



Centro Maya Project

January 2026

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Dear Friends of Centro Maya Project,

As I share this yearly report, I offer gratitude for you and your families, wishing you a new year filled with peaceful moments and good health. Your support for this community has helped sustain critical services and care that many people in villages around Lake Atitlán rely on. The small town of San Juan La Laguna is where Bob and I built our home some years ago. We felt an immediate connection, forming deep relationships with individuals and families in the community. Many have become our family. Bob tended coffee and played music with children and friends around the lake, and I worked with children and adults, visiting families connected with Centro Maya Project.

When we first arrived twenty-five years ago, I could never have imagined how profoundly this experience would shape our lives. Living in a remote Indigenous Mayan community taught me about the beauty of resilience that is woven with hardship, and about the generosity that is part of the fabric of Mayan life. I have deep respect, admiration, and love for the people of San Juan. Although Bob is no longer with us, my connection to this community remains strong. I continue to work closely with Centro Maya Project and plan to stay active in Guatemala, supporting the programs we have built together and walking beside the families who have become part of my life.

Field Operations Staff

Fiscal Officer

Maria Cholotio

Hernandez

Board Representative

Benedicto Mardoqueo

Ixtamer Pérez

Your ongoing partnership strengthens this work. It helps families stabilize, children remain in school, and elders access care and food when they need it.

Thank you for your generous support through the years.

With gratitude,

Jeanne Nakamaru

Centro Maya Project

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FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Food assistance has become our largest and most constant program. We support families in San Juan, San Pablo, Aldea Palestina, Panyebar, and Pasajquim, adapting the program as needs shift so we can remain responsive. Currently, 210 families receive food assistance four times each year. When determining eligibility, we prioritize households experiencing illness, economic hardship, children with disabilities, older adults, single mothers and widows, and children raised by grandparents. Each family receives corn, beans, eggs, rice, Incaparina (nutritional supplement), sugar, pasta, salt, oil, and vegetables. This nourishes families while also supporting local farmers.

MOUNTAIN WATER PROJECT

One of our most ambitious initiatives has been bringing clean water to remote mountain villages. Six years ago, we purchased land with a small river and three natural springs, recognizing that these resources could benefit many households. We invited organizations to partner with us, and when the municipality of San Juan joined the effort, progress accelerated. Engineers Without Borders and other NGOs provided expertise, while residents contributed most of the labor, investing time and care into the project. By fall 2025, a reservoir serving four communities and a solar-powered pump facility were completed. Work now continues to extend water directly into homes. Some families still need financial support for household equipment, and addressing those needs will be a focus in the coming program year.

EL FONDO PARA MI ESCUELA EDUCATION PROGRAM

Our education program began in 2007 with a simple yet powerful vision: to help 20 children begin their education in early elementary school and continue receiving support through high school. As the need grew, the program quickly expanded to 40 students. Scholarship students receive individualized school supplies, uniforms, and paid registration fees. Today, more than 60 youth have graduated, one-third of whom are young women. Each graduation represents a doorway opened not only for a single student, but often for an entire family. Over time, we realized that strong students come from classrooms where teachers are supported, too. Our program now also provides teachers with material kits and office supplies, making learning spaces more organized and effective. Benedicto proudly served as the sponsor for 33 students who completed elementary school and was recognized for his meaningful social work in education.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Health care in San Juan can be difficult to access. Public services exist, but they are often limited, and people sometimes wait a long time for treatment. When that happens, Centro Maya Project helps fill the gap. We arrange consultations with private physicians when needed and assist with the costs of medications, surgeries, and transportation to appointments both locally and in Guatemala City, where more specialized care is available. We also help cover fuel costs for the Volunteer Fire Department ambulance, which transports patients to nearby hospitals. It is a practical form of support that makes urgent care possible.

HEARING AID PROGRAM

Access to hearing support can change how people participate in daily life, education, and work. Lucy Tzaj, Centro Maya Project's hearing aid technician, works in collaboration with a nurse at Clinica San Juanerita to evaluate community members, create earmolds, and fit hearing aids that meet individual needs. This year, 45 people received new or refurbished hearing aids. These devices improve communication in families, classrooms, and workplaces, and help reduce isolation.

Maria Cholotio Hernández, our Field Fiscal Officer, wanted to offer this reflection. Her full letter will be available on our website next month:

Guatemala is a country with immense cultural richness and ethnic diversity, primarily of Mayan descent. It is largely rural, with high rates of poverty reaching 57%, and 21.5% living in extreme poverty. Access to food, health care, and education is precarious and unequal.

These realities led to the creation of Centro Maya Project, which provides basic but nutritious food to families in rural areas of San Juan and San Pablo La Laguna, helping children, adolescents, and young people continue attending school. The program also helps lighten the burden of serious health conditions such as diabetes, cancer, kidney failure, surgeries, and other illnesses through modest financial assistance for medications, check-ups, tests, and transportation to hospitals.

Maria also would like to share “THE MIRACLE OF MICHAEL”

Michael Dolman Quiacaín Ixcayá was born in 2009 with significant physical and developmental disabilities. It was clear from birth that walking would be one of his greatest challenges. Over the next sixteen years, his mother, Doña Juana, dedicated herself to supporting his treatment, including therapy and surgeries. Recently, through perseverance, guidance from therapists, and unwavering faith, Michael reached a milestone she had prayed for: he began walking with greater balance and confidence. For Doña Juana, a single mother with limited financial resources, watching her son take those first independent steps felt like a true miracle. She carries that day as a sign that her prayers and efforts were heard. With the support of Centro Maya and his mother, Michael will continue to receive the care he needs to grow.

“From the bottom of our hearts, we dedicate this MIRACLE to BOB, one of the people who, during his lifetime, loved deeply and dedicated his valuable time, knowledge, and resources to many people like Michael.” Maria Cholotio Hernández