



Your Generosity at Work

*in providing land, hope, life to the 20 families
in the village of Villa Linda, Guatemala*

PRESENTED TO

Villa Linda supporters

PRESENTED BY

Agros International
2225 4th Ave. 2nd Floor,
Seattle, WA 98121

**"Thanks to the literacy
program, I now can read
a little and, most
important, sign my
name."**

—Mayra

We are so grateful for your ongoing support of Villa Linda and the hope and opportunity it brings to the families who live there.

As we begin a new year, we're happy to present our update in a new format, which integrates feedback we've received over the years about our village updates. Some of the changes we've made include providing an overall country update from Country Director Mario Morales as well as including more photos of the families you've come to know through your support of Villa Linda.

We hope you like this new update, and would welcome any feedback you may have. Thank you for your commitment to Villa Linda!

Villa Linda, Guatemala

Village Update, Autumn 2011



Four families in the community now have beekeeping enterprises. They look forward to their first harvest of honey.

From the Country Director . . .

The end of the last fiscal year (June 30, 2011) saw the graduation of six villages in Guatemala from Agros' direct support. That means, they have developed to a stage of significant self-reliance and are able to be on their own, without further training, technical assistance or financial input.

Many of the families are still working toward paying off their land loans to Agros, but our expectation is that they now have the skills and means to generate an income and steadily make their payments.

Belén, for example, one of the graduate communities, has 25 families. Among these families, 18 have paid off their land loans. The remaining seven families are using what they have learned from the Agros program and are working hard to join their fellow community members as proud land owners.

Currently, four communities in Guatemala are still receiving direct support from Agros and working to achieve a stage of self-sufficiency. We look forward, along with you, to seeing the 285 families in these communities grow in their knowledge, skills and confidence to reach their ultimate goal of land ownership.

On behalf of the families you are helping to reach this goal in Guatemala, thank you!

—Mario Morales

Villa Linda Facts at a Glance

- ◆ Founded in 2005, Villa Linda is in its sixth stage of development (of 10 stages).
- ◆ Families grow seven different crops to sell for income, and 19 of the 20 families own livestock.
- ◆ All of the families successfully market their products.
- ◆ 19 families are up-to-date on repayment of enterprise loans.
- ◆ All of the families have access to clean water for home use.
- ◆ 85% of the school-aged children are attending school.
- ◆ 42% of the community's leadership positions are held by women.



Julián (left) is trained in measuring his parcel to establish regular rows for planting his crops.

Autumn 2011 Village Highlights

Land Ownership

Roberto and his mother, Ana, paid off their land loan. Earnings from their coffee and cardamom crops enabled them to reach this special goal. Currently, Roberto is in the process of planting about a half acre more of coffee.

Housing and Infrastructure

The community has taken the first steps to acquire electricity. They are working with the Unión Fenosa electric company in Huehuetenango to accomplish this goal.

Sustainable Economic Growth

The Agros team provided training and technical assistance to the two families with beekeeping enterprises. In addition, they helped two more families get started in the business of honey production.

Assistance was also provided for 10 families cultivating coffee seedlings.

Once they are ready, the seedlings will be transplanted to create 4.86 additional acres of coffee in the community.

Another cycle of tilapia production was completed this quarter, with five families harvesting and selling their fish in local markets. Two of the five families have achieved the highest level of production in their tilapia enterprise.

Ten families were assisted with planting family gardens, including a variety of vegetables such as cucumbers, jalapeño peppers, chard and cilantro. These gardens will provide families with important nutritional diversity.

The community bank added five more members for a total of 14. The members all made payments on their loans, which are being invested in a variety of small income-generating projects.

Community Education & Training

14 women and one teenaged girl graduated from the second year of the community's three-year literacy program. This important program is provided in cooperation with the government organization CONALFA, which provides the instructor.

Making a Difference...

In the past, Faustino, his wife, Marcela, and their children lived on the farm where Faustino worked caring for the cattle and coffee crop. Although the work was steady, it averaged only \$106 per month—not nearly enough to provide for the family's needs.

When Faustino learned about the potential of being part of a new Agros village, he began meeting with other interested families and the Agros team. Unfortunately, his employer found out about Faustino's involvement with these new plans and fired him immediately.

Kicked out of their home and with nowhere else to go, Faustino moved his family to the land that would soon become Villa Linda. They constructed a shelter of cardboard and scrap plastic sheeting, where they lived until the community was launched and they were able to build a real home.

Today, Faustino has cultivated about 60% of his parcel with coffee and cardamom. Marcela is the treasurer of the community bank. She also runs a small grocery store and raises pigs.

They are happy to be working their own land, no longer at the mercy of a landlord's whims.

