



Safe Passage  
Camino Seguro



**HOPE.  
EDUCATION.  
OPPORTUNITY.**

Annual  
Report  
2009



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Safe Passage is a US-registered 501(c)(3) organization. Camino Seguro is a Guatemala-registered non-governmental organization. Within a safe and caring environment, we provide hundreds of children with a comprehensive and integrated program that fosters hope, good health, educational achievement, self-sufficiency, self esteem and confidence.

**OUR MISSION** | To empower 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.



Safe Passage serves nearly 550 children and 300 families directly and estimates impacting the lives of more than 3,000 people.



**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR** | Barbara Nijhuis

**IN 2009 WE CELEBRATED OUR 10TH ANNIVERSARY!** We shared memories of how Safe Passage started and where we are today. We have so much to be very thankful for as we cherish our graduates, the healthy and well-nourished children in the program, and the increasing number of engaged parents who are eager to study and participate. Thanks to the dedicated and professional

Guatemalan staff and International volunteers, we created and strengthened programs to offer real opportunities to children and parents in a place with little hope of prosperity. And thanks to your confidence in and support of our Mission, we have been able to continue helping nearly 550 children and their families to change the neighbourhood around the Guatemala City garbage dump.

Guatemala is a very beautiful yet complicated country with challenges for so many... Safe Passage, while giving the world a look at extreme poverty and how to break its cycle, is not only helping the children and families in the Guatemala City garbage dump. Every day we see how Safe Passage is allowing people to appreciate their own lives so much more, how it changes perspectives and the lives of the people who experience it.

Thank you, for all you share with Safe Passage! I hope that when you read this annual report you feel as blessed as I do that we are able to be part of this amazing work, by which—step by step, child by child—we change the world into a much more beautiful place.

With love,  
 Barbara Nijhuis, Executive Director; Antigua, Guatemala

**SAFE PASSAGE & THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), set by the United Nations in 2000, are a concerted global effort to meet the needs of the world's poorest people by the target date of 2015. In alignment with the worthy endeavor, Safe Passage has been working to achieve four of the eight Goals:

**Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger:** We aim at our core to end cyclical poverty through education. Daily meals, monthly food bags and support for job-seekers bring children and families closer to the Goal.

**Achieve Universal Primary Education:** Our children are either enrolled in school or preparing to enter, and our Adult Literacy students work towards sixth-grade diplomas.

**Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women:** Our Literacy Program connects women with education, a supportive community, and chances to make and sell jewelry to earn income.

**Reduce Child Mortality:** Our children sustain a necessary level of well-being through access to our clinic and medical staff, at-home water purifiers, good hygiene and exercise habits, and food and vitamin supplements.

**47%** 47% of Guatemalan adolescents, aged 15–19, in urban areas drop out of school before completing junior high, compared with 37% in all of Latin America.<sup>1</sup>

**6%** *The 2009 school dropout rate among Safe Passage's students was 6%. Adolescents at Safe Passage find the financial and emotional support that keeps them enrolled.*



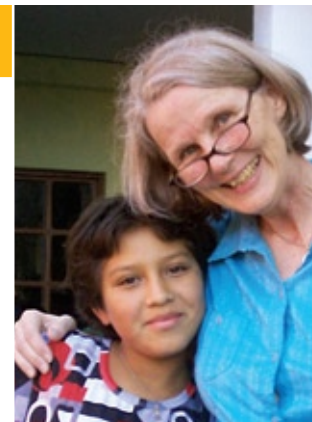
## EMPOWERMENT THROUGH EDUCATION

The Men's Literacy Program, begun in April 2009, now has more than 20 participating dads. The class meets at night to accommodate the men's work schedules. Students learn reading and writing skills, mathematics, natural and social sciences, English, and computer literacy. Safe Passage provides sixth-grade diploma accreditation through CONALFA, the Guatemalan National Committee on Adult Literacy.

Four teenagers graduated from high school in 2009, along with seven adult literacy students, including six women and one man. Of the four high school graduates, three are currently employed.

