



NEWSLETTER 2018-2019

Improving the lives of the people of Santa Cruz through support for education and sustainable economic empowerment since 1998

20th Anniversary Edition!



Dear Friends,

This is a special year to be a part of Amigos de Santa Cruz as we celebrate 20 years working in the Santa Cruz communities. It

is an occasion to look back at the lives that have been profoundly impacted by Amigos' work, and to see the powerful generational change that is currently underway. A change inspired by that simple desire to help that motivated our founder, Pat Torpie, 20 years ago.

Recently, I have had the honor of looking back at hundreds of Pat's old photos from those early years. They are photos of young adults, uneducated and struggling to keep their families healthy and food on their tables. They are photos of parents who never could have imagined that one day their little boy would master an advanced technical trade, or that their little girl would go on to graduate from university.

These 20 years tell a story of hope, of what can be achieved when we focus our efforts and resources and work together with the dream of a better future for all.

It is also a time to look at what lays ahead for the next 20 years. Amigos will remain an integral part of the Santa Cruz community, providing employment skills and business investment, opportunities for a better education and professional development. We will ensure that even more advances are in store for the next generation. I hope that you will join me in celebrating our accomplishments, and continue to support our work as we move forward to this exciting future ahead.

Jessie Cohn
Executive Director

GENERATIONAL CHANGE IN ACTION

2018



Dominga, Estela, Cristina, and Rosalia were all in the 2nd grade when Amigos first delivered school supplies to help the Santa Cruz public school in 1998. All four women went on to achieve their dream of a secondary education and were among the first generation in their village to graduate from high school. Rosalia and Estela also went on to become the first woman university graduate and first law graduate in all of Santa Cruz. Today, all four are on Amigos' staff, taking on increasing responsibility and leadership in the organization and in their

1998



community. They represent a new generation of educated young women that are truly changing Santa Cruz.

THEN



NOW



Cruz Martín Mendoza began participating in Amigos' Nutrition Program in 2009, when her daughter Maria was six years old. At that time, Cruz cooked meals over an open fire on her kitchen floor, and Maria dropped out of school after just one year because the daily walk to the neighboring village was too far.

Amigos built Escuela Milagros in 2011, the first school in their remote mountain village of Tzanjmel, and Maria was able to go back to school. Her four younger sisters all now attend the school as well, and her father is president of Escuela Milagro's parental governing board. With Amigos support, the family also obtained a clean stove

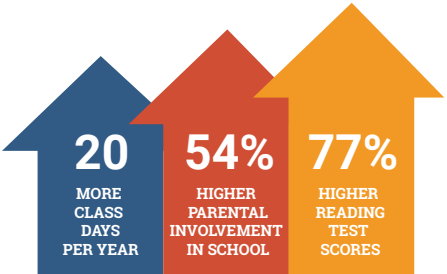
for cooking and a filter for clean drinking water, improving the family's health.

This year, Maria became the first graduate from Escuela Milagros to go on to middle school! The dream of healthy families and access to an education are truly becoming a reality in the village of Tzanjmel.

AMIGOS' LONG-TERM INVESTMENTS...



Rosa Álvarez Hernández with her son Lucas, a student in the 1st Model Classroom, and his younger sister Melisa.



RAISING EDUCATION VALUES & SCHOOL PARTICIPATION

When Amigos began working in Santa Cruz in 1998, only four students stayed in school until the 6th grade. Most attended school for only a year or two, barely learning to read, write, or speak Spanish. The only school in town was crumbling, poorly funded, and had few teachers. Most parents saw little benefit to an education for their children.

Over the years, Amigos supported the parents of Santa Cruz to advocate for more teachers and better services, and provided material support to improve the schools. A new preschool and middle school were built. And with Amigos' higher education scholarships,



Marcela Álvarez and grandmother, from the Santa Cruz village of Tzununa, at her high school graduation.

