

HORIZONS OF FRIENDSHIP

Horizons

NEWSLETTER

Fall 2017

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS TO END POVERTY IN CENTRAL AMERICA AND MEXICO

Migrant Workers Get CPP Support



Migrant workers (l-r) Linton Vassell, Rupert Brown, Gray Smith, Peter Reid and Anthony Messado join paralegal Teresa Williams.

Felix Molina, age 59, is beginning to experience severe knee pain, a repetitive stress injury common to migrant workers who work long hours. “As I get older my body just isn’t able to handle the work anymore,” says Felix. “I think this may be my last year coming to Canada to work.” As he ponders retirement, Felix has many questions about the Canada Pension Plan, to which he has been contributing for 20 years. He’s not alone.

Felix is one of the 200-300 migrant workers Horizons of Friendship supports each year. They come from Mexico, Guatemala and the Caribbean to work on apple and vegetable farms in Northumberland County. Our Migrant Worker Outreach Program provides health, legal and social services to these workers who live on the fringe in our community.

Like the rest of Canada’s workforce, migrant workers pay income tax, Employment Insurance and CPP. Although they receive some information from the government about these programs upon arrival in Canada, it can be a difficult process for them to get clarification or help with their application.

This year, around a dozen migrant workers made inquiries at our legal clinic

about their CPP contributions. Like Felix, they are on the brink of turning 60, experiencing the aches and pains associated with a life filled with manual labour and difficult work conditions, and contemplating retirement.

Caring for his family after retirement is a key concern for Linton Vassell, who has worked for 30 years on a Northumberland County-based apple orchard. “I still have to pay for my children’s school, food and housing. I hope the government can provide me with the money for that when I retire.”

It became clear to Horizons that there was a serious knowledge gap among migrant workers around what CPP is and does, and how to access it. Employers of migrant workers are not required to provide them with this information.

Working with paralegal Teresa Williams from the Northumberland Community Legal Centre, Horizons held a CPP workshop for the migrant workers. Approximately 25 workers, ages 30-60, attended the hour-long workshop and several workers stayed afterwards

to clarify any questions or issues they had. Teresa explained how CPP works, where contributions go and how to ensure they receive payments. At the end of the workshop, the migrant workers were able to find out how much each will receive once they retire.

The migrant workers beamed with relief after the workshop, secure in the knowledge that they will receive a steady remuneration in exchange for their tireless efforts of putting food on our tables. They will be able to support their children and family back home in Mexico, Guatemala or Jamaica.



Donovan’s Dream

Meet Donovan

Farquharson, a 39 year-old migrant worker from Westmoreland, Jamaica

who has been coming to Northumberland County to work for the past five years. He talks about his life back home and here in Canada.

“I have a 14 year-old daughter named Shanice. There are no jobs or work back home, so I have been coming to Canada to work on an apple farm to support my daughter. With Horizons of Friendship’s support, I’m able to get full health and legal coverage free of charge – this is a service we don’t get back home.

“I love Canada. The people are so friendly and there’s a lot of work and jobs in agriculture. My dream is to one day become a Canadian citizen. I’d like to say a big thank you to the Horizons team, health and legal team, and all the volunteers and supporters who contribute to the Migrant Worker Outreach Program.”

PLUS! 2016 Annual Report



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MEXICO

Eco-stoves Have Ripple Effect



New eco-stoves give women in Chiapas, Mexico more time to work on alternative income generation.

Chiapas is one of the poorest regions in Mexico with poverty rates close to 96%. The families who live in the community of Candelaria El Alto in Chiapas have faced a number of recent difficulties, resulting in

decreased food security.

Horizons' partner, DESMI (the Economic and Social Development of Indigenous Mexicans), has worked with these families for the past few years,

helping them to organize as a community to improve farming practices and create collective income projects.

Women like Julieta Guadalupe Méndez De La Cruz, however, spend such long hours cooking on open wood fires, they have little time to participate in agricultural projects or micro-enterprises. These women and their families are also vulnerable to respiratory ailments caused by smoke inhalation.

