

Dear Sponsors and Friends,

I hope that our July newsletter finds you, your family, and your friends doing well. I am certainly enjoying all the daylight summer brings us.

I am very pleased to announce that we have launched our new website (sltscholars.org). I hope you enjoy it. Please take a look!

Enjoy Rita's newsletter and her photos of recent events in San Lucas! **Julie**

From Rita –

It is a pleasure to send you this newsletter to inform you about the activities and projects since my last newsletter.

The good news! All schools have conducted their scheduled activities, such as sports, socio-cultural activities, anniversary celebrations, and excursions. Returning to in-person activities and learning has greatly motivated our students – they have needed and waited for this for 3 years. You can see in the faces of our young people the excitement and joy of participating and especially the excitement of continuing school.

Last month the IMED school celebrated its golden anniversary with an anniversary party – 50 years of service to education! A very curious fact and of note is that the IMED Director, Juan Juárez, was the founder and has been the director during these 50 years. There were many celebrations for this great event including meetings of alumni. There were also many honors for Professor Juan Juárez.

I have been visiting elementary schools interviewing prospective scholarship candidates for next year's 7th graders. This is the process that Dennis and I followed prior to COVID. During the pandemic, we asked scholarship candidates to come to Dennis' home for this interview. Many students were accompanied by a parent and the presence of a family member sometimes made it harder for the student to answer some of the questions fully. Interviews in their schools without family members gives us the opportunity to understand the student better.

Private schools finished the second block (two months of classes) several weeks ago and public schools finished last week. I am waiting for grades to be available to guide me and choose our new scholarship recipients.

I am waiting for the second grades block from all schools so that I can give awards to our students who completed at the top of their classes.

Another piece of good news! Since the beginning of the year, after some students stopped studying for economic reasons, I am happy to report that the rest of our students have continued their studies. I think that face-to-face classes have motivated young people a lot, encouraging them to continue in

school.

In the Pavarotti school a very important activity was carried out, coordinated with the Vice President's Office of Guatemala. They held a conference "Heroines of Science" and a robotics workshop with the students at this school. The aim is to make visible the work of Guatemalan women who stand out in science, technology and innovation, as well as to create spaces of motivation to engage more women in these fields. I was a guest of honor, a pleasant experience for me. In addition to this, I have taken part in several socio-cultural activities in several other schools.

I held meetings with parents, encouraging them to continue their support of their children to continue school, and I have told them the importance of education. I have tried to motivate them so that they can also recognize and understand that they are an important part of their children's education.

On June 25th, voting was held to elect new governors in San Lucas. In San Lucas, our hope is for a change for real development. It was very important that the majority accepted and is satisfied with the winning team in San Lucas Tolimán, because in the last elections, there was bad behavior by a group in our community. On one occasion, people burned ballots, destroyed buildings, and the last time, they burned the municipality. So as neighbors we were fearful. But in this year's elections it was quite the opposite; everything was in peace and harmony. Currently we have some problems with the presidential election. There are very large social problems where I cannot say which group is the best. Guatemala has been submerged in corruption and many groups have claimed to be human rights defenders, but none have done anything to even begin to change. I see this as very complicated, and I do not want to engage at this level. I prefer to work, support, and start change from within my community. Thanks to our program, I have been able to do this without making so much noise. We are betting on a better future, investing in education.

July 10th was the 2nd anniversary of Dennis' death – of course we do not forget this date. I organized a small activity with a group of students to remember Dennis and especially the legacy he left us, such a wonderful program that is helping many families with the education of their children. We had a prayer service and singing at the IMED school, and then we walked to the cemetery with flowers that we took to Dennis' grave. I sent this news and photos to Geoff and Pauline – Dennis's family in England.

On August 14th I am hosting a motivational workshop with all the students graduating from high school this year, and another with students graduating from the 9th grade. At first, I thought that this project would be only for the students in the SLT Scholars program, but I saw it as better and more supportive of our community to hold this workshop for all graduating from high school in San Lucas, as well as all 9th grade graduates. I have coordinated this event with television channels, so that those who are interested can watch this activity from home or on their cell phone; it will also be broadcast on social networks. This will be a great contribution to our community supporting education. We will have a professional motivational speaker. I will be sharing the link so you will be able to view this activity.

It is all the work that God has entrusted to us, and we want to do better every day.

Please visit the website for links to photos about recent program activities. They are found in the [About](#)

Us menu on the Reports & Newsletters page. I hope you enjoy them!

Rita Chajil

SLT Scholars Program Director