

Horizons is proud to announce that Margaret Frayne and MEC (the María Elena Cuadra Working and Unemployed Women's Movement) are this year's recipients of our Founders Award. Every year, Horizons celebrates two recipients – an individual in Canada and a partner organization in the South – who exemplify the generous, caring and passionate spirit of Horizons' founders Father Tim Coughlan and Christine and David Stewart.

An enduring educator and former elementary school teacher, Margaret Frayne is a tireless volunteer with S.H.A.R.E. Agriculture Foundation, bringing programs in food production, literacy, community development and skills training to thousands of families in Central America.



Margaret Frayne accepts her award.

Closer to home, Margaret has volunteered with Melville United Church in Fergus, Ontario. Acting as a board member, secretary to the board, a member of both the fundraising and communications committees and the chair of the women's group, Margaret's countless lunches and fundraisers have been invaluable to the heritage and spiritual life of her local community.

At the June 17th award ceremony held in Cobourg, Horizons' board member Karin Wells noted, "From small gestures towards friends and strangers, to large international projects to empower the rural poor, Marg lives in accordance with the credo: love thy neighbour."

MEC, Horizons' partner in Nicaragua, received the Founders Award this year for its support for unemployed Indigenous women and women working in free trade zones in the country. Founded in 1994, MEC works towards the inclusion and full participation of women in Nicaraguan society.

In the past two years, several MEC members have been persecuted and incarcerated due to civil unrest in Nicaragua. Despite these hardships, MEC remains devoted to addressing a wide set of issues affecting women, such as domestic violence, social, labour and economic rights and living standards.

Congratulations to Margaret Frayne and to MEC!

Horizons



Educational Tour – February 7-17th, 2020

Are you ready for a truly unique experience? Join us for an Educational Tour across Guatemala from February 7-17, 2020. You'll learn about the rich history and culture of Guatemala and the Maya people, and see some great sights, including the historic Tikal pyramids and the breathtaking Western Highlands.

You'll also visit with our local partner, PIES de Occidente, who have been working with Horizons in the western-highlands of Guatemala to reduce maternal and infant mortality, and you'll get a chance to meet the traditional, Indigenous midwives who are making a difference in their communities.

Don't miss this exceptional opportunity to see Horizons and PIES de Occidente in action!



For more information:
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905 372-5483 x10

HORIZONS OF FRIENDSHIP Horizons NEWSLETTER

Fall 2019

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS TO END POVERTY IN CENTRAL AMERICA AND MEXICO

Support for Migrating Women & Kids



Over 27 representatives from organizations in Mexico and Guatemala gathered for a capacity building session on migrant and human rights in Chiapas, Mexico.

"Seventy percent of women who migrate from Central America and Mexico to the United States have faced some form of sexual violence during their journey," says Diana Palencia, National Coordinator at FOCA (the Association for Training and Capacity Building), our newest partner in Chiapas, Mexico.

With mounting civil unrest across much of Central America, including mass protests in Honduras and Nicaragua, and the transition of governments in Guatemala and El Salvador, tens of thousands of Central Americans continue to head north to the U.S. seeking a life free of violence and stronger economic conditions.

But the face of migration is changing. In the past, it was categorized as a progression of life reserved for men – with women and children staying in their home countries. Increasingly, women and girls are making the dangerous journey north, and they're vulnerable to abuse. According to the United Nations Human Rights Commission report, *Women on the Run*, after paying exorbitant fees to human traffickers for passage to the U.S., many women are beaten, raped, and killed along the way.

In response to this alarming situation, Horizons, the United Steelworkers Humanity Fund, and FOCA have entered into a one-year project to support a coalition of organizations, known as the Mesoamerican Women's Network on Health and Migration, to strengthen migrants' rights in Central America and Mexico.

Founded in 1996, FOCA has over 20 years of experience working on issues such as women's health and

rights, with a strong focus on supporting lay midwives in the primarily Indigenous Mexican state of Chiapas. FOCA quickly adopted a focus on migration after many lay midwives within their program began fleeing the country to escape violence in their communities.

The violation of human rights is also a key tactic being used to curb the flow of migrants—from arbitrary detention of human rights defenders to inhumane conditions in holding facilities for migrant children and the use of violence by military forces to expel migrants.

As one of the leading members of the Mesoamerican Women's Network on Health and Migration, FOCA is leading the charge to train the other 26 members. Two meetings have been held to begin creating a strategic plan to promote migrant women's rights, and two upcoming workshops will strengthen the network's knowledge of human and

migrant rights.

