

Dear Friend,

As a dedicated supporter of [Long Way Home](#), I am often asked, "Why Guatemala? There are people in this country who need help." As the third poorest country in the Western hemisphere, 65% of our community in Comalapa survives on less than \$2/day. Daylight hours are for working to put food on the table, leaving a shortage of time to devote to education, play or leisure. Recognizing that the community lacked a place to rectify this imbalance, Long Way Home (LWH) has spent the last five years turning an underutilized piece of land into a full-service recreational park, recycling center and organic garden. Through the focused energy of over 600 volunteers, Parque Chimiya is now a place where the community learns, plays and congregates year-round.

Today I come to you with our mid-year appeal for a [gift to LWH](#). Our campaign to raise \$40,000 by the end of 2010 will allow LWH to complete Phase 1 of Técnico Maya and begin Phase 2, the primary school. These funds will cover the cost of materials, repair and maintenance of equipment, and salaries for ten local laborers and our staff of six. LWH will honor your gifts of \$500 or more with recognition in a mural painted on the school grounds, your gift of \$100 or more with an original rendering of Técnico Maya by a local artist, and your gift of any amount with acknowledgement on our website and at the school's inauguration ceremony. Gifts of all sizes add up to make a big difference; last year LWH was able to raise over \$10,000 from gifts of \$50 or less.

LWH broke ground on the Técnico Maya Vocational School in 2008, marking the beginning of our second project, which will train youth in skilled trades such as alternative construction, business administration, entrepreneurship and appropriate technology. Built with re-purposed materials such as tires and trash-filled plastic bottles, the school exemplifies a sustainable construction model. These materials are inexpensive, readily available and might otherwise be burned or thrown into the water supply. Our project is innovative, practical and visionary, embodying change that the community is learning and embracing.

With minimal mechanized assistance, relying on hand tools to turn the earth and using it for packing tires to form walls, LWH has been able to cut costs while creating employment opportunities for 15 local laborers. Working alongside the LWH staff, learning these unusual building techniques, local workers are endorsing the use of "trash" as a welcome example of conservation and stewardship for their community. This innovative spirit that fosters the productive use of items that others might consider trash helps LWH realize the opportunity to assist this community in improving the management of their resources, building hope for a more sustainable future.



When traveling to Guatemala, I am struck by the ways in which it is like traveling back in time to a period when community and agrarian life were primary. Large, interdependent families dominate the social fabric and work together to solve problems with the materials at hand. LWH is honoring this tradition and working with the community to find more innovative ways to re-purpose what others might not see as valuable resources.

We all have things we care about and often feel compelled to give back, sharing our blessings. My heart has been captured by Guatemala's ancient beauty, warm family life, and modest, hard-working people. I am compelled to help in any way I can. Through LWH, I am confident that my contributions are helping to support a different, less destructive path out of poverty. Their use of green building methods can make a difference in the development of Guatemala and the future of our earth.

Still wondering what fighting poverty through education in Guatemala has to do with you? Political, social and natural systems connect us all. World Bank estimates that those in poverty will be the first harmed by the destructive results of climate change. As global citizens we have an opportunity to effect change in communities that lack the basic infrastructure that you and I take for granted. I appreciate the support you have provided to us in the past and ask that you renew your support today by making a commitment to our organization with a [financial gift](#). Remember, it's not just a tax deduction, it's an investment in a better future for us all.

Many thanks,

Elizabeth Rose, MSW, MS
President
Long Way Home Board of Directors

Enjoy our latest Técnico Maya Vocational School video [here!](#)