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A Youth WINGS peer educator works on a reproductive health collage

Dear Friends,

The most recent report by UNICEF concludes that more than half of Guatemala's children are chronically malnourished – the third highest rate in the world, behind Yemen and Afghanistan. In parts of rural Guatemala, where the population is predominantly Mayan, the incidence of child malnutrition reaches as high as 80 percent. A diet of little more than tortillas does permanent damage, leaving thousands of children both physically and mentally stunted.

While there are numerous and long-standing causes of chronic malnutrition in Guatemala – massive income inequality, lack of education and infrastructure, government corruption, high rates of unemployment and poverty, and prevalence of unsustainable subsistence farming – an often overlooked but central cause of the current crisis is the lack of family planning.

Guatemala continues to have the highest fertility rate in Latin America and the Caribbean at 4.2 children per women, and it is no coincidence that the fertility rate climbs to 6.1 children among indigenous women, 6.7 children among those with the lowest level of education, and 8 children among the poorest 20 percent of the country, the very same populations that are plagued by chronic malnutrition. Teenage pregnancy, lack of birth spacing, and multiple births contribute to a cycle of diminished health for mothers and underweight babies who grow up having to compete with too many siblings for already limited resources.

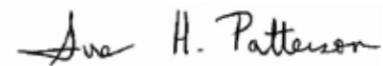
Having lived and worked in Guatemala for 16 years, I am no longer surprised to meet a mother pregnant with her eighth, tenth, or even twelfth child, despite struggling to put even a small amount of food on the table, but I still find these situations heartbreaking.



A young girl takes care of her 3 siblings

While immediate relief in the form of food aid has begun to pour into the country, such temporary solutions are not sustainable and will never be sufficient to meet the needs of the quickly growing population here. Instead, we must consider how we can enable Guatemalans to improve their lives by providing them with the long-term tools – sex education and access to family planning services are critical – that will help lift families out of the grips of severe poverty and malnutrition. Thank you for supporting WINGS, and for helping to provide a sustainable solution to the devastating malnutrition that is ravaging this country and limiting its future.

Sincerely,



Sue Patterson, Founder

Family Planning REDUCES GLOBAL WARMING

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, human activity is the primary cause of global warming. With the world's population expected to grow by more than 2.4 billion people over the next 40 years, the foreseeable result will be increased pressure on earth's natural resources and the exacerbation of existing inequalities faced by vulnerable groups – particularly women, children and the elderly. The solution? Invest in family planning.

A 2009 study by the London School of Economics concluded that family planning is the most cost-effective means of preventing climate change. Currently 200 million women around the world report an unmet need for family planning, meaning that they would prefer not to become pregnant in the next two years but lack access to the family planning services that would allow them to delay pregnancy. The report estimated that if this unmet need for family planning was addressed more than 34 gigatons (billion tons) of CO₂ would be saved by 2050 – equivalent to nearly 6 times the annual emissions of the US.

The report also found that each \$7 spent on family planning would reduce CO₂ emissions by 1 ton, while it would cost \$32 worth of conventional green technologies, such as hybrid cars and solar energy, to similarly reduce emissions. Put another way, family planning is nearly five times less expensive as a means of preventing climate change than conventional green technologies. As Roger Martin, the supervisor of



The natural beauty of Nahuala, Solola the study, put it, "...including family planning as part of the solution is so easy, and so cheap, and would bring so many other social and economic benefits, from health and education to the empowerment of women. It would also ease all the other environmental problems we face – the rapid shrinkage of soil, fresh water, forests, fisheries, wildlife and oil reserves and the looming food crisis."

The idea that increasing access to family planning services is a crucial component to combating climate change has been gaining traction in recent years. In June 2008, the British Medical Journal also proposed better family planning as a means to reduce CO₂ emissions.

These reports provide further evidence supporting the importance of the work of WINGS. In addition to helping families take control their fertility, combatting poverty, and reducing reduce maternal mortality, family planning also plays a central and cost-effective role in preventing climate change.



WINGS' educator, Luis Ordóñez, gives a family planning talk in Chimaltenango

WINGS Launches a New Youth Website!

We are pleased to announce that this August WINGS launched a new website specifically for youth.

The website is one of the first of its kind in Guatemala and acts as a virtual resource center for Guatemalan youth to find reliable information regarding family planning and reproductive health services.

The site offers information on topics relevant for teens – puberty, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), the proper use of birth control methods, reproductive risk, the importance of communication and respect in developing healthy relationships – and includes an online forum for youth to share their concerns and experiences about reproductive health with each other. One of the site's most



Teens visit the new youth website popular features, 'ask the expert,' allows its users to directly ask a WINGS staff member for advice. Since the website launched in August, users have sent in a myriad of questions, ranging from where to find a nearby STI testing center to which type of birth control to use.

In the first month alone, the website drew

more than 600 visitors, far surpassing initial expectations. However, Youth WINGS Coordinator, Elida Guzman, says she is not surprised by the early success of the site. "Every day I see how eager adolescents are to learn how best to protect themselves and their partners from STIs and early pregnancies. The website provides these youth with a confidential, reliable source for reproductive health information."