"Women and children who are fleeing physical, psychological, and sexual violence are facing these exact same conditions as they emigrate," says Patricia Rebolledo, Horizons' Executive Director. "We unequivocally denounce these acts, and will continue to look for ways to support women and children who live under these conditions."



PROFILE

Diana Palencia,
Coordinator and Founder
of FOCA (the Association
for Training and Capacity
Building)

Born and raised in Chiapas, Mexico, Diana Palencia has a strong history of advancing women and migrants' rights in Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras. After leaving her rural hometown to study social work and psychology at university, she made the decision to return home to work with Indigenous women on issues of health and women's rights.

"Generally speaking, women are the last to eat and the first to get up in the morning to work," says Diana. "To add to this reality, Indigenous women here often face early marriages, and little-to-no autonomy over their own bodies."

As FOCA's founder, Diana has worked for over 20 years to advance women's rights in the region. These days, the self-proclaimed 'Chiapan feminist' is working hard along the Guatemala-Mexico border to support migrant women who are making the dangerous journey north to the United States.



I want to help Horizons empower people in Central America and Mexico.

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Year 3 Ends on Strong Note

The health needs and voices of the most disadvantaged women and their families in Totonicapán, Guatemala continue to be fundamental to Horizons' Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (MNCH) project as we close out Year 3.

The project brings vital health information to Maya K'iche' Indigenous women and their families, allows women to play an active role in their own health and provides advocacy support for midwives. Here are some highlights from a very successful year:

- 660 midwives attended two national meetings calling on the government for recognition of the vital role midwives play in maternal and infant healthcare
- a contribution of approximately \$800,000 worth of essential equipment was made to Totonicapán Provincial Hospital to modernize its

capacity to resolve complicated maternal and child health cases

- 1,044 traditional leaders attended training sessions to better understand the MNCH reality in their communities and to find culturally relevant strategies to support service access
- 6,000 health counsellors made home visits, teaching 12,600 family members about MNCH best practices, including breastfeeding, nutrition, vaccinations and early detection of danger signs in pregnancy – all in Maya K'iche'

In brief, Year 3 saw thousands of beneficiaries experience positive changes in maternal and newborn healthcare as Horizons, our partner PIES (PIES de Occidente), local health authorities, and all other collaborating partners worked to transform Indigenous lives in Totonicapán.



A health educator makes a household visit to a young, pregnant, Indigenous woman in Guatemala, providing her with critical health information on prenatal, postpartum and infant care - all in Maya K'iche'!

 **Government of Canada** **Gouvernement du Canada**

**MNCH
UPDATE**

CANADA

Migrant Workers in Tax Trouble



Diego (left) and Wilberth return from a 12-hour shift on the farm, trying to keep their spirits high despite a difficult situation.

For most Canadians, tax season is a nightmare filled with surprises, headaches and stress. For temporary foreign workers (migrant workers) Wilberth and Diego it means the same, but with the added risk of sacrificing remittances to their families in Mexico, and potential deportation.

In April 2018, an unnamed tax consultant helped Wilberth and Diego to file their income taxes. They paid the consultant for their services and believed

their taxes were filed correctly. Now one year later, Wilberth and Diego are receiving collection letters from Canada Revenue Agency. It appears the tax consultant filed their taxes incorrectly, and they now have to pay a penalty, plus interest, for unpaid taxes.

With the help of Sharee Bhaduri from the Northumberland Community Legal Centre and Horizons' community outreach officer Daniel Quesada-Rebolledo,

Wilberth and Diego are on the hunt for justice.

"It's unfair that these workers have to pay for the mistakes of the tax consultant out of their own pockets," says Daniel. "Horizons stands in solidarity with them, and will help them fight these penalties."

In Canada, migrant workers are particularly vulnerable to immigration scams and fraud. Hailing from Jamaica and the Caribbean, Mexico and Guatemala, migrant workers aren't familiar with the laws of the land, and many don't have the tools or resources to protect themselves from the questionable business practices of some immigration and tax consultants.

"The lawyer from the legal centre and I are visiting the workers at their workplace and home on a weekly basis to help them resolve this complex issue," explains Daniel. "We are in touch with Canada Revenue, a chartered accountant and the migrant workers' banks, and are providing English/Spanish translation through the entire process."

With Horizons' Migrant Worker Outreach Program, and a great lawyer at the Northumberland Community Legal Centre, help is on the way. Over the coming months, Wilberth and Diego can rely on the support they need to overcome this challenge and get the reparations they deserve.

