VISITORS IN PARRAMOS  
By Martha Dugan

Parramos is usually a quiet little town but we have been lucky to have several different visitors in the past month. First, Rolene Walker, the San Francisco Quaker who is walking from California to Chile in order to bring attention to the environment, spent several nights living at our office while she and her walking companion, Darcy Stanley walked to Guatemala City. Later she and Darcy took two days off from their walking and teaching schedule in order to spend some time with Martha in Antigua and meet for worship with Guatemala Friends Meeting. To learn more about Rolene’s calling go to her website www.walkwithearth.org. Darcy also has a website which is linked to the main site.

Less than a week later, Saskia Schuitemaker arrived from New Zealand. Saskia is a Dutch born New Zealand Quaker who used to live in Guatemala during the 1980s. She has received funding from several sources including her yearly meeting which will allow her to work with us as a volunteer for the next six months. Her background in community psychology is a perfect fit for helping us to further develop the community service projects which our students perform. In order to get the ball rolling, she is helping us to focus this year’s student conference on community service. We hope to include one or more trainers along with several student and non-student speakers who are already involved in community service. We are hoping that our speakers will inform and inspire the rest of the group with examples of the types of community projects they could take part in.

During the final week in February we held our annual tour. The group was small but they had a wonderful time and were deeply moved by their meetings with current and past students. One current student, Alejandro Chan, who is studying Political Science left an especially favorable impression with the way he is using the marimba to bring young people together in his community. One tour participant called him “the Obama of Guatemala”.

TEACHING ENGLISH TOUR IS A GO  
By Martha Dugan

I am thrilled to announce that the first ever Progresa Work Tour will take place this coming December 10th thru the 18th 2009. The tour participants will be working one on one with Progresa students who want to learn English. Both the volunteers and the students will be housed for the week at the Belen Convent in Antigua. Most of the rooms in this wonderful old convent are located around an historic patio garden. In addition the convent grounds include a large and serene garden with many nooks and crannies where the volunteers and their students will be able to find privacy for their lessons.

This location is superior to the retreat center I mentioned last year for several reasons. First of all we will be able to offer double rooms instead of dormitory rooms. For a small extra fee we may even be able to offer single rooms. Secondly the convent’s location in beautiful Antigua means that we will be able to arrange a variety of short excursions for you and your student to local markets, monuments, churches and museums. Finally the convent serves delicious family style meals.
I know because for many years the Guatemala Friends Meeting used the convent for our annual retreat.

The price of the TEACHING ENGLISH TOUR will be exactly the same as the price of our other tour, only $800 for eight nights lodging and all meals plus an additional $50 which will go directly to the scholarship fund to support a student in 2010. Your fees will cover not only your expenses but those of the student you work with. If you arrive in Guatemala just before the work tour and/or leave immediately afterwards we will also pay for your airport pick up to and from Antigua. If you plan to come earlier or stay later we will be happy to help you arrange to attend language school, book a hotel or visit other parts of the country.

Don’t feel you have to speak Spanish or have experience teaching English in order to participate. In response to my first article written last Spring I heard from several Friends who not only want to do this, THEY ARE EXPERIENCED PROFESIONALS in the field of Teaching English as a Second Language. They are willing to volunteer their skills to help us put together a simple packet of beginning English exercises. All of our students will be beginners. Some will be able to read and write a little English but almost none will be able to speak it. What you will need is lots of good will and patience as students learn to speak by listening to you and repeating simple phrases again and again.

For this first work tour I envision limiting the group to no more than 10 to 15 volunteers and 10 to 15 students. I have already made a first down payment to the Convento Belen and I will need to pay them more before I leave in June. For that reason, it is essential that we receive your down payment of $200 before May 15th of this year. Checks should be made out to Lester Lacelle at 29770 Sherwood Road, Willits, CA 95490. Please enclose a note with your address, e-mail, and phone number so that we can follow up. For more information about the tour e-mail Martha Dugan at mardugan@earthlink.net.

My name is Saskia Schuitemaker. I lived in Guatemala for eight years from 1980 to 1988, during which time I attended my first meetings of Guatemala Friends with Tom and Trudy Hunt and Jean and Peter Wright. In 1988 I moved back to New Zealand with my two young children. My connection with Quakers strengthened so that in 1994 I became a member of Aotearoa New Zealand Yearly Meeting.

