

VAMOS ADELANTE FOUNDATION



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Dear Elene, Lars-Erik and other Ledarhogskolan Friends,
This is Susann and Tomas writing to you.

We have now been here for 5 months and in this period working as volunteers we have learned alot, Spanish for example. Nina has some problems with her right wrist, which gives her a hard time typing, so we will be telling you about the latest news.

During our time with Vamos Adelante we have seen and experienced many new and sometimes chocking things. The lifestyle here is very different from ours at home. The women get up at three o'clock in the morning to make their tortillas which are a part of every meal. Even when we were preparing pancakes for a family once, they refused to eat them without tortillas.



We have mostly worked with the Vamos Adelante's 5 after -school classes, and lived there in the villages with local families, which was a good way to learn about the daily life. We bathed in the cold river, where we also washed our clothes and fetched the water, which we used for cooking over an open fire.

The teaching methods in the schools here are often old- fashioned and pretty boring for the kids. In public school the children copy sentences from books or the black-board and when you ask them what they've been writing they don't even know. We wanted to show the teachers and the children that studying can be both entertaining and educational so we have been developing new methods

with the teachers, combining games with different school subjects.

Many of the teachers never played games before and therefore enjoyed participating together with the children. All activities we did with the schools we summarized in a book for the teachers to keep and to work with in the future.



Right now we are helping out in the Vamos Adelante school in Santa Rosa where we solved some problems with 6th grade. The students did not much respect their teacher and the big age difference among them was causing trouble. While the youngest students are only 12 years old and are still playing with marbles, the oldest is 17 and struggles with puberty.

On the other hand the teacher could not really handle her class and was not showing enough authority. Vamos Adelante finally had to ask her to leave and just hired another older male teacher with much more experience.





The swineflu spread to Guatemala very fast and within short time the newspapers reported 300 cases and the government decided to close down all public and private schools from 15th to 30th of June.

Some positive cases were identified in our villages and as soon as we believe that someone might be infected we send them

directly to hospital where they can be treated with „Tamiflu“ .



Because of the rainy season and its many changes of temperature, such as cold nights and lots of rain, many people also suffer from the normal flu, which can be pretty heavy as well. Many can't afford to buy medicine or pay for the transportation costs to a hospital. Luckily people who need medical care can come to us and get treated by our nurses and Doctor for free. Thanks to generous donations we always have enough medicine to help our patients.

The prices of groceries, firewood, public transportation and medicine went up dramatically in the past months. Eggs, beans and rice have almost doubled in price. At the same time there are few work opportunities in the countryside. Therefore many parents are forced to leave their children with their grandparents to go work in Escuintla, other larger towns or on remote large commercial farms only to return once a month.

Another dark side of the economical crisis is the increase of criminal activity. According to the statistics there are daily 18 people murdered in Guatemala. In the area where we are working there are almost weekly attacks on public buses, often with a deadly outcome. More so than before the Vamos Adelante promoters are often scared of going by bus or walk alone in remote areas .





As we have been spending a lot of time in the villages and visited many families we noticed a high number of young mothers

and girls at the age of 13 to 14 years being pregnant, which is one of the reasons why so many girls have to quit school to take care of their baby.

The Vamos Adelante promoters are now focussing much teenage pregnancy prevention and are talking openly with our students in small groups about typical adolescence problems.

Glenda and Fidelina, our education supervisors, are also adding meetings, especially with girls to their program where they talk about these matters.

Mothers mostly do not mention puberty and the changes the body goes through or they are ashamed of talking about this with their daughters and sons.



As you might have noticed being a volunteer is not always easy. Of course, working in a project like Vamos Adelante is an unforgettable experience but it can also be really tough both physically and mentally. It's not only that we work under difficult circumstances like extreme heat, very heavy rainfall and volcanic eruptions but also that there is a lack of clean and comfortable bathrooms, water from a tap or a bug-free bed.

The security precaution has to be in the back of your head at all times. All doors need to be locked and you shouldn't be away from home after dark. For us a big help to adapt quickly was that we already worked with children and travelled to other developing countries before we came here.

Spanish skills are also important so you can do something useful from the beginning. Being a volunteer is not always a walk in the park but you can learn a lot about life and it's values.



Hejsan Ledarhogskolan!

Jag (Tomas) har nu jobbat för projektet i snart 6 månader och under den tiden har jag bla. hjälpt till med undervisningen i 4de klass på Vamos Adelante skolan i Santa Rosa. I den klassen går erat fadderbarn Jose Catalino. Jose är en mycket speciell ung man. Han har stora problem att prata men kan andra saker mycket bättre än sina klasskamrater.



Hans talfel består av att när han ska säga något blir han nervös och det verkar som att han inte kan andas. Detta gör att han inte vågar säga så mycket. Till en början trodde jag bara att han var blyg och inte ville prata med mig men sen märkte jag att han inte pratade med sina klasskamrater heller. Det intressanta med honom är att detta inte verkar påverka hans betyg så mycket. Han får inga top betyg för han kan ju inte uttrycka sig i tal, men han är t.ex. väldigt bra på matte och kan gånger tabellerna bättre än någon annan i klassen. Jose kommer varje dag till skolan och har många kompisar som han leker med på rasten.

Han kommer från en stor men fattig familj och måste hjälpa till med att bara ved, stada och på helgerna hjälper han sin pappa på faltet. Han älskar också att spela fotboll och det gör han ibland på eftermiddagarna när han inte måste hjälpa till med något där hemma.

Jag har även besökt erat andra fadderbarn Norma. Man kan nog säga att jag har gjort mer än besökt henne, jag har nämligen bott hemma hos henne i 2 dagar. Hon är barnbarn till en av de kvinnor som jobbar för projektet (Sara). Norma bor med sin mamma, mormor och morfar, 3 möstrar två morbröder och 9 av sina kusiner. Allt som allt bor det 18 personer i 3 små hus. För att komma hem till Norma behöver man först ta by bussen så långt den går (denna buss går bara 2 gånger om dagen) sedan är det en timmas promenad på en liten dalig grusväg. I huset finns det el men vatten måste man hämta i en källa som ligger 300 m ner för en brant stig.



Normas mamma och pappa ar bada mentalt handikappade och de kunde inte ta hand om henne, darfor flyttade flickan och hennes mamma in hos Normas mormor. Norma hade en bror som dog av epelepsi. Hon sjalv har ocksa nagot slags handikapp och verkar franvarande och har ofta en tom blick som inte ar normalt for fyraaringar. Hon kan heller inte prata, det kommer bara ut laten och pa sin hojd sager hon mamma. Trots allt detta sa har hon det ganska bra, hennes mormor och moster tar val hand om henne och hon har manga andra barn att leka med. Hennes kusin Iris ar i samma alder och de leker ofta, fast i bland tar Iris hennes docka och da blir hon ledsen.

Norma var tidigare rejalt underernard nu bra och mar mycket battre. I ett son som jobbar ar det svart att fa det att Guatemala hart och maten har blivit my- valdigt uppskattat att fa en sack med livs- mindre att matta. Vi som jobbar med Va- stora familj ar valdigt glada och tack-



men hon har lagt pa sig lite vikt och ater hushall med 18 personer och bara en per- ga ihop. Ekonomi krisen har drabbat cket dyrare. Darfor ar det i dessa tider medel varje manad, da finns det en mun mos Adelante, och framfor allt Normas samma for erat stod !!

Hoppas att ni har haft en bra sommar!

Manga halsningar fran mig, min flickvan Susann, Nina, hela Vamos Adelante teamet men framforallt fran Norma och Jose Cata- lino.