Preserving a Way of Life

Indigenous Térraba people living in the South Pacific coast of Costa Rica face constant perils to their way of life. The Costa Rican government has converted forests in the Térraba region to massive agricultural plots, endangering resources linked to traditional knowledge.

Non-Indigenous persons have illegally occupied Térraba land and Indigenous people are being forced to give up traditional income-generating activities and become day labourers. This undermines both livelihoods and the sharing of cultural practices.

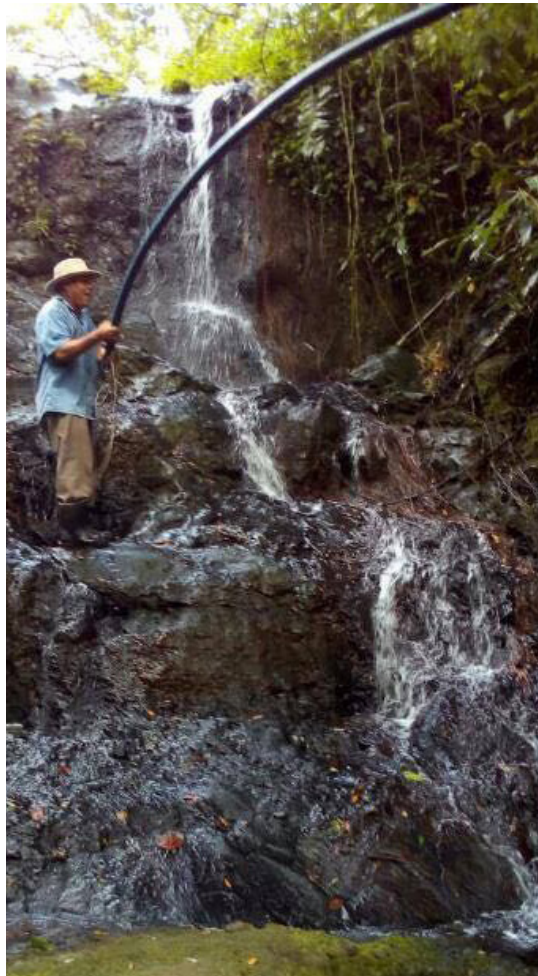
Horizons' partner, Mano de Tigre (Tiger Hand Women) is helping Térraba communities resist these perils. Since 2004, Mano de Tigre has been actively working to reverse the impact that lost territory has had on traditional knowledge and economic wellbeing.

Through its latest project, and with the support of Horizons, Mano de Tigre is strengthening food sovereignty and economically productive activities rooted in local culture among 12 Indigenous Térraba families living in vulnerable situations.

The project is providing infrastructure and training for four families to cultivate a freshwater fish species native to Southern Costa Rica. The four families will benefit nutritionally by consuming more fish, and will also generate income through its local sale.

Eight families will receive supplies to expand pigsties and increase the number of pigs being bred by them, ensuring financial sustainability.

Finally, all 12 families will form traditional gardens designed to protect and grow native seed species that have all but disappeared from Térraba. Training sessions will emphasize building the skills of women - eight out of the 12 families involved have women at the head of their households.



A Térraba man gathers water to set up a fish farm, helping families generate income while preserving their culture.

Protecting Textile Art



The banner reads, "Indigenous women demand the government protect our textiles and our Mayan clothing."

To be born Indigenous, female and poor in rural Guatemala means being at the lowest level of the social strata with few opportunities to live a full and dignified life. One of the only ways for Indigenous women to generate an income is through their unique and historically significant textile designs. However, even this is at risk as industrialized clothing manufacturers appropriate these designs and mass-produce them, decreasing Indigenous women's ability to sell their textiles for a fair price.

Horizons and AFEDES (the Women's Association for the

Development of Sacatepéquez) are working to change this. They are providing Indigenous Kaqchikel women with the skills and resources to achieve economic independence, training on social, cultural, economic and political rights, and the knowledge to defend their diverse designs as the collective property rights of Indigenous peoples.

As a direct result of the weaving schools facilitated by AFEDES, Weaving Councils have formed to take actions to sustainably maintain the weaving networks in their communities. These networks also work together locally and nationally to collectively promote the conservation and protection of the textile art of the Indigenous women of Guatemala.

To further this goal, members of AFEDES and the National Weavers Movement proposed to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (CIDH) that the textile designs of Indigenous women be protected in law. CIDH agreed and urged the Guatemalan government to adopt the proposed law.

The weavers are planning more marches to increase public awareness of the need to protect Indigenous women's designs and Mayan clothing.