Now my children are adults and I am free of family responsibilities, so I am able to pursue the service work as a Peacebuilder and Community Psychologist that I feel spiritually called to do. I was thrilled to find that PROGRESA needed someone to further develop their Community Service Programme with students, and that my skills and experience matched their needs so that I am able to respond to this calling. Working here will enable me to give back to a country and its people that I have a strong connection with, and that I love. I am inspired by PROGRESA’s achievements in terms of life changing outcomes for students and their families who are most in need. I hope that my contributing to the team here will assist PROGRESA to extend the reach of their benefits for students and their communities. The aim is to foster students’ community development and leadership skills and to benefit their communities through their community service projects. I will be here for a minimum of six months.

I have been supported financially by Aotearoa New Zealand Yearly Meeting through QPSANZ (Quaker Peace and Service) and by two Monthly Meetings including my own. QPSANZ has provided money for the Scholarship Programme since 1991 and has donated about $14,000 U.S. Through my advocacy I also aim to strengthen funding support, so that PROGRESA continues to make such excellent use of money to greatly benefit those who need it most.

GREETINGS FROM SASKIA
By Saskia Schuitemaker

Warmest Greetings to you all - friends and supporters, and potential supporters of PROGRESA! I am delighted to be involved with the project and to be working with the team here in Parramos, Guatemala in a very “hands on” and meaningful way which uses some of my skills in community development.
Pascual Ramirez Morales is a 24 year old student from a village of San Idelfonso Ixtahuacan, Huehuetenango. He is studying law and this year began his second year of at least six years of classes. (Plus additional time for internships and exams) In spite of his youth he already has a family of his own and a son which may explain his high level of maturity. He is the fourth child of a family of eight and is the only one who has managed to graduate from high school with a primary school teaching degree. He has a job as a primary school teacher and because of this he is practically the only one of his siblings who is helping to support his parents. Due to his example, another brother, who is also married has begun his studies to become a teacher and hopes to graduate this year.

Because he is one of only a few professionals in his aldea, Pascual collaborates with several different development groups in his community. Currently he is coordinator of the community’s health commission and has instituted a community wide waste program which includes the installment of trash barrels, as well as a recycling and incineration program. He and his committee are also pressuring the Minister of Health to bring a nurse and composting toilets to the community. In addition he works with the Community Coordinating Council which is responsible for the major decisions made in his small rural village.

As a result of all this experience Pascual is very aware of the importance of education. As he himself expresses it in one of his letters: “This is a time of much self development and growth in responsibility for me…I feel very ready to study and know that I can succeed; my desire to do it is very strong.” As in many other cases in spite of his having great potential, Pascual’s economic situation has impeded his ability to move forward in his development. Last year he decided to try studying at the university. Even though he satisfactorily passed his courses Pascual realized that he would not be able to continue alone. When he learned about our program, he decided to ask us for help and it was easy for us to accept him. We are confident that once more we are helping to develop a leader who can make a difference in his community.

Elena Reanda Queju’s life has been very difficult but is also inspiring. She is 21 years old and comes from San Pedro La Laguna, Solola, on the shores of Lake Atitlan. Her mother was born in San Pedro and her father came from a small community on the south coast of Guatemala. When Elena was only a year old her mother abandoned the family to live with another man. Her father was left with the responsibility of raising Elena and her two older sisters which he did working as a day laborer, a job which provided only the most basic necessities. The situation was especially difficult because the father didn’t own any property and the house where they were living belonged to the mother’s family. Eventually they had to leave and rent another house.

In spite of this the father did everything possible to help his daughters to complete primary school. The girls helped too by making and selling Guatemalan weavings. Still it was only possible to finish Primaria (primary school) and then the girls had to leave school in order to work in the fields and to continue making weavings. Sadly in 2006 the father died and the three daughters were left as orphans without even a place to live. In the end they were forced to go to Guatemala City to seek work as domestic servants, each girl having to fend for herself.

During this time Elena realized the importance of continuing her education and decided to take courses at night. Last year, at the age of 20, she succeeded in finishing Basico (middle school) which she managed to do on her own. Never the less she wanted to continue in Diversificado (high school) in order to improve her opportunities. The problem was that in order to study for a career she would have to leave work because most of the classes met during the day. Upon hearing about our program she applied, and even though she is not the best student we have had, her determination and struggle to get ahead convinced us that we should accept her.
Now she has begun her first year as a specialist in accounting and with the help of one of her sisters. Our program is helping her to fulfill one of her dreams that had seemed impossible. On graduating she hopes to find work that will allow her to help her sisters and others who, like herself have been left alone in the world struggling for survival.

VISITS TO EX-STUDENTS
By Meme Romero

Javier Lux comes from Los Trigales, an aldea of the town of Cunen, which is located on the slopes of the Cuchumatanes, the highest mountains in Central America. The majority of the inhabitants of Cunen work in agriculture and unfortunately have had to depend on emigration to the coffee and sugar cane plantations of the Pacific Coast in order to survive.

