

SLT Scholars
July 2022 Newsletter

Dear Sponsors and Friends,

I have recently returned from a trip to San Lucas in late June and it is my pleasure to provide this update on the SLT Scholars Program.

Most importantly, I am happy to report that our students are doing well in their studies as evidenced by their grades. There are a few exceptions, but that has always been the case. As I write this, Rita and Alberta, Rita's assistant, are contacting teachers and parents to understand the reason for their lower performance with the goal of creating plans to get these students back on track. Considering this is the second year of distance learning, teachers are eager to collaborate with students so that they end the year well.

Much of my time was spent reviewing our operations since we are now functioning in San Lucas as a Guatemala non-profit organization.

In July 2021, I was one of the founders of Asociación Becas Dennis Evans - San Lucas Tolimán Scholars (Dennis Evans Scholarship Association - San Lucas Tolimán Scholars). This is a Guatemala non-profit organization recognized by the Guatemala government as a "non-tax" entity. There was a change in government guidelines that made it important for us to form this organization.

Our Guatemala non-profit is similar to San Lucas Tolimán Scholars which is a US 501(c)(3) charitable organization. Asociación Becas Dennis Evans - San Lucas Tolimán Scholars governs the operations in Guatemala and the US non-profit San Lucas Tolimán Scholars governs operations in the United States. I am a member of the Board of Directors and serve as Treasurer on our Guatemala non-profit.

In November 2021, we received approval from the Guatemalan government as a non-profit entity. We are now operating under a set of articles of incorporation and bylaws.

As you will see from the following summary of my activities, I was quite busy during my 10 days in San Lucas.

- I conducted the second Board meeting of our Guatemala non-profit.
- I met with Arnolando who is our accountant. His responsibilities are to reconcile the books monthly, prepare monthly reports for our operations and the Guatemalan government, and prepare reports to support an audit should it be requested.
- I reviewed the accounting/reporting process from preparation of documentation for each expense, assembly of the documents which represent a transaction/expenditure, to appearing in month-end reports. I reviewed the reports for January – May, and everything is in good order.
- I met with Edwin who is our communications consultant. Our priority is to launch a new, more user-friendly web site in 2023. After we have done this, we will update our 2 Facebook pages (one is in English, one is in Spanish).
- I spent a lot of time with Rita and Alberta to understand daily operations including the status of students' attendance in school, grades, distribution of money to university students and those who study outside of San Lucas, student letters, and what we think 2023 will look like.

Other Events/Updates

My travels went well despite the 5-hour drive (instead of the normal 3) from Guatemala City to San Lucas Tolimán on the day of my arrival. There had been 3 weeks of rain which caused 2 of the usual

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routes to be unusable or slower than usual. My road trip was extended by 2 hours because of an accident on the highway we were traveling on. I chose to report that I brought the sun since it only rained one afternoon after I arrived! In terms of COVID, masking in public spaces is mandated by the Guatemalan government and I saw masking consistent with this while there.

Rita invited me to the quinceañera for her older daughter – Pamela. I was a guest of honor and was seated next to the ex-director of the IMED school. It was a beautiful celebration of a beautiful young woman. A quinceañera is a celebration of a girl's 15th birthday and her transition to being a young woman. This celebration has pre-Columbian roots in Mexico and Guatemala (Aztecs and Mayans) and is widely celebrated by girls throughout Hispanic America.

With memorial funds received, Rita worked with the INEB school in Tierra Santa to renovate their school's existing computer lab/classroom to make it accessible to an entire class of students instead of only a few at a time. Her decision reflected Dennis' recognition that students need to learn computer skills to be employable. Tierra Santa is one of the rural communities down the road from San Lucas. Their community school serves students in elementary and junior high school (Básico). Rita created this video to share with you:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1wMjwa3rBMX1hKgBgy8eulZOEI6pl4JSp/view?usp=sharing>

In honor of Dennis and in recognition of his legacy to the people of San Lucas, a Mass was given on the 1-year anniversary of his death. It was followed by a procession of flowers to his grave. Rita made a 2-minute video of these events:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1aWZWb01YmNZ5w8ksdv5t07G4IBTwRFOs/view?usp=sharing>

Both events were recorded by Channel 9 Guatemalan TV. Please use these links to view these events.

Mass: <https://fb.watch/ejNEphUNn-/> (<https://fb.watch/ejNEphUNn-/> (1 hour, 20 minutes)

Procession to cemetery: <https://fb.watch/ejNCbBBwKh/> (<https://fb.watch/ejNCbBBwKh/> (13.5 minutes)

After my time in San Lucas, I am filled with hope for the future of our scholars. In my many conversations with families, the focus was on the importance of education and the difference it is making.

Thank you for your part in our important work.

Julie Marcotte
Executive Director
SLT Scholars