GIVING KIDS A HEADSTART IN SCHOOL

"My son is only eight and he can already read better than me."
—Rosa Álvarez Hernández

Rosa Álvarez Hernández was one of the first parents to enroll her son, Lucas, in Amigos' first Model Classroom six years ago. She saw an opportunity for him that she never had, the opportunity for a good education. The Model Classroom aimed to improve public preschool education by providing a more positive and enjoyable learning space in the classroom through better teacher training, more resources, fewer school cancelations, and greater parental involvement.

Our Model Classrooms have grown each year since, following Lucas and his classmates as they advanced through school. Now in the 3rd grade, these students are more academically prepared than their non-Model Classroom peers in the public

primary school. They are growing in their confidence and are excited about learning.

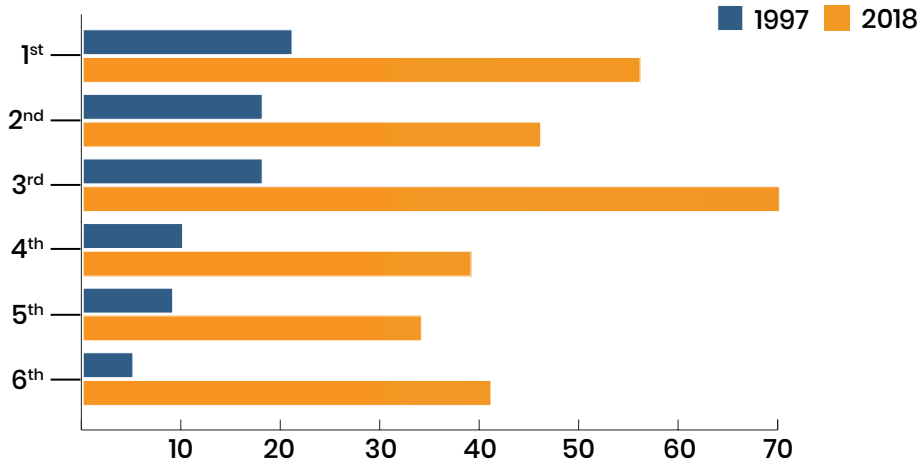
Rosa and Anastasio Canel enjoy watching Lucas excel in school. At only eight years old, they can see that his knowledge is already well beyond what they were able to achieve. It is even spreading to his two-year-old sister, Melisa, who already demands that she be able to read books just like her big brother. This is an incredible development for a young child in this community, where the generation before her was largely illiterate.

Six years in, Amigos' Model Classrooms are improving early education in Santa Cruz, and improving future opportunities for children like Lucas.

more and more youth are now going on to high school and even university. Young women are leading this new embrace of education, comprising over 50% of students at the primary, secondary and even university level.

20 years later, schools are full and parents increasingly see the benefit and opportunities that education can provide for their children. Amigos has now supported more than 150 higher education scholarships, with over 100 high school and 6 university graduates. These include the first woman university graduate and first lawyer (also a woman) in all of Santa Cruz!

STUDENTS ENROLLED BY GRADE



LEAD TO LONG-TERM CHANGE

KICKSTARTING THE SANTA CRUZ ECONOMY

In 2012, Amigos established two social enterprise businesses to support the CECAP Vocational School. The mission was to create professional development opportunities for students to practice their skills and gain employment after their studies. It also aimed to

generate income to make the vocational school financially sustainable in the long-term, as well as draw tourism to spur economic development in the Santa Cruz community. Six years later, we could not be more proud of how far these two businesses have come!

CAFÉ SABOR CRUCEÑO



Our graduate-run café now employs over 15 young Cruceños and Cruceñas, and hosts dozens of CECAP Culinary students doing their practical training. The café attracts more customers each year, and is well known all around Lake Atitlán for its spectacular view and good food. The café has catered weddings, hosted special events, served Sunday Brunches and Friday Pizza Nights, and offers Guatemalan cooking classes for visitors. Almost half of its raw materials are purchased from Santa Cruz vendors, investing money into the local economy and attracting visitors to the town.