Since its creation in 2004, the Youth WINGS program has been met with great enthusiasm by community members and the youth themselves. It is our hope that the new website will further encourage Guatemalan youth to educate themselves about reproductive health so that they make informed choices around sexuality and reproduction. To see the new youth website in action, please visit: www.jovenesconal.org.

Stories FROM THE FIELD Juan is a father of 3 from El Tejar, where he runs a drug and alcohol rehabilitation center for men.

He graduated as WINGS' first ever Men's peer educator in December 2008. Along with counseling men on drug and alcohol abuse, he also talks to them about preventing STIs and distributes condoms. He came to the second peer educator training this July to talk to the men about what it means to be a responsible father. As an example,



Father and son support family planning

Juan brought along his 14 year-old son, Gerson, and shared with everyone his personal experience living with an STI in hopes that the men, and his son, wouldn't repeat his mistake. While Juan was unable to attend all 3 days of the training, his son participated in the entire workshop and graduated to become the first son of a WINGS for Men peer educator to participate in the program.

Lourdes is a 33 year-old mother of 4 from the small town of Santa Lucia la Reforma.

She first heard about WINGS' family planning clinic through a radio announcement and decided to attend. The oldest of 13 siblings, Lourdes knows firsthand the hardships that come with having more children than desired. She was pulled out of school at the age of 8 to help her family herd sheep and lost 2 of her younger siblings to malnutrition. Before attending the WINGS clinic, Lourdes had never heard that there were methods available that would help



Women wait to receive Jadelle implants a woman to avoid pregnancy. At the clinic, she learned about the various family planning options and became interested in receiving a Jadelle implant. Since she didn't have the \$3 to pay for the implant, WINGS covered the cost so that Lourdes could prevent future unwanted pregnancies.

To read more Stories from the Field, please visit us online at www.wingsguate.org.

Get Involved

It has never been easier to get involved with WINGS and make a difference in the life of a Guatemalan family. There are many ways that you can get involved with WINGS.

GET ONE PERSON YOU KNOW TO GIVE TO WINGS

WINGS has grown largely because donors like you have shared WINGS' story with family, friends, and colleagues. This year, help WINGS by telling one person you know why WINGS' work is important and why you give.

HOLIDAY GIVING This holiday season, consider giving a gift that makes a difference. You can give a gift in honor of your loved ones on our website, www.wingsguate.org, or make a note on your check donation. Alternatively, add WINGS to your wish list, and ask your friends and family to make donations to WINGS this year in lieu of a traditional gift.

DONATE STOCK Looking for an alternative way to support WINGS but not sure what to give? Donating stock is a simple and effective way to make a difference by supporting reproductive health and family planning services in Guatemala. For more information on how to donate stocks to WINGS, please contact devofficer@wingsguate.org.

INVEST IN PLANNED GIVING Some donors generously choose to include WINGS as a beneficiary in their wills or estates to ensure the long-term sustainability of our effective programming. To learn more about planned giving options with WINGS, please contact info@wingsguate.org.

Thank You For Your Support

Without the generosity and dedication of our incredible network of supporters, our programs couldn't exist. We would especially like to recognize the following donors and organizations whose recent contributions to WINGS have made a tremendous impact on the lives of Guatemalan families:

Pat Cornell for choosing to include WINGS in her will, and her generous family for continuing to raise money for WINGS in her honor. More than \$10,000 was raised for WINGS' family planning program in Pat's name.

Dennis Wheeler for showing his support by generously offering WINGS a home in Antigua for more than 6 years.

Firma de Abogados www.firmadeabogados.com.gt for their generous donation of free legal services to WINGS in Guatemala.



Various ring designs by McFarland Designs

BUY FAIR TRADE JEWELRY

TO SUPPORT WINGS We are honored to announce that McFarland Designs has chosen to donate 10 percent of all its proceeds for the month of December to WINGS. McFarland Designs specializes in ethical, fair trade jewelry. Each piece is custom designed, and uses sustainable, eco-friendly materials to create wearable works of art you can feel good about.

To learn more about an incredible gift giving opportunity, please visit: www.mcfarlanddesigns.com.

DONATE YOUR OLD ELECTRONICS TO SUPPORT WINGS

WINGS is teaming up with Gazelle, the largest "reCommerce" company in the US, providing a practical, responsible and rewarding way for consumers to get value for used electronics. Gazelle recently launched Gazelle for Good (www.gazelle.com/gazelle-for-good), a website that allows non-profits to run "gadget drives" to raise money for their organizations. Simply visit WINGS' campaign website www.wings.gazelle.com enter the information about the items you wish to donate, and send in the items. Gazelle covers the cost of shipping, wipes all personal data off of the devices, and sends WINGS a check for the value. Gazelle will accept: Cell phones • Mp3 players • Digital cameras • Gaming systems • iPods • Computers • and more!

Marty Bischoff, CPA www.martybischoffcpa.com for continuing to provide us with high-quality tax preparation assistance.

Ashley Gamble www.reussnewmedia.com for her excellent work designing WINGS' newsletters and publications.

Ed Crocker for generously donating prints of lithographs drawn by his uncle, Pat Crocker.

Angelika Bauer for providing WINGS with 12 of her beautiful prints to adorn our new offices.

WINGS NESTS Bay Area, Manhattan Beach, San Diego, and St. Paul/Minneapolis for their tremendous efforts in raising awareness and funds for WINGS in their communities in 2009.

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