



The Guatemalan
Tomorrow Fund

SUMMER 2018

Dear Donors and Staff,

Please allow me to introduce myself. I am Debora Kerr, the new executive director of the Guatemalan Tomorrow Fund. I am excited to take this position with an organization that has a 25-year history of providing health care, education, job training and shelter to thousands of Guatemalan young men and women served in the Rio Dulce region. The goals that have been accomplished prove that funding provided by the donors to Ak'Tenamit have truly effected change through education and mentoring.



I have worked in the Palm Beach County nonprofit community for 20 years and truly feel that taking this position is a culmination of my job skills involving project management and implementation in public health, job development, and environmental issues. I have always maintained my interest in the welfare of the people of Guatemala after completing my fieldwork for my master's degree in anthropology/archaeology in Santa Lucia Cotzumalguapa on the Pacific Coast. I was fortunate to travel throughout Central America during this time and visit other countries including Mexico, Costa Rica and Honduras.

I look forward to setting goals and standards for the beginning of the next 25 years of the Guatemalan Tomorrow Fund and Ak'Tenamit and am especially interested in learning more about our loyal individual donors, faith-based organizations, and many Rotary clubs who sustain this organization.

As I review the incredible accomplishments of former executive director, Suzanne Cordero, I realize I have a high standard to uphold and feel ready to accept the challenge. I would like to thank Suzanne for her dedication and wish her the best in her new endeavors and also thank the board members, many volunteers and great staff members in the US and Guatemala.



In partnership for the next 25,

Debora Kerr, MA
Executive Director

Ak-Tenamit-Student + Internship

For seniors everywhere, the last school year carries a mixed bag of emotions, and Ak' Tenamit is no exception. Many of the students and their families have made sacrifices to enroll them, while others do not enjoy the support of their families. Their post-graduation ambitions are impressive. In this series of stories, we meet a few Asociación Ak' Tenamit (AAT) students and learn what brought them to the school, and the hopes and plans they brought with them.

Interviews with Students

Gicell, a seventeen-year-old from Livingston, comes from an unstable home environment. Her family didn't want her to attend Ak' Tenamit or to help her get here, but she came anyway. In 2015 she had to interrupt her studies to go back home because of family issues. Since she returned to school a year ago, she hasn't heard from them. But she's determined to finish her program in sustainable tourism and get a job. She'd like to continue her education at a university, open a dance school and earn a good living to help her three siblings study at AAT, too. But Gicell's ultimate dream is to go to France, get into an academy and study fashion. If she were asked for advice from young people considering Ak' Tenamit, she'd tell them that the school provides an opportunity to pursue their studies. Even though they might not have the money to pay tuition, they can earn it by working. They have the opportunity to graduate and continue their studies.

Ingrid, seventeen years old, is from Livingston. She always wanted to study. She plans to become a nurse and help indigenous peoples because they don't always get good services. She wants to provide care and medicine and improve the health of children.

Ingrid is one of two sisters and has two younger brothers. Her older sister is nineteen years old, has one child and is expecting a second. Ingrid would like to work in a city to gain more knowledge and opportunity. The main thing standing between her and her goals is financial. She is seeking someone who will help her. What she likes about Ak' Tenamit is being with the indigenous people and the fact that students can attend even if they don't have money. She would advise young people to study even if they have difficulties and to follow their dreams.

Rafael is a seventeen-year-old from Rio Dulce. His dad knew about the school because they live in the area. The choices were to study in a private school in Rio Dulce or at AAT. He chose sustainable tourism because he likes to cook and because men can be the chefs, too. His family has three brothers and one sister and Rafael is the youngest. Someday he wants to work somewhere else, maybe another country. He thinks people learn well and enjoy their work at AAT. Young people should attend Ak' Tenamit because it's a beautiful place to develop your career and get employed. He enjoys respecting the rules and finds it a good place to learn.

Victor's age on paper is eighteen, but he is actually twenty-four years old. He was in an accident five years ago and needed to travel to the US for an operation. His sister studies tourism at Ak' Tenamit, but Victor would like to study medicine. His family lives three hours away in a village. His sister is helping him financially to attend school. He's in his last year. He likes being at Ak' Tenamit in the fresh air. He thinks it's a good idea to study at the school and become a chef. However, he would like to continue studying. His parents cannot support him. Because of the poor economy,

he was in Quito working with his father. Ever since his accident, he cannot get a job that requires standing, so he needs to study.

Internships at the Hotel Villas Caribe

Serving on the buffet line and waiting tables, Ak' Tenamit's interns smile as they greet guests at the Hotel Villas Caribe in Livingston. AAT and the hotel have a close working relationship. At any given time, the hotel may train up to six students, who rotate through different roles in housekeeping and the restaurant. Depending on what grade they're in, they'll intern for seven weeks or, in the case of the seniors, up to three months. The goal is to introduce them to the basic terminology of hospitality. "It can be difficult for them when they first start as many are simultaneously learning Spanish as a second language," said the hotel's general manager Manfred Hungar. "But after a few days, they catch on."

With six busy months per year, the hotel business is seasonal, so they can't hire many full-time workers. But they're getting trained for other opportunities and earning a little money while having few expenses. Some live on the hotel property, pay a small amount for rent and are able to save much of their income.

The average indigenous youth in Guatemala leaves school at age twelve. Manfred said, "Keeping young people in school helps them delay starting a family until they're beyond their teenage years." He would love to codify the training further into a more formal apprenticeship program and would welcome a volunteer versed in hospitality to support that effort.

Guatemala Volcano Catastrophe Emergency Scholarship Fund

Support is urgently needed to keep children of disaster affected families in high school! Neediest students will be selected from communities most affected by this catastrophic volcanic eruption as one of the greatest challenges poor families face after a disaster is keeping children in high school. Your support is urgently needed!

Tax deductible donations can be sent to **The Guatemalan Tomorrow Fund, P.O. Box 3636, Tequesta, FL 33469** or online at www.thegtfund.org "Donate Now", "Education Fund" specifying Volcano scholarship Fund in the check "memo" or online under "notes"



Sponsor A Student *Transform* A Life!

Ak' Tenamit's practical, vocational education, 3,000 hours of job experience, and personal motivation prepare graduates to succeed in their rural environment, and inspire them to help their families and their communities. For just one dollar per day (\$365 per year), you can transform the life of a young person who would otherwise be trapped in poverty.

The Guatemalan Tomorrow Fund, P.O. Box 3636, Tequesta, FL 33469 Phone: 561-747-9790 | info@thegtfund.org

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