

Dear Verein Guatemala Zentralamerika Friends,

Guadalupe

28.5.2019

The rains have started early this year, which we suspected would happen as nature's signs pointed towards this and that means of course that the rivers will grow fast and unpredictable, more so this year with the many daily eruptions of the volcano, where now huge amounts of volcanic sand and ash rest on the slopes. The crater is full to the brim they say and for certain we will see much pyroclastic material and lava coming down. Nobody knows of course if the lava will stay within the previous paths or if it will look for new exits, all depending on the amount and force once erupting. There are warnings of a big possible eruption to come soon and that is not precisely encouraging.

Warning systems are now installed in over 20 villages and villages committees at this point have been briefed that possible evacuations might happen when the volcanic activity intensifies.

On the 11<sup>th</sup> of April the afternoon the sky was cloudy but we had no idea that it was already raining heavily high up in the forest and after 3 hours the rivers crossings were all totally blocked, the dirt road not passable and the main road between Alotenango and Escuintla closed ( the latter by the authorities). It took several days to cross the rivers again. Similar storms continue several times a week.

Vamos Adelante is obviously highly alerted as our base is located in Zapote ( one has to cross 4 rivers to get there) and in case of a sudden evacuation is prepared to work flexible out of different villages for which we have trained well and detailed. In case the village of Zapote at one point might be too dangerous to be in ,we can work out of Ceylan, which so far is being protected by two hills or /and we could move to Escuintla, where we still rent a house for several disaster victims. We worked like this during the months of the disaster 2018 with good results.

Our community promoters are frequently training the affiliated Vamos Adelante women for an effective evacuation and although some might think this is a bit boring hearing about the same subject so often- at least they do remember most items they should take and have them ready in the house! We have also handed out many more solar lamps recently as the electricity net often fails and especially during an emergency at night light is very important, also at times during the day it gets rather dark when much sand and ash comes down. In addition cell phones can be charged through the solar lamps, very important for communication.

Our education promoters and supervisors have been busy evaluating the scholarship students, visiting their homes and schools, talking to teachers, checking that the students actually show up for class, ask if they need help or if the teachers have any comments in this regard. The re-enforcing classes for students who need support in some extra subjects are ongoing.

In the beginning of the year the students received not only a big basic bag of school material, school uniforms but also books and special material requested by their teachers . We just handed out the second basic bag after having looked at the results of their first big academic evaluation. If the student failed they will not receive the bag but that only happens in very few cases. The scholarship students



know that they have to fulfill certain requirements with us and the ones who have been with Vamos Adelante since the very early grades find them easy, children who start in 5 or 6<sup>th</sup> grade find them sometimes hard especially being punctual in school, being respectful, doing their homework, dress properly for school and so forth.

The quality of the two pair of shoes the students received in January is very good and they are comfortable. If they have not fallen apart after an intense year of wearing them they are of course being handed to a smaller sibling.

In San Andres Osuna and Chuchu we painted 2 schools in April much to the delight of the students, teachers and parents as we use happy and bright colors.

Accompanying patients to hospitals, specialist, laboratories, etc. right now is turning into a challenge as we often have to be there at 6am or 7am at the latest to receive a waiting number to see the doctors. The rivers make it hard for us to travel and sometimes we leave a day early, especially with elderly people who have difficulties walking. Our Vamos Adelante doctor remains in telephone contact with the health promoters and gives advice in difficult medical situations. The dentist who has been coming to Zapote is on hold as our area has officially been declared as high risk area and we can for obvious reasons not accept any volunteers during this time.

We have been donating wood saving stoves and many more solar lamps and the lucky recipients feel very fortunate having received such good and helpful items. The stoves are easy to assemble and not only do they save much firewood but also reduce the risk of getting burned and respiratory related diseases as well as eye infections caused by smoke. The solar lamps are fabulous and much needed.



Vamos Adelante total scholarships for 2019 : 918

This year many more students applied for a scholarship and help was approved.

Education remains so important and many more families have turned towards us for support after the disaster, which was a huge wake-up call . Vamos Adelante is very happy to be able to guide them through their education.



Juan had a dream since he was little and that was going to school, but his mother could not afford it. We always saw him working, carrying heavy loads of firewood and working on the fields, never playing. This year he will graduate from 9h grade and we hope that he will continue in vocational school next year.

The school in San Miguel Los Lotes was destroyed but not the spirit of education!! It will be rebuilt in the new settlement for the surviving victims.

These children suddenly lost their mother last year, seven children now were half orphans. The oldest is 14 years old. We immediately jumped in and helped with food through godparents and with scholarships.



paperwork at this point and reads important document to her parents.

Debora is the only one in the family who can read and write. She was severely malnourished when she was little and had learning disabilities. This year she will graduate from 6<sup>th</sup> grade and would like to continue in Junior High school next year. She is handling all the family's







Alex is 11 and due to his physical limitations his parents did not want him to participate in every-day activities. We succeeded to convince them that Alex needed to be with other children, that he needed to be in school, play soccer and so forth. They finally agreed but Alex needs help , which he is receiving in our afternoon re-enforcing school. We have two wonderful teachers, Rosalia and Yaqueline ,young , dynamic and caring, curious to learn more about new teaching methods.



Our food program for malnourished children , adults and elderly continues,; if children are hungry they cannot concentrate and hungry adults do not have the strength to work .

In February several villages offered a good school feeding program but nobody knows how long this will last, in the meantime we are feeding the ones not participating there and who are malnourished.





On May 15<sup>th</sup> the government handed out the first 168 property titles with houses to the victims of the volcano disaster! This is phase one. In July more houses will be donated. By the end of November 2019 a total 1000 houses are planned to be donated to the victims, we were told. The houses are very nice as you can see and are located in the center of Escuintla. The property is 7x12 m big and a second floor can be built on the existing structure. The house consists of 2 bedrooms, a dining-living room, an area where to attend laundry, a bathroom, a little garden. Parks and playgrounds are available, a school is close-by.

Thank you very much for supporting  
Vamos Adelante's projects  
Many warm regards from our team