To address these problems, DESMI has supported the construction of 28 new wood saving eco-stoves in the last year. It provides the materials as well as workshops and education on stove construction and care.

Julieta was one of the recipients. She reports that smoke no longer fills her house, reducing health hazards for her family. And because the new stove is more efficient and offers more space, she is able to spend less time cooking. Now, Julieta has more time to work in collective community gardens and participate in alternative income generation through a chicken/egg collective.

NICARAGUA



Student Field Trip Unforgettable

Five Cobourg Collegiate Institute (CCI) Food Collective students recently visited Nicaragua as part of a Horizons of Friendship Youth Delegation. Over the course of 10 days, CCI students visited Managua, Granada and Nandaime to learn and share their experiences with young people about community projects related to food security.

The CCI Food Collective has been hosting school fundraisers for several years, using funds raised to support Horizons and its local partner, ACOAR (the Oscar Arnulfo Romero Association for Socio-Cultural Promotion), on a Food Sovereignty and Climate Change project in Nandaime, Nicaragua.

Battling through the intense Nicaraguan heat, the small but committed group made it a point to see firsthand how their school fundraisers are empowering Nicaraguan youth to be environmental and food security leaders in their communities. The Canadian youth learned directly from the Nicaraguan youth that poverty, pollution and clean drinking water are issues communities across Nicaragua battle on a day-to-day basis.

“The most powerful experience for me was eating meals with families and youth in Nandaime. Hearing about extreme poverty and pollution does not even come close to witnessing it personally,” says Lily Mackenzie, one of the delegates on the trip.

CCI Food Collective students learned that their funds are being used to spearhead public campaigns to deter littering and to educate Nicaraguan youth to protect the environment.

For Aidan Woodward, the trip was an experience of a lifetime. “It was a valuable experience that I honestly think will permanently change who I am.”

Feeding Hope

“Here’s a photo of an infant boy when we first encountered him,” says Juan Pablo Recinos, chief nutritionist in Momostenango’s Maternal and Child Health Care Centre during a visit from Horizons team members. He pointed to a shocking image of an emaciated baby boy clearly in distress – one of many making up Totoncapán’s alarming 70% chronic child undernutrition rate. “Lacking sufficient food for everyone, his family of seven had been feeding him primarily sugary water to keep him pacified. The results were alarming.”

Although the example of this type of infant wasting is rare, other indicators of systemic malnutrition in Guatemala’s predominantly Indigenous rural communities are much more common. Indeed, half of Guatemala’s children exhibit stunting – the worst in the Americas and fifth worst globally. This tragic situation condemns far too many children to significant developmental delays, contributing to a seemingly perpetual cycle of poverty.

Given this context, Juan Pablo and his colleagues have nothing but positive things to say about the Horizons and Global Affairs Canada funded Maternal, Newborn and Child Health: Transforming Indigenous Lives (MNCH) project in Totoncapán, Guatemala. It’s being executed by Horizons’ long-time partner, PIES de Occidente (the Association for Health Promotion, Research



Juan Pablo Recinos with the two-year-old Maya K’iche boy before and after receiving Incaparina supplements.

and Education). “The work you’re supporting here is quite literally saving lives – lives that are all too often considered expendable.”

“You’ve seen the numbers,” he continues. “Indigenous children, women, men... they all live through disproportionately worse conditions of poverty and ill health. Showing you this baby, essentially slowly starving, is painful, but there’s no better way to make this message clearer.”

The MNCH project has multiple components benefiting the entire population of Totoncapán over the course of four years. One pillar is bolstering nutrition. Pregnant women, new mothers, and infants 6-24 months will receive fortified, culturally pertinent nutritional supplements – a source of protein and essential micronutrients. In

addition, families are learning about healthy eating and food preparation. Expectant and new mothers are being encouraged to exclusively breastfeed their babies at least for the first six months. The aim is clear: making a measurable dent in child mortality and morbidity.

Juan Pablo clicks on his mouse and shows us a new photo of a healthy baby boy. “Here’s the same baby after we intervened in part by using Incaparina, the protein-rich nutritional supplement your project is providing to thousands of families here. We have the will to make this difference; we thank you for helping us with the means to make it happen.”



