



HOLIDAY NEWSLETTER 2009

CONGRATULATIONS: YOU'VE HELPED LUIS GRADUATE!



“Luis is such a beautiful person. He’s a daily inspiration for me.” — Cara Snyder, Sponsor to Luis since 2006

Student Luis Batz has achieved his goal to graduate from high school this year. And he **couldn't have done it** without YOU. You have given encouragement and support to him through your contributions - be they time, funds, or skills - to Safe Passage, and this holiday season, we recognize your impact and thank you for making it a lasting one. Please join us in proudly welcoming Luis to the

ranks, growing each year, of Safe Passage students who have earned their high school diploma!

* * *

“Before I came to Safe Passage, I couldn't read and write. Now I love writing and will have my own book someday. I like to tell my story and to help others. I'll never forget Hanley's words: 'Never stop trying.'” — Luis

OUR MISSION

Safe Passage empowers the poorest, at-risk children whose families live in the Guatemala City garbage dump community, by creating opportunities and fostering dignity through the power of education.

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A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Fortunately, only a very few of us really know what it is to be hungry, and it is hard to imagine that you would go home to a house where there is literally nothing to eat. I once heard the story of a mom who was stirring a pot of hot water for her children, to get the feeling that there was some food to come. While hungry and looking at their mom preparing dinner they fell asleep, with empty stomachs but with a comforting image that all would be well in the end...

It's a sad and powerful story at the same time. The mother doesn't have a meal to feed her children, but she can still nourish them with the anticipation of a full belly. She makes me think of



heartbreak and poverty, but also of the most pure versions of a mother's strength, innovation and love.

I feel lucky to know strong moms like the one in my story. Safe Passage knows them too, and is proud to call many of them not just mothers but also students. They study and learn

with passion that comes from seeing it's going to help their children too. This year, another six moms will graduate from Adult Literacy and more than twenty have profited from making jewelry in the CREAMOS cooperative.

The holidays are about family and giving and gratitude. As you celebrate, please think of ways to honor the strength of the women in your life. If you can make a gift to our program this year, you will certainly help in honoring the ones in ours.

Con mucho cariño,



Barbara Nijhuis

LOOKING AHEAD: PROGRAM PLANS FOR 2010

Educational Reinforcement: Extend staffed program hours during the week and weekends to offer students extra help, increased computer lab and library access, and a safe place to study.



Early Childhood: Incorporate physical education and music into the permanent curriculum to broaden the range of activities, prepare children for school, and promote physical activity.

Sports: Increase staff and peer leaders' understanding of the Brazilian "Change the Game" methodology to continue the program's leadership and community development components. Safe Passage staff members will work directly with Change the Game's founder in Brazil.

English: Practice speaking English during sports to increase students' comfort level and conversation skills. English teachers will attend sports classes to enhance relationships with their students.

Adult Literacy: Enroll additional mothers and fathers in classes and begin micro-finance loans to women in the jewelry cooperative to continue educating the parents of Safe Passage students and create additional means of employment and income.

TALK OF THE TENTH: 2009 MARKS A DECADE OF PROVIDING SAFE PASSAGES

Over the past decade, Safe Passage has seen a great deal of positive change. The program that Hanley began with 40 children now serves 535 children and 300 families. We have moved from a run-down, rat-infested church building to three well-maintained, clean, lively program sites throughout the neighborhood. The children, who once enjoyed a simple meal of beans on toast, now find meat and fruit on their plates each day. The last three years have seen 24 students graduate from either high school or Adult

Literacy. A program that began with \$5,000 has reached an annual operating budget of nearly \$2 million. Founder Hanley Denning's vision has ignited sparks in the hearts of people all over the world, so that one woman's passion has become the collective work of thousands.

In 2009, we have celebrated together in Germany, Guatemala, Holland, Maine, Michigan & North Carolina, enjoying beautiful music and a new documentary, *Manos de Madre*. As 2010

nears, we look forward together to another decade of safe passages...



Safe Passage's international anniversary concert series featured Colombian singer/songwriter Marta Gómez.

EDWIN, 33

Studying at the **Men's Literacy Program**

Working at the Guatemala City garbage dump

Aspires to work as a mechanic or carpenter

Enjoys reading the Bible & setting a good example

KATI, 6

Studying at the Early Childhood Center

Loves English classes, Saturday Dance Club, chicken soup, the color pink & reading *Cinderella*

