



Personalized Pens from Guatemala

FTGA is again organizing an order of personalized pens made by the weavers of MayaWorks (www.mayaworks.org). The cost of a pen is \$2.50. Half of the cost goes to the women who weave the pens as a "fair trade" cost. The other half will be donated to Worldlink Partners on behalf of the Let's Be Ready Preschool Programs in rural areas of Guatemala! See the informational sheet included for more information and to consider making an additional donation for these programs.

To order pens please complete the order form by October 23rd and mail it to FTGA Pens Order, 7451 Sagamore Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45236. Please include \$3 to the total cost to have the pens shipped to you. All checks are to be made to **FTGA for the pens** order and **additional donations please make a check out to World Link Partners**. Pens will be mailed to you the first week of December. If you have any questions, feel free to email at szumbiel@cinci.rr.com.

Your name _____

Your Address _____

Your Phone Number _____

Your email address _____

Print clearly how you want name(s) to appear on pen(s) ordered:

- | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|
| 1. | 2. | 3. |
| 4. | 5. | 6. |
| 7. | 8. | 9. |
| 10. | 11. | 12. |
| 13. | 14. | 15. |

(Continue order on back if ordering more than 15 pens.)

Cost of Pens (\$2.50 each)	\$ _____
Shipping costs	_____ \$3
Total Cost	\$ _____



Let's Be Ready

Preparing Guatemala's rural children to be successful in school

The majority of rural, poor Guatemalan children are ill-prepared for the first-grade. The February 2006 World Bank report states: 30% of children in the Central American countries fail the first-grade; many drop-out at this point. Often parents can't read or write; many work long hours and children are cared for by older children.

The Guatemalan government is recognizing the problem and in 2005, they began training pre-elementary teachers, building classrooms and adopted a National Curriculum. However, the lack of quality schools, particularly in rural villages, and crowding everywhere remains an overwhelming problem that needs to be tackled if the children and the communities they reside in are to thrive and the cycle of poverty is to be broken.

Our mission is to prepare at-risk Guatemalan children for the first-grade by establishing preschools (Centers for Stimulation, as they are sometimes called here) and training preschool and first-grade teachers.

Our vision is to break the cycle of poverty in Guatemala by reducing the high rate of drop-out and repetition of children in the first-grade.

Our goal is to have 80% of our students successfully complete 6th grade—current national average is 20%.

We are currently working to fund a preschool that is up and running without a sponsor. Here's the story of the preschool community in San Martin Jilotepeque called El Rosario:

Lidia Regina Bacajol Chojoj is the teacher (currently volunteering until funding can be secured) for 12 kids in El Rosario, a farming area four bus rides and a two kilometer walk from Antigua. The director of the three room school there approached Let's Be Ready last year to start a preschool. Lidia shared that she and two other teachers teach all six levels of primary school, but the government won't provide a preschool classroom because there are not enough six year old children. The official number needed is 25, but the truth is the average rural preschool, where there is one, has at least 35 kids per teacher.

This year on her own initiative Lidia showed up for our 3-week training for the sponsored school teachers and shared that she was going to attend the training and start up the school room in February even if there was no sponsor and she could not be paid. She would wait for Let's Be Ready to find a sponsor. Well, we reimbursed her for her meals and paid for her bus travel to the training, gave her two boxes of supplies and told her we would continue looking for a sponsor. She invited us to the opening of her school the next week and to bring any friends to celebrate with the community. We did and began subsidizing her.

There are not quite 15 kids (although it may grow quickly), so for now it will be a half time school. If we can find sponsors for the \$1500 it will cost to pay her halftime, we can provide the kids a solid foundation of reading, math and social skills to enter the first grade and in truth provide some needed supplies of teaching aids that we will share with the first and second grade teacher in the government school.

If you are willing to show your support through a donation for the work of Let's Be Ready, **please include a check made out to Worldlink Partners and write on the memo line "Let's Be Ready"**. Together our donations will sponsor Lidia and the preschool she knows is needed to serve the children of El Rosaria. For more information visit www.letsbeready.org and see a video about our work.