



Bienestar.

Hello everyone:

Warm greetings to you, with the hope that with the approaching Spring (!) you have some reason for optimism in your lives.

We want to give you an update on our collective work with **BIENESTAR**, beginning with news of Pavel these four months on, and then to share with you some of the things we've done with your donations in terms of projects and scholarships, and the effects that these are having in the lives of our friends in the south.

First, Pavel...

In a word, he is fine -- his health is good, his humor is intact, and his activities in the community are once more as extensive as ever. He fully plans to guide us in the jungle in May when this year's group arrives in Nuevo Horizonte (our 10th Anniversary!!!). What an amazing guy.



Pavel standing beside a picture of his younger self during the war.

Your monthly donations at work...

For the **BIENESTAR** board -- in addition to the \$1,600 earlier sent to support Pavel's emergency medical expenses -- late in November we were extremely pleased to be able to send -- on your behalf -- **\$3,100**:

- ✓ \$500 for a project -- delightfully named "Proyecto Azucar" (Project Sugar) -- to help combat a marked increase in the incidence of Type-2 Diabetes.
- ✓ \$200 to complete the healthy snack bar business initiative by two women in Nuevo Horizonte.
- ✓ \$300 to support a regional youth group leadership gathering.
- ✓ \$2,100 to be dispersed in student scholarships.

Below is further information about these initiatives.

Proyecto Azucar

In 2014 -- following a request from Nuevo Horizonte -- Selkirk nursing students, working together with local students, did an assessment of the incidence of diabetes in the community.



30% of those 100 screened had elevated blood-sugars. Mary Ann voluntarily returned on three occasions later in the year with diabetes educators from the Kootenays (Jean Charman & Esther Brown). They were involved in consultations, co-creation of a diabetes education program that was facilitated by the health promoters, and evaluation of the impact.

At the community level, one direct outcome was the formation of the "Project Sugar" group. Given that one important part of staving off the effects of the diabetes is regular exercise, the group now does daily walks together around the community!

Unfortunately some of the people identified with diabetes have progressed to the point of needing regular dosages of insulin. Our **\$500** donation will help support these costs until the group is able to develop other ongoing funding.

There is a real sense of determination here, and we feel pleased to be a part of it.

Women's Project

Last year we were able to support two women – Marleni and Erica -- in developing a micro-economic project, purchasing a fridge/freezer for their snack bar. This final donation will help them with marketing.

In the words of Marleni...

"We thank you for the help you gave us ... now we can store our natural fresh fruit and ice for smoothies, as well as the chicken and prepared vegetables. The fridge is a great help, we are grateful to all those who made this possible. "



Youth Group

A number of years ago, there was no cultural display in Nuevo Horizonte; people were too busy simply building basic infrastructure in order to sustain themselves. Now, though, dance and music are thriving, partly thanks to you.



This year we were able to channel a **\$300** donation to a Youth Festival, where a youth committee planned and organized a weekend gathering featuring discussions on youth participation in leadership and society, as well as soccer games and

traditional dance. Youth groups from around the Petén region were invited and participated.

Your donations through Bienestar covered the cost of their meals.

The youth committee sent a CD and reports to Bienestar, documenting the event, thanking us for the support, stressing how important it was for them to host such a festival that helped them develop significant leadership skills.



Scholarships

One of the highest reported priorities for all our partners is education -- vital for the future of their young people and their communities, but inaccessible to many due to the costs involved. As a result, the biggest portion of your donations this time -- **\$2,100** -- went to help four young students pursue their education.

In Nuevo Horizonte, BIENESTAR is partnering with a Community Women's Organization which oversees these funds -- selecting recipients from the many applicants, and then regularly meeting with scholarship recipients and their families to monitor their progress and involve them in active leadership in the community itself.

They report that your funds were assigned to four individuals for their next 10 months of schooling, two at the College level, and two at Secondary School. The scholarships will cover a half of all their fees.

Scholarship Recipients



Marina de Jesús García
2nd Year High School



Bernabé Alexander Ramírez Girón
College Level in Arts & Sciences



Paola Martnes Garcia
3rd Year High School



Jaqueline Castañeda León
College Level in Business Administration

On behalf of the Bienestar board and our project partners, **we thank you for your ongoing support and solidarity**, and always welcome any questions you may have.

Our intention is to examine project or scholarship applications twice a year – in May and in November – and send the funds that we’ve raised at that time.

Please know that there is **room for you** on the Board! We can easily skype you into our twice-yearly meetings, so if this is something that speaks to you, please do let us know.

Tax Receipts:

You should by now have received an email from CanadaHelps with your 2015 charitable tax receipts attached for printing. If you have any problems with this, please contact me.

And finally, if you’d consider becoming a regular donor -- even \$10 a month – the price of two coffees after your tax break – please add your grain of sand to this growing, very worthy pile. You would find yourself in wonderful company.

<https://www.canadahelps.org/dn/23514>

Sincerely,

Michael
For the Board (see below)

Board members:

Roy Nelson
Liz Knox
Teeka Ferguson
Cheralynne Kennedy
Monika Nowatschin
Mary Ann Morris
Michael Chapman

