

SLT Scholars
October 2022 Newsletter

Dear Sponsors and Friends,

I hope that our October newsletter finds you, your family, and your friends doing well. Graduation season is here for our students in San Lucas – a very exciting time for our scholars, their friends, and their families.

A note on payment reminders for 2023 - In Rita's update you will read that public schools will finish classes in November which is one month later than private schools. Because we need to wait until November to know all students who will be continuing, I will be sending your reminders in late November. If you need to make your donation before you receive my reminder, please email me so that I can share with you the information I have.

Enjoy Rita's newsletter and the videos she has made to share San Lucas with us! *Julie*

From Rita -

I send you a greeting of gratitude for all your contributions to the SLT Scholars program, hoping that you will be at peace and that all your activities will work together for the common good.

It is very interesting for me to think about schooling and education at this time. I have had moments in which I have thought about how the children learned this year in school. The good thing for students and teachers is that there was more in classroom attendance with face-to-face instruction and there is more interaction. Part of the education is their social life – collaboration among students and teachers. In some schools, students attend classes Monday through Friday; in others, 2 or 3 times a week. To see our young people on the streets interacting with each other and spending time together is very moving to see.

In Guatemala we are in the last "block" of the school year. Private schools will end in October and we will have graduations in the first week of November. Public schools will finish the school year in the second and third weeks of November and their graduations will be the last week of November. Alberta and I will be going to the graduation ceremonies and take pictures of our graduates to share with you.

In August, we distributed money to the students to help with their expenses doing homework at home. These expenses were for internet or cell phone service. Parents are very grateful for this assistance because the months of June to October are hard because jobs are scarce, especially harvesting crops. From November to March most families, especially those from rural communities, can go out to work to pick coffee to earn money.

In September the students received a pair of school shoes or tennis shoes; it was their choice of what they needed most. Our scholars were very happy to receive their shoes.

Also, in September we celebrated the independence of Guatemala - 201 years of independence! This is a wonderful celebration in Guatemala. Along with musical groups, dance groups, poets, writers, and others, our schools participated in allegorical parades to celebrate our Independence Day. This is a wonderful celebration in Guatemala because it is an opportunity for the students to use their talents each in their own way.

We are into our third year of the pandemic, and in the first two years we did not have the opportunity

SLT Scholars
October 2022 Newsletter

to celebrate together in this way. Thus, this was a very fun and emotional year for us as most people came out to celebrate together. It was great to see all the excited faces of every generation - children, adults, and grandparents, as they enjoyed the parades.

The most exciting part for us is that several of your scholars achieved the highest grades in their classes, and these students had the privilege of carrying the flags in the parade.

In September we interviewed and evaluated new applicants for a scholarship in our program. The situation is more difficult for families than in previous years. There are so many families looking for help to keep their children in school. Many fathers have lost their jobs and many businesses have failed.

Our selection process considers several factors. First, students must have achieved high grades because this shows they are interested in learning and can succeed. We also conduct a small socio-economic study about the families of the applicants.

We appreciate your contributions to our program and for sponsoring one, two, or more students so they can continue to learn and develop new skills which will provide them with better options after their schooling. We always have a waiting list. It is very difficult to turn away students from a scholarship.

In October we celebrated the patron saint of the town of San Lucas Tolimán with a celebration with different activities from October 13th to 20th. The main day is October 18th which is when the Catholic Church celebrates the Apostle St. Luke the Evangelist.

On October 14th there was a very special activity that is held every year on this date, called Floral Games. The event is a poetry competition and there are prizes for the best compositions and readings of the poems. Each year the organizers select a theme for the poems, and they are dedicated to an important person of the community either for their talent or their valuable contribution to the town of San Lucas Tolimán. This year Dennis Evans was honored.

Participants received instructions in August on how to present their poetry dedicated to Dennis Evans. Manuel, my husband, my children, and I attended and represented our program. A very important event! Even though Dennis is longer with us, it is important that the city authorities recognize our great contribution to the communities and remember Dennis as a great man who promoted and worked for this program. It is with your support that it is possible that so many young people continue school. I know that Dennis will always be with us.

An update on our scholars and their achievements.

- 200 students will be graduating from junior high school. We are in the process of learning which of these students will continue into high school next year and their careers.
- 130 students will be graduating from high school with a “bachelor's” degree or other specialty career.
- 4 students will be graduating from their university programs - 1 in Pedagogy, 1 in Information Technology, 1 with a Masters in Public Accounting, and 1 in Nursing/Lab Technician.

Again, I am filled with great satisfaction to see the success of these students. With this I share with you my joy and gratitude, because without you this could not be possible.

THANK YOU, THANK YOU!

SLT Scholars
October 2022 Newsletter

Rita Chajil

Please enjoy the poem which won the Floral Games this year. Note that there are 3 words that don't translate well; they are colloquialisms or words in Kaqchikel, which is the native Mayan Indian language of the people of San Lucas.

- Loy means "Señor de San Lucas Tolimán" in Spanish and "Mister from San Lucas Tolimán" in English.
- Piloy is also Kaqchikel and means large red beans.
- Chapin is a colloquialism and means Guatemalan.

If you would like a copy of the poem in Spanish, please let me (Julie) know and I will send it to you.

Enjoy these videos of our activities!

Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the Celebration of Independence Day

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hbmbPh5wIplqDX36zCM41kSCITXDdMM-/view>

Independence Day Parades

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1e_n4VhPu4QtMtQawIG4BO_s-rkq_FM9O/view

Julie Marcotte

Executive Director

San Lucas Tolimán Scholars