JEFRI, 7

Studying at the Educational Reinforcement Center

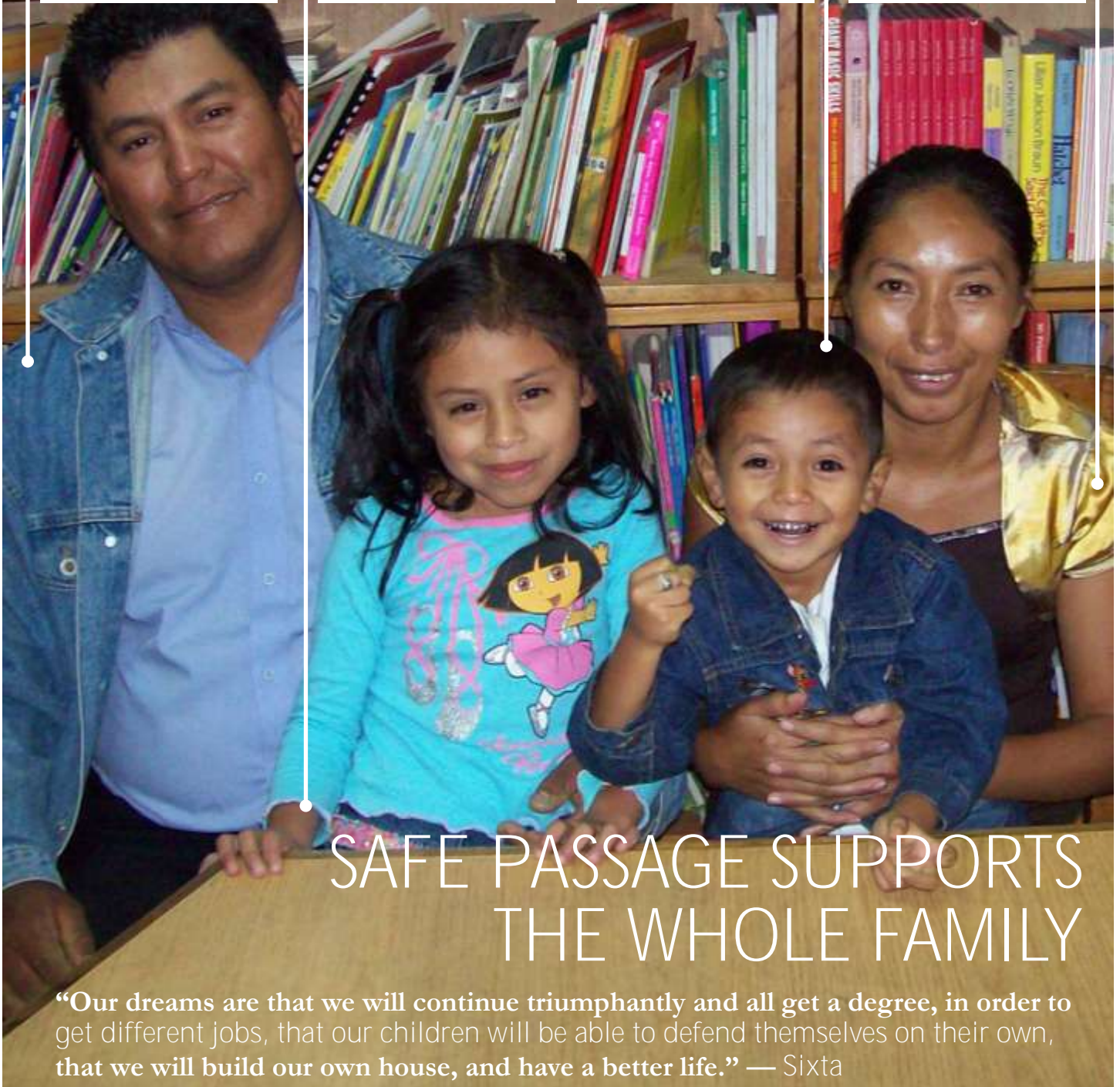
Loves Saturday Karate Club, computer and English classes & pizza and vegetables

SIXTA, 38

Studying at the **Women's Literacy Program**

Earning income as a member of the CREAMOS jewelry cooperative

Loves fried chicken, reading the Bible & Safe Passage excursions



SAFE PASSAGE SUPPORTS THE WHOLE FAMILY

“Our dreams are that we will continue triumphantly and all get a degree, in order to get different jobs, that our children will be able to defend themselves on their own, that we will build our own house, and have a better life.” — Sixta

JOIN A SUPPORT TEAM TO GUATEMALA & MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Teams of up to 12 members volunteer with Safe Passage for one week to provide hands-on service to Safe Passage, connect with other members of our community & gain a meaningful understanding of Guatemala.

“We came together as a nurse, two teachers, counselor, law firm administrator, school bus driver, firefighter & non-profit coordinator. We spent a quality week learning about the *many* aspects of the program. The background, insight and hard work to make this become a reality

was clear and admirable. It couldn't have been more wonderful to see all the lives being helped by Safe Passage and to be involved in the work too.”

— Nancy Beach, Volunteer with Team Kaleidoscope (pictured below)



Safe Passage welcomes individuals and small groups too! **We'll be** creating multi-group Teams for the following weeks in 2010:

- February 28 - March 7
- April 25 - May 2
- September 12 - 19

Please contact our Team Coordinators at teams@safepassage.org or (502) 7832-8428 to begin planning your adventure! In-country costs begin at \$595 per person.

WAYS YOU CAN HELP

SPONSOR a child or mother. Build a relationship with a student in the program as you help them afford school-related costs. Sponsorships begin at \$50 per month. Contact sponsorship@safepassage.org.

RECYCLE this newsletter. Once you've read this, please pass it to a friend, family member, colleague, or even a stranger.



SHARE what you know. Be an advocate by telling our story or making a presentation in your local community. To get started, contact outreach@safepassage.org.

DONATE. It is the generosity of donors like you that keeps Safe Passage's program operating, day after day and year after year. With your support, we have expanded our services and added to our successes in 2009, even in the face of a worrisome global economy.

Yet the children and families living around the Guatemala City garbage dump continue to rely on us, and in turn we will continue to rely on you, to bring Safe Passage into 2010 with strength and with hope.

This holiday season, we offer our deep gratitude for your support and our best wishes for a wonderful new year.

If you wish to make a year-end gift, please use either the enclosed donation card or our secure online account at www.safepassage.org.



VISIT as a Volunteer, Team, or Individual. Join us to provide the children and families with daily services and smiles. Contact outreach@safepassage.org.

ENDOWED SPONSORSHIP

We're happy to announce that as a result of a very generous bequest, Safe Passage has its first endowed child sponsorship. This gift will provide for an ongoing child sponsorship for **many, many years**. If you're interested in creating a similar type of bequest, please contact Betsey Andersen at betseyandersen@safepassage.org.

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