Javier, who is now a teacher in Cunen, was a student in our program from 2001 to 2006. His family is very poor and after we visited them it was clear that without the help of Progresa he could not have continued studying. His father barely speaks Spanish but from what we could understand he is extremely proud of his son’s success and grateful to us for helping him.

In order to get where he is, Javier has had to struggle and sacrifice. He has now succeeded in finishing all his course work for his legal degree and is working on his thesis. He has plans to take his legal exams in 2009. In our experience most of the students in law need years to finish all the requirements for graduation because of all the costs and complicated tasks they must fulfill after completing their course work. We are impressed with Javier’s determination to finish it all this year and graduate in 2009.

Meanwhile, he is working for the Minister for Education as a Technical Coordinator and says that he is responsible for 300 teachers. According to him this has been a huge responsibility and a challenge but the salary is not very high. Still, he says, it has been an opportunity to identify with and work in his own community. When we met him, he was very enthusiastic about his work and optimistic about his plans for the future. Those plans include working in the court system and becoming the best lawyer in his village.

Micaela Ern nesta Tzaj Cotiy is an ex-student from the town of Nahuala, one of the poorest towns in the Department of Solala. In 2005 she asked the program to help her study at the high school level because her family was unable to financially assist her in her dream of becoming a teacher. In 2007 she obtained her degree as a teacher but like almost all of our recent graduates had a hard time finding work. Her first job was as a poll taker for an organization called INCAP (a nutrition research program which has operated in Guatemala for many years) but that job lasted only one month. She later got the opportunity to work for PRONADE in a school named Patzij Balam Abaj, which is located near her home. (PRONADE is a special program for rural schools which gives power to the local community to hire and fire teachers but unfortunately it doesn’t pay very well) Finally, she says, she is expecting to receive a position as a teacher for the Ministry of Education in 2009.

The reason I am writing her story is to congratulate her because she is an example of how in spite of many limitations, a poor person from the rural area can succeed in overcoming all of the obstacles and come out ahead. I personally share this joy with her because I got to know her very well during her years as a student and was able to see her growth and learn about her experiences. We also congratulate her for her great sense of responsibility and the way she has worked to repay her loan.

Thanks to our faithful donors who make all this possible! All contributions are made to: Redwood Forest Friends Meeting and are mailed to Guatemala Scholarship Program, PO Box 1831 Santa Rosa, CA 95402
## SECONDARY LEVEL (41 students)

### Physical Education (3 years)
- **Juan Carlos Ujpn Juárez** 18 Tz'utujil

### Nursing (Vocational 1 year)
- **Arturo Francisco Diego Gaspar** 19 Q'anjob'al

### Pre-primary Teaching (3 years)
- **Liz Darleé Pérez Arriola** 17 Español
- **Marcelina Chum Cortez** 25 K'iche'

### Primary Teaching (3 years)
- **Claudia Lorena Ical Xol** 21 K'iche'
- **Isabel Cún Sinto** 36 Kaqchikel
- **Rubelsi Eduardo Montejo López** 18 Popti'

### Primary Bilingual Teaching (3 years)
- **Albertina Sanic Chipix** 23 Kaqchikel
- **Ana Elizabeth Sirón Maxia** 18 Kaqchikel
- **Antonio Menéndez Francisco** 19 Q'anjob'al
- **Berta Alicia Chipix Apén** 20 Kaqchikel
- **Bonifacio Cac Cac** 30 Poqomchi'
- **Edgar Odilio Caná Cún** 20 Kaqchikel
- **Elías Choc Mucú** 25 Q'eqchi'
- **Francisca Natalia Quixán Pérez** 19 K'iche'
- **Jorge Luis Méndez Morales** 17 Mam
- **Juan Chub Caal** 21 Q'eqchi'
- **Maria Sales Morales** 19 Mam
- **Martha Julia Gabriel Raxcal** 23 Kaqchikel
- **Romeo Dagoberto Domingo** 18 Man
- **Tereso Sisimit Chutá** 21 Kaqchikel

### Music Teacher (4 years)
- **María Estefany Muñoz Ajquí** 21 Kaqchikel

### Agriculture (3 years)
- **José Jeovanny Patzán Pérez** 17 Kaqchikel
- **Avilio Gregorio Tum** 22 K'iche'
- **Bruno Recinos Carranza** 19 Español
- **Daniel Aldana Avalos** 21 Español
- **Pablo Vargas Ramirez** 19 Popti'
- **Wilson René Aldana López** 17 Español

### Bookkeeping (3 years)
- **Armando Morales Pérez** 18 Mam
- **Elena Reanda Quejú** 22 Tz'utujil
- **Marco Tulio Daniel Pérez Tepáz** 19 Kaqchikel
- **Noelia Crucidalia Cún Apén** 18 Kaqchikel