MANOS CRUCEÑAS ARTISAN STORE



From just a handful of artisans selling their products in a corner near the café entrance, Manos Cruceñas has grown into a beautiful retail space with wholesale customers across North America. It now employs over 100 women artisans who work in beading, sewing, weaving and embroidery. Most are women who have never before had the opportunity to make an income outside of the home and are now earning fair wages for their work. Their high quality products feature beautiful designs, and are even available for purchase through an online store: www.store.amigosdesantacruz.org

BUSINESS HIGHLIGHT SANTA CRUZ'S FIRST WELDING SHOP

When the CECAP Vocational Training Center opened its doors in 2010, Ramos Cumes, then 28, was one of the first students to enroll. He studied both carpentry and welding, eagerly taking advantage of the Industrial Arts courses offered. After graduating he teamed up with his cousin and fellow classmate, Ramos Mendoza, to open the first welding shop in Santa Cruz.

Today, 'Ramos and Ramos' are well-known across Santa Cruz and in surrounding communities for their high quality welding skills and business professionalism. Their work is on display in the metalwork in the CECAP building, and in many homes around Santa Cruz. Their business has grown over the years with their reputation, providing both with a steady stream of extra income for

their families, and a source of pride for the Ramos cousins.

The story of generational change in Ramos' family is inspiring. Neither Ramos nor his wife had the opportunity to go to school, nor did his parents before him. Both he and his father worked as gardeners for nearby homes. Ramos is now determined that each of his four children will finish school, and he is proud to be able to support them through his business earnings. His oldest daughter, Cali, is a graduate of the CECAP Culinary Program and now works in the graduate-run Café Sabor Cruceño. Ramos is also now the CECAP welding instructor himself, proud to help the next generation of Cruceños to achieve the skills and successes that he has.



"Thanks to the training I received in CECAP, I am able to earn more income each week. I am proud of this shop and what we have accomplished."

—Ramos Cumes

THE AMIGOS TIMELINE... 20 YEARS OF EDUCATING & EMPOWERING IN SANTA CRUZ



1998



Amigos de Santa Cruz founded through 'Books in the Classroom' Project

2000

Amigos begins providing healthy snacks for the Santa Cruz primary school

2001



Amigos donates first computer in all of Santa Cruz

2002

Scholarship Program begins with 22 middle school scholarships

2005

Nutrition Centers opened in our most remote communities

2004



Amigos hires first employees

2003



Pat Torpie & Nancy Bingham, Amigos' founders, open first Amigos office space in the preschool building

2006

Clean Water Filter & Stove Installation Program begins

2007

Santa Cruz Has a Dream
First meeting held to organize what becomes the CECEAP Vocational Training Center

2009

First youth leadership conference held

2010



After community-led construction, CECEAP Vocational Training Center opens its doors on April 26th

2012



Café Sabor Cruceño opens for business

2012

Sexual and Reproductive Health Education Program begins in Santa Cruz public schools

2013

Early education Model Classroom Program begins, Manos Cruceñas Artisan Store established

2015



Santa Cruz Youth Corps Program established

2018

20 years on, the Amigos team now consists of over 35 staff, interns, and instructors!

2017



Pat Torpie retires as Executive Director after 19 years, replaced by Jessie Cohn. Rosalia Simón Pérez promoted to join leadership team, together with new staff member Alex Macfarlan

2016



Estela Simaj, the first scholarship student to complete university and the first woman university graduate in all of Santa Cruz, earns a Bachelor's in Communications

THE NEXT 20 YEARS... WHAT'S IN STORE?

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION FOR ALL SANTA CRUZ STUDENTS



Now that students are enrolling in school at higher numbers than ever before, Amigos' mission is to ensure that every student receives a high quality education. Good quality education is the key to alleviating poverty in Santa Cruz once and for all.