Global Affairs
Canada

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Canada

Carmen Floridalma Oxlaj, an Indigenous Maya K’iche woman living in Totoncapán, Guatemala, almost suffered a miscarriage during her latest pregnancy. She is now mom to six kids, four daughters and two sons, including the healthy infant she recently gave birth to.

Carmen experienced complications while pregnant, including profuse vaginal bleeding and white discharge. Luckily, she was able to recognize these as warning signs of a high-risk pregnancy, thanks to information she had received from health educators working for PIES de Occidente. She quickly sought help, visiting the nearest Health Centre to her rural community. Carmen’s decision effectively saved two lives: her baby’s and her own.

As part of Horizons’ Maternal, Newborn and Child Health project, PIES de Occidente health educators provide culturally-pertinent information in the Maya K’iche language on a wide variety of best practices, helping prevent maternal and child deaths through a comprehensive health promotion campaign. Carmen is very grateful for all she has learned from the health educators and the benefits they have brought to her and her family.

“They do this work so that people are in good health and so that they don’t die of any warning signs that occur. I think everyone should listen to the PIES health educators that visit and I hope they listen well because it will benefit many women to learn about these warning signs. If women do not know the warning signs, it can be a risk to their baby and themselves.”



Carmen: Miscarriage Averted

Founders Award 2017

Winners Say Thanks



Horizons' board member Paul Burnham presents Susan Murdock with her award.

We're happy to announce that Susan Murdock and AMICA (the Association of Indigenous Women of the Atlantic) are this year's recipients of Horizons' Founders Award for their strength and commitment as volunteers. Each year, Horizon celebrates two recipients – an individual in Canada and a partner organization in the South – who demonstrate the same kind of dedication as our founders, Reverend Tim Coughlan, and the late Christine and David Stewart.

Susan Murdock has spent her life helping

others in a variety of ways. An Ottawa resident, Susan is a long-time supporter, volunteer and former staff member of Horizons. At the June 19th award ceremony in Cobourg, Horizons board member Paul Burnham noted that, "Susan goes above and beyond to volunteer her time, energy and financial resources to address a range of interconnected social justice issues. These range from the role of mining companies in violating human rights and the structures of violence and impoverishment in Honduras and Guatemala, to women's and Indigenous communities' struggles for justice and peace."

In her acceptance speech, Susan remarked, "When I learned I had been considered in the same category as previous Founders Award honorees – champions of social justice in our country – I was speechless! I want to thank the Founders Award Committee and all of Horizons' Board and staff for giving me this award. It means a lot to me."

AMICA, Horizons' partner in Nicaragua, won the Founders Award this year for its work with and on behalf of Miskitu women. While the group could

not be present at the award ceremony, they relayed their gratitude in a letter from project coordinator Doris Borst.

"What great news that you have selected us, AMICA, for this award. We are honoured and happy for this wonderful news. On behalf of staff, associates, volunteers and members of the Board of Directors of AMICA, we are profoundly appreciative of this recognition of our volunteering and leadership. We will continue forward with this work. We feel very good being recognized for these efforts because we all work very hard volunteering our time in one way or another."

Congratulations to Susan Murdock and AMICA.

Submit your Founders Award nomination for next year by May 14th, 2018.

You'll find the award nomination form and full details of the award process at:

www.horizons.ca/What-We-Do/Canada-Locally/Founders-Award

JOIN CHIAPAS TOUR!!



Are you ready for a truly unique experience? Join us for our Educational Tour to Chiapas, Mexico on February 5-14, 2018. You'll learn all about the culture, history, and social lives of the people of Chiapas, and see some great sights, including Sumidero Canyon.

You'll also visit with our partner, DESMI (the Economic and Social Development of Indigenous Mexicans), which has been working with small-scale farmers and their families to increase production and improve nutrition in this extremely poor region of Mexico.

Don't miss this exceptional opportunity to see Horizons and DESMI in action! Call Linda Robertson at 905-372- 5483 x 10 to find out more.



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