### Mechanic (3 years)
- **Alberto Alexander Calel Telón** 17 Kaqchikel
- **Luís Clemente Gómez López** 18 Kaqchikel

### Rural Health Technician (2 years)
- **Manuel Constantino Díaz López** 22 Popti'
- **Selvin Hernández Jiménez** 21 Mam

### Primary (young students under special memorial fund)
- **Jasmin Mishel López García** 7 Kaqchikel
- **Baltazar Leobardo López García** 24 Kaqchikel
- **Isabel López García** 12 Kaqchikel
- **Margarita Stephanye López García** 10 Kaqchikel
- **Pedro Daniel López García** 13 Kaqchikel

## UNIVERSITY LEVEL (68 students)

### Political Sciences (6 years)
- **Alejandro Ramiro Chan Saquic** 24 K'iche'

### Law (6 years)
- **Amilcar Armiulfo Lucas Morales** 22 Mam
- **Angelico Leonel Otzoy Sajbochol** 33 Kaqchikel
- **Edgar Benjamín Ramírez Morales** 25 Mam
- **Edras Noe Ajpop Cárdenas** 22 Kaqchikel
- **Eduardo Jacinto Pablo Francisco** 23 Q'anjob'al
- **Ermeregildo Castellanos Caal** 28 Q'eqchi'
- **Eulalia Nallely Simón López** 24 Q'anjob'al
- **Hector Alejandro Canto Mejía** 28 K'iche'
- **Helen Luisa Montejo Montejo** 20 Popti'
- **Jairo Benjamín Ajataz Martínez** 27 K'iche'
- **José María García Vásquez** 27 K'iche'
- **Karol Olimpia Ajanal Abac** 24 K'iche'
- **María Antonieta Mateo** 21 Popti'
- **Pasqual Ramírez Morales** 24 Mam
- **Santos Mendoza Jerónimo** 25 Mam
- **Santos David Villatoro Villatoro** 20 Español
- **Silvia Patricia Orozco Juárez** 32 Español
- **Velveth Lusmaria Sequen Yucuté** 20 Kaqchikel
- **Vilma Angela Chali Colaj** 21 Kaqchikel

### Nursing Professional RN (3 years)
- **Angela Nathali Morán Chén** 19 Q’eqchi’
- **Antonio Santos Pacheco** 25 K’iche’
- **Astrid Graciela García Sí** 21 Q’eqchi’
- **Faustino Tum León** 35 K’iche’
- **German Lux Us** 37 K’iche’
- **Hector Fernando Xol Tut** 24 Q’eqchi’
- **Hermelindo Gudiel García Gomez** 19 Mam
- **Hugo Aroldo Cuc Coc** 24 Q’eqchi’
- **Juan José Bernal de León** 31 Ixil
- **Liliana Yaneth Moscoso Aldana** 34 Español
- **María Magdalena Imul Joj** 20 K’iche’
- **Marvin Romeo Teni Pop** 26 Q’eqchi’
- **Raul Cac Mó** 29 Q’eqchi’
- **Rubidia Matías Ramirez** 29 Mam
- **Sara Nohemi Gutierrez Batz** 25 K’iche’

### Agronomy (6 years)
- **Oscar Antonio Guerra García** 23 Español
- **Angélica Melissa De la Cruz** 22 Español

### Engineering (6 years)
- **Víctor Manuel Choy Choc** 25 Kaqchikel

### Medicine (6 years)
- **Ana Beatriz Quevedo Galindo** 21 Español
- **Ernesto Estrada Atz** 33 Kaqchikel
- **Eulalia Santiago Paiz** 32 Popti’
- **Wendy Carolina Recinos Lemus** 22 español

### M.A. in Education (6 years)
- **Benjamín Carlos García Barreno** 32 K’iche’

### Secondary Teaching (3.5 years)
- **Isaías Coc Poob** 22 Q’eqchi’
- **Diego Bernabé López Joj** 21 K’iche’
Some statistics about our 2009 group of students

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Students by level of education and sex</th>
<th>University</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>TOTALS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>36</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ninety eight students (90%) are indigenous and only 11 are non-indigenous (10%). Starting this year, all our students will get part of their help as a scholarship and part as a loan. An exception is made when a sponsor requests that his or her student be given a full scholarship.

Some statistics about our 2009 group of students

The Guatemalan Scholarship/Loan Program (PROGRESA) focuses on helping rural students attend universities and secondary schools. The program has grown from supporting one student in 1973 to supporting 114 students in 2008. Since its inception the program has provided scholarships and/or loans to over 920 students so that they may continue their education.