EDUCATION

THE CHALLENGE

Santa Cruz has seen dramatic increases in school enrollment. Education is now valued and in demand, yet too many students still graduate without basic academic skills. Public school resources are insufficient to provide the quality education that Santa Cruz children need to succeed. Santa Cruz is at a pivotal moment. Parents are demanding a good education for their children, but are still being let down.

AMIGOS' PLAN

Students need resources above and beyond what the local public schools can provide. Amigos will focus on initiatives that provide a positive, inclusive and interactive learning environment. One that delivers integrated educational support for students from pre-K through University, ensuring that children grow into educated, analytical and critical thinking adults. Our priorities are:

- Literacy support and teacher training
- Positive after-school activities such as arts and sports
- Higher education scholarships & study support with access to technology and mentoring services

BUILDING NEW LIVING-WAGE WORK & BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES IN SANTA CRUZ FOR BOTH MEN & WOMEN



Good economic opportunities in Santa Cruz remain scarce with many still earning subsistence wages. Amigos' aim is to build more living-wage, sustainable jobs that enable men and women to improve the livelihoods of their families and their community.

ECONOMY

THE CHALLENGE

As Santa Cruz's main industry, increased tourism has created many new job opportunities. However, too many are still left without a sustainable income, particularly in Santa Cruz's most rural areas. Meanwhile, Santa Cruz mainly imports goods and services from other towns, exporting good jobs and sending money out of the local economy.

AMIGOS' PLAN

Critical to improving quality of life for the next generation of young Cruceños is a Santa Cruz economy in which locally made goods and skilled professionals are in demand across the Lake Atitlán region. Santa Cruz needs to be a thriving producer of goods and services, not just a consumer.

- Industry and business development to grow professional jobs
- Investment in women-owned small businesses
- CECAP advanced courses for in-demand areas such as small motor and refrigerator repair

AMIGOS TO INCREASE ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP



Access to quality education and growing economic opportunities in Santa Cruz will be lost if we don't also protect our environment. Human pollution has led Lake Atitlán to the verge of destruction, and the beautiful surrounding hillsides could be lost to deforestation. The local economy will be severely and negatively impacted if this environmental devastation continues.

Therefore, Amigos will be stepping up a focus on environmental stewardship in all of our work. Our education programs will include environmental instruction and

awareness. Our economic empowerment programs will require environmentally friendly practices in all business initiatives that we support, with special backing for new environmental businesses. We will sponsor village-wide celebrations on important holidays such as Earth Day. And we will strengthen CECAP's role as a leader in environmental best practices in Santa Cruz, setting a positive example through progressive environmental practices in our office and community programs.

TEACHING ADVANCED TECHNICAL SKILLS & CREATING NEW TRADE BUSINESSES

Any time a fridge or water pump breaks in Santa Cruz, an outside professional needs to be contracted to do the work. Expertise in areas such as car repair, fridge maintenance, boat motor repair, and plumbing are absent in the local area. Good jobs are exported out to other communities, resulting in higher prices for trade services and less skilled trade jobs in Santa Cruz. New

Amigos Technical Scholarships are addressing this gap by building advanced skills in trades where there are not yet any local technicians to fill the need. Once trained, Amigos will assist these young professionals to start businesses in Santa Cruz: lowering prices, creating skilled professional jobs, and boosting the local economy.

These scholarships provide an opportunity for qualified applicants to attend technical colleges with established reputations, complete apprenticeships with experienced technicians, or attend classes taught in the CECAP Vocational Training Center. This year we piloted the first three of these scholarships. Here are their stories:



JOSÉ EFRAÍN SIMAJ GARCÍA

STUDYING AUTOMOTIVE REPAIR IN QUETZALTENANGO

Currently works as a pickup and tuk-tuk driver and hopes to grow his automotive business as road access in Santa Cruz expands.



