

Scholarship Program

Providing Educational Opportunities for Poor Rural Children

Many children in rural El Salvador do not attend school beyond the sixth grade because their parents do not earn enough money to pay fees and purchase a uniform, shoes and school supplies. Only about 50% of the school children in El Salvador complete the ninth grade, and only 30% finish high school. Most rural families earn less than \$800 a year. The minimum cost to send a child to elementary school is about \$65 a year. The basic cost for a year of high school averages about \$160. A year of college will cost a student at least \$800 not including room, board and books.

About 15 of the children receiving scholarships live in very remote villages where there is no schooling beyond the sixth grade. They have to spend their weekdays away from their community and require additional funds to cover food and lodging. Project Salvador assists these students by providing each with an annual scholarship of \$450. We are also providing university scholarships of \$800 each to six exceptional high school graduates. For the year 2006 the scholarship budget will be \$17,500 for approximately 75 students. The amount includes \$1200 (10.2 percent) for administrative costs.

The scholarships provide about \$100 per high school student to cover school fees, about \$9.00 for school supplies, \$16.00 for a uniform and \$15.00 for shoes. Additional costs are covered by the family or student. The program is not designed to cover all of the costs. We try to keep each individual scholarship to a minimum in order to maximize the number of students in the program.

The scholarship program is one of several programs of Project Salvador www.projectsalvador.org, a non-profit, 501(3)(c) organization dedicated to providing material assistance to the people of El Salvador. Project Salvador works

with the Carmelite Missionary Sisters who administer the program in the Department of Chalatenango in northern El Salvador. Board Member Tony Gasbarro travels to El Salvador twice each year at his own expense to review the financial records kept by the Carmelite Sisters and together with them meets with the scholarship students and their parents. Student grades are closely monitored. Students who consistently have grades below 70% are dropped from the program. The Sisters also require that students regularly perform volunteer work in the community.

Currently between 10 and 15 scholarship students graduate from high school each year. During the 8 years of the program only 15 students have dropped out of the program because of poor grades, pregnancy or early marriage. Once kids get involved in school and develop good relationships with their peers, they become very enthused about attending school.

Our goal is to maintain the number of scholarship students at about 75 by replacing those who graduate or drop out of the program. With so many worthy causes in this world, it has been difficult to raise funds. Please try to send something no matter how small. If you have particularly fortunate this year please consider increasing your donation. The scholarships will only

go to the poorest students. Seventy percent of them will be young women who traditionally have been kept out of school.

If you desire to contribute, please make a check out to Project Salvador Scholarship Program and send it to Project Salvador c/o Tony Gasbarro, 2687 Horsetail Trail, Fairbanks, AK 99709-6055.

For further information, please call Tony at (907) 455-6287 or send an e-mail to tonygasbarro@yahoo.com.



Students who will be graduating from the Scholarship Program in November 2005. Each student has received a book to encourage them to read in their free time.



Flor de Maria will be attending the Nacional University of El Salvador this year to study Sociology.