

# Stove Builders of Guatemala Newsletter

Issue #1 Summer 2015

## Updates

**First Newsletter**  
Sharing some of the news and recent stories of this project.

### Great news!

Over 400 stoves have been built for Mayan families in Guatemala! Ten stove builders have been trained in 5 different villages. Lots of families are waiting for your donation so they can have a stove.

**New Web Site!** If you have not seen it, please check it out. It includes an informational video and a link to the PBS special about Bonnie Laycock and the Stove Builders of Guatemala project!

<http://www.stovebuildersofguatemala.org/>



### Partnering with the Guatemala Church

In February and March 2015, we met with Guatemalan church leaders to update them on progress, for them to view the stove building process and to set new goals for working together.

### Branding the stoves

The board of Stove Builders of Guatemala wanted to “brand” the stoves so that people could identify our stoves. After a lot of discussion here and in Guatemala, the brand that was selected is AXS. A for amigos, X for por, S for siempre. These words mean “Friends forever”



**Next work team trip** Ready to learn about the Stove Builders of Guatemala by building a stove?

Contact [Bonnie@316-267-3204](mailto:Bonnie@316-267-3204) or by or by email at [BonnieL@firstwichita.org](mailto:BonnieL@firstwichita.org) **Come join us!**

# Stove Builders of Guatemala Newsletter

Updates continue...

## New Partnership

After a presentation to the First United Methodist Church, Richardson, TX, we were invited to participate in their church's International Christmas Market in November 2014. A team of people from Wichita set up a display and sold shares for the Stove Builders of Guatemala. We raised money for 67 stoves and signed-up volunteers to go on a work team trip in March 2015. That trip was a great success and a new partnership began!



## Felipe's news

Felipe is a terrific young man and one of the original stove builders. He got married in February. He and his bride are living on the land owned by his parents and he has started building his own cement block home with a stove of course! He is fortunate to have a job at a coffee plant but will continue to build stoves.



## Wider Recognition for the Project

In November 2014, we were excited to learn that the Stove Builders of Guatemala had received "Advance" designation from the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church. This means our project will appear in a booklet of projects and can be seen by churches all around the world. Donations can be made to us through the Advance and local churches get credit for those gifts too!



A project of the Advance with the  
United Methodist Church  
Advance #3022040

**Online donations** can be sent through this link: <http://www.umcmmission.org/Give-to-Mission/Search-for-Projects/Projects/3022040>

**E-Mail** We would like to send the next newsletter via email to those who are able to receive it. Please send your email address to [BonnieL@Firstwichita.org](mailto:BonnieL@Firstwichita.org) (This address will be used only by Stove Builders of Guatemala.)



# Stove Builders of Guatemala Newsletter continues

## A Stove for the Primary School

Over 200 elementary children in the primary school in Tzan Chaj, Guatemala wait for the cook to finish preparing the noon meal. How would you like to be the only cook for over 200 children? Imagine starting your work day at 5am preparing for the noon meal and then with preparations for tomorrow's lunch, not leaving work until 7pm and that is with the help of your mother chopping vegetables. Would you even take such a job, especially knowing that all the food is cooked over a wood burning stove that is leaking smoke into the work area?

The kitchen has running water, a table to use as a work area, and space to store wood out of the rain. The kettles are very large. For the cook, Rosario, this is her life, cooking every day for over 200 children in preschool to sixth grade. The stove is small and the work is hard.

But in March of 2015 some of this work got a little easier, a little more bearable. A stove building VIM team



Stove Builder, Pedro, building the school stove.

This new stove, because of its special design, consumes less wood. There is also a larger stove pipe that carries the smoke outside preventing the formation of creosote on the ceiling and walls. Rosario is thankful that her work will be easier and faster because of this new stove.



Rosario at work

The team is grateful to give back to the school as the school is used by the VIM teams for children's activities while their mothers attend the health and nutrition classes the teams offer. Stove Builders of Guatemala look forward to continue the good relationship we have with the school of Tzan Chaj.

Story submitted by Karen Fieser, Norwich United Methodist Church Kansas

## THE SILENT WITNESSES

In a corner, near a low legged chair is a fire fueled by twigs and branches. A woman sits on the chair tending the fire and cooking dinner. No child can be too close to mom while she prepares the meal as the fire can burn small fingers and hands and the smoke is too much.

The silent witnesses to the way these women have been cooking and feeding their families are the blackened pots and skillets that they use. Pots in all the houses are streaked with the soot and black of

## Stove Builders of Guatemala Newsletter continues...

the fires over which they have been repeatedly placed. These poor Guatemalan women cook at least three meals a day over open fires. Some pots are beyond recognition due to their darkened appearance and misshapen forms. The tar and black on the walls also attest to the fires that have been made through the years. Whether the walls are of cinder block or made of cane stalks, they are black. Every inch is further evidence of the smoky interior of that cooking area. Dark and dim as those kitchens are, one can see other items that hang along the walls have also been covered with the spidery black soot.

A stove can change a life. A stove DOES change a life. The witnesses to smoky fires can rest because each time a stove is built, the sights they have beheld are over, no more smoke, no more open fires.

Story submitted by Dee Weaver, First United Methodist Church, Richardson, Texas



Open fires build-up creosote on the walls



Typical Mayan cook kitchen



Young boy shows scars from falling in the kitchen fire.