SILVESTRE RAFAEL

STUDYING ELECTRICITY INSTALLATION AND ELECTRONICS REPAIR IN PANAJACHEL

Currently works as a masonry assistant on basic electronic installations, but still lacks the skills for many electric jobs. Silvestre hopes to take his skills to a more advanced level, in order to become a qualified expert in his field.



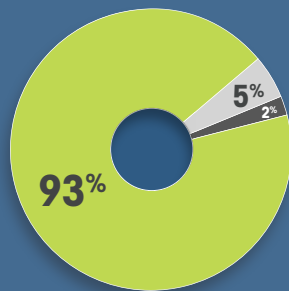
ALFREDO SIMÓN

STUDYING ELECTRICITY INSTALLATION AND ELECTRONICS REPAIR IN PANAJACHEL

Currently works as a day laborer and looks forward to learning a technical skill to increase his economic opportunities so he can better support his family.

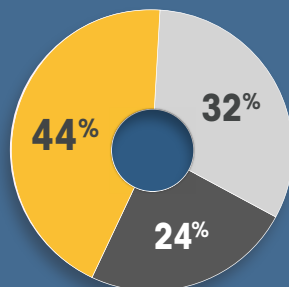
USE OF FUNDS 2017

TRANSFORMING GENEROUS
PARTNER SUPPORT INTO
REAL IMPACT



USE OF OPERATING FUNDS

- PROGRAM SERVICES
- ADMINISTRATION
- FUNDRAISING



OPERATING REVENUE

- FOUNDATIONS & GRANTS
- SOCIAL BUSINESS & PROGRAM INCOME
- INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS

HONORING OUR DONORS

Amigos Programs are generously supported by:

Carson Foundation
SG Foundation
CG Foundation
The Summit Foundation
Grousemont Foundation
Boulware Foundation
John Brown Family Foundation
Miracles In Action
Mayan Educational Foundation
Rotary International
Innocent Eyes Project
The Seattle Foundation
Chances for Children International
Daniel López Pérez Photography
and our many wonderful friends...

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR
GENEROUS SUPPORT!**

JOIN US...



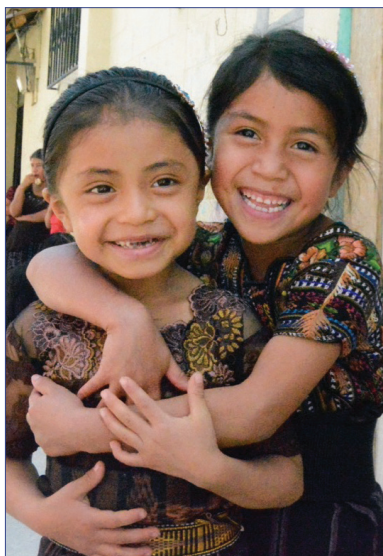
*In changing the world,
one community at a time,
one generation at a time.*



We are proud to be an organization led by indigenous local staff, almost all from the Santa Cruz communities themselves. The young men and women who now make up our team were among the first recipients of school aid when Amigos first began working 20 years ago. And today, they are leaders of the organization.

Investing in the professional development of our staff is integral to the Amigos mission. We are helping to build the first wave of young professionals in Santa Cruz, young men and women who are the catalysts of change in their community.

SUPPORT OUR WORK TODAY!



In honor of our 20th anniversary, we hope you will give generously this year. Help Amigos continue to improve the lives of future generations in Santa Cruz. We've come so far and with your help we will continue our work supporting quality education and economic empowerment for all.

DONATE ONLINE

www.amigosdesantacruz.org/donate

SEND A CHECK

Amigos de Santa Cruz Foundation
2226 Eastlake Ave. E., #319
Seattle, WA 98102

For more information and to sign up for monthly e-newsletters, visit:
www.amigosdesantacruz.org

GUATEMALA

Santa Cruz La Laguna
Solola, Guatemala
+502 5034-7844

UNITED STATES

2226 Eastlake Ave. E., #319
Seattle, WA 98102
+1 (360) 468-2057