



A letter from the Amigos Leadership Team



Dear Amigos Family,

These are uncertain times in which it seems our entire world has been turned upside down. We write to you in solidarity, and hope this message finds each of you safe and in good health.

Here in Santa Cruz, our community is coming to grips with what it means to experience this COVID-19 global pandemic from rural Guatemalan communities. The Guatemalan government has closed the nation's borders, shut down schools, businesses and offices, cancelled public transportation, and imposed a 4pm - 4am curfew. These measures are unsettling, but leave us hopeful that the spread of the virus in Guatemala can be contained. This nation's healthcare system is already incredibly fragile, particularly in our area. A widespread outbreak here would be truly devastating.

Amigos field programs, offices, store and cafe have been closed and staff are working from their homes. This is a first for our young team. They are learning how to conduct video conference calls and supervise teams remotely.

At the same time, we recognize the important leadership role that we at Amigos must play in our underserved community, to both protect from this disease and the economic effects that it is causing. Here is how we are currently supporting the communities of Santa Cruz:

- First and foremost, we are continuing to pay all of our staff their full salaries, including staff of our social businesses, and providing work for our artisans (that they can do from home). Our staff are our priority and our responsibility. Their family's livelihoods depend on their salaries, and this community depends on their ongoing work.
- Our local government-run health centers are severely understaffed and undersupplied, even lacking basic supplies like disinfectants and gloves for clinicians. In each of the seven Santa Cruz communities we are purchasing essential medical supplies such as thermometers, antibacterial soap and face masks as well providing additional staff to support their work.
- Our communities are heavily reliant on tourism and the sudden exodus of tourists and closure of borders has left many without work and no savings to fall back on. We have identified those most at risk in our communities to ensure that they do not go hungry during this difficult time. Our staff will monitor them and their families, and provide support in the form of work-trade opportunities, not handouts. We will be shifting resources to help put people to work so that they can provide food for their families. Projects will include planting trees to protect Santa Cruz's clean water springs or cleaning trash on local hiking trails, projects that help the community and that can be safely done while practicing social distancing.
- In a community only accessible by boat, we are particularly at risk for food security

due to access concerns and price gouging. Given the uncertainty of how long this might last, we are working with our Municipal Government to purchase bulk supplies of food staples that can be available for purchase at-cost to the people of Santa Cruz should the need arise.

We need your support now more than ever to ensure these efforts can be sustainable. If you would like to support our local emergency support efforts, please consider [making a donation](#) to Amigos today and add 'COVID Response Effort' in the note.

Our team and our community are strong, both in Santa Cruz and around the world. We know that together we can get through this. Thank you for being a part of our Amigos de Santa Cruz family.

In Solidarity,



Rosalía, Alex & Jessie

The Amigos Leadership Team

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