at the Santa Cruz Barillas Health Center, in Huehuetenango, one of the furthest towns in Huehuetenango. During these years, she has also gained experience with natural medicine, which is why she has a small pharmacy in her house where she treats patients, both with chemical and natural medicine. Because of her work as a nurse, Ana has worked with many women who have suffered some kind of violence and this motivated her to start law studies. Now, Ana is in the eighth semester of law and hopes in the future to support the women of her community in health matters and also in the defense of their rights.

Carmelino García Reynoso, comes from San Juan Ixcoy, Huehuetenango, a town with high rates of migration to other countries. Carmelino was supported to study medicine between 1995 and 2003 and thanks to this he began his career as a doctor. His first job was as an on-call doctor in a private hospital, owned by one of his teachers. Some years later, Carmelino decided to specialize as a pediatrician and did so at the National Hospital of Antigua Guatemala.

Now, he has returned to his town to work as a pediatrician at the Center for Maternal and Child Care in Soloma, a town near his hometown. Carmelino is happy to have returned to his community and now treat his own people as a specialist doctor, which was always his dream.



Amalia Verónica Maxía was supported by our program to complete her studies as a secondary school teacher in 2017 and 2018. She lives in San José Poaquil, Chimaltenango, in the central highlands of the country. Like many indigenous women, Amalia weaves typical guipiles from her town and this led her to be part of organized groups of women weavers who fight for their rights. After graduating as a secondary school teacher, Amalia began to work as a volunteer at FUNDEBASE, which is an organization that works to organize and strengthen women's groups on productive issues and their rights. After some time and upon seeing Amalia's capabilities, she was hired by this organization and is currently in charge of a self-management group that works in 14 different communities and advises about 250 women on production issues, defense of their rights and productivity. Due to this experience, Amalia now wishes to study law to continue supporting women who have suffered family violence, gender violence, etc.

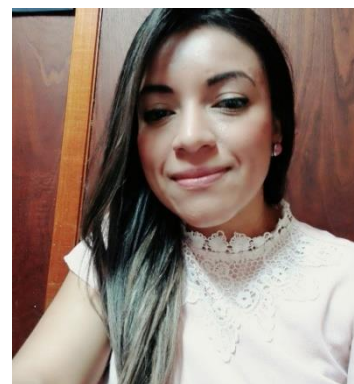
Sandra Gabriela López (Gaby), was supported by our project between 2014 and 2018 to study forestry engineering. She lives in Momostenango, in the western highlands of Guatemala, and from a very young age she learned from her parents the importance of organization and community work.



While in Progresá, she performed several very comprehensive community services, such as training farmers in composting, creating nurseries, etc. Now, as a forestry engineer, Gaby remains very involved in community work. She is currently the legal representative of the Association for Health and Integral Development of Momostenango where she has helped to manage several projects, one of them is the creation of 190 family gardens and 190 facilities for laying hens, with which families can obtain their own egg production. She has also trained families in growing organic food to combat malnutrition. Among her plans is to promote the creation of forest, agricultural and medicinal plant nurseries, all with native seeds from her region.

Rosa Delfina Sunum, was born in Quetzaltenango (Xela) and studied chemistry and biology with the help of Progresá between 2005 and 2009. As a biologist chemist, Rosa has always felt very attracted to the field of research and has collaborated in different projects, mainly the looking for food alternatives for the population. Rosa has also a great passion for rescuing the environment and this led her to work at the National Forest Institute (INAB), which is the government body in charge of promoting the sustainable management of the country's forest resources. From there she has participated in research and training programs for the correct use of forests. Rosa has also been a volunteer in the Organization of Women for Science in Developing Countries, working in the research axis in the climate change team.

Currently, she participates in the Emissions Reduction Program of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources whose goals include the reforestation and restoration of forests in Guatemala to help purify the air and combat global warming.



Our new slogan!

This year we set out to create a slogan that represents who we are. During the year we had several activities in which we asked our students what they consider to be our essence, what characterizes us. The phrases and words that they repeated the most were that PROGRESA trusts them, that we are a community or family and that we form leaders. Therefore, we created the following slogan that we consider summarizes what our students see in PROGRESA. We hope you like it.

- ✓ **We Believe in People**
- ✓ **We Build Community**
- ✓ **We Promote Leadership**

Our heartfelt thanks for your support!

All this work is possible thanks to your valuable support. As our students say, we are a community, and you are an important part of it. Please help us to continue this wonderful project. All donations are made out to **Redwood Forest Friends Meeting** and mailed to:

→ Redwood Forest Friends Meeting
Attn: Guatemala Scholarship Program
P.O. Box 1831, Santa Rosa, CA 95402

Please remember to always write in the memo section of your check "For Guatemala Scholarship Program" or add a short note with that instruction.

All donations are tax deductible

The Guatemala Friends Scholarship Program – PROGRESA

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