82% of our primary school-age children passed their grade, including 100% of first graders. Many Guatemalan students must drop out of school mid-year—when their families stop being able to afford school books or uniforms—but Safe Passage's support ensures that each child can pay for a full year's expenses and thus can remain in school.

Every child in the program developed an individual "life plan" to identify and map the route to their short-, middle- and long-term goals regarding education, school grades, future dreams, and home life.



## PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD | Deborah Walters

**IT HAS BEEN TEN YEARS NOW** since Hanley Denning started working with the children and families in the Guatemala City garbage dump community. There have been many successes and changes over the decade. Generous donors have built buildings, gardens and play areas that provide the children with a safe and beautiful haven in the midst of an impoverished and polluted neighborhood. Being treated with respect by the hundreds of volunteers that come from all over the world has changed the way the children and families view themselves, now realizing that they

can dream and achieve a better future. The success of the early childhood center was demonstrated this year, as all of the children in the first grade passed to the second grade—which is an unheard of accomplishment in the poor neighborhoods in Guatemala.

As we look towards the next decade, the future looks brighter for the children and families. More mothers, and now fathers, are becoming literate, and using those tools to find new ways to support their families. The family nurturing programs, as well as the leadership training of the youth through the sports program will continue to make positive changes in the dump community. More children will be graduating from school. All of this continues to be possible through the generous contributions from our incredibly committed donors who, even through the global recession, provided the funding that enables Safe Passage to provide hope and opportunity to Guatemala's most impoverished children and families.

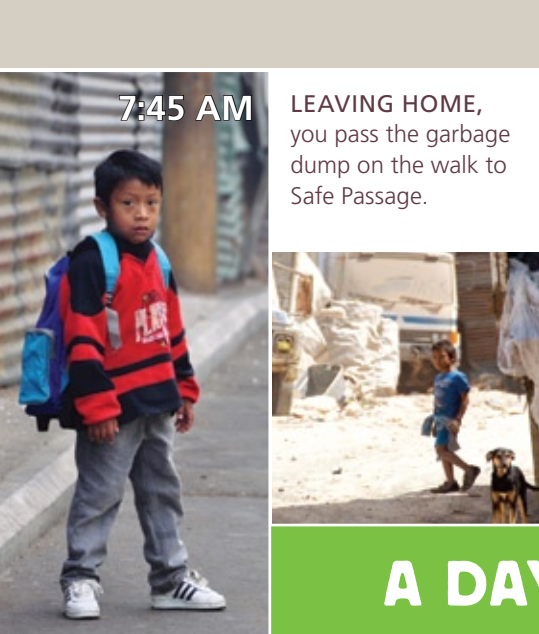
With warm regards,  
Deborah Walters, President; Troy, Maine

Safe Passage has a new website at [www.safeassage.org](http://www.safeassage.org).



"When I paint, I feel motivated to keep going. If I make a mistake I try to fix it and I'm always trying to give my best effort." – Jose Carlos

**THE ART PROGRAM**, founded in 2009, continues to encourage expression and creation, both through visual art and music. Volunteers teach classes in portraiture, art history, photography, print-making, piano, and guitar.



7:45 AM

**LEAVING HOME,** you pass the garbage dump on the walk to Safe Passage.

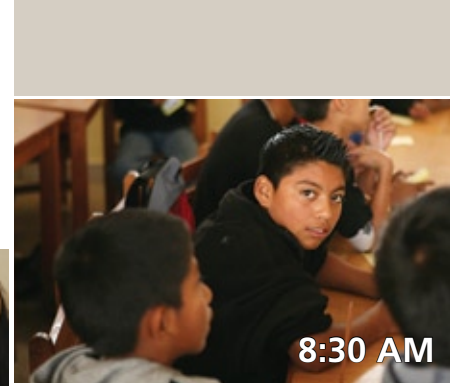


8:05 AM

**BREAKFAST** at the program includes milk, pancakes, and fresh fruit.



**BRUSH YOUR TEETH,** using the toothbrush and paste provided. Healthier teeth require fewer painful extractions.



8:30 AM

**YOUR TEACHER BEGINS THE DAY** by reviewing the monthly value from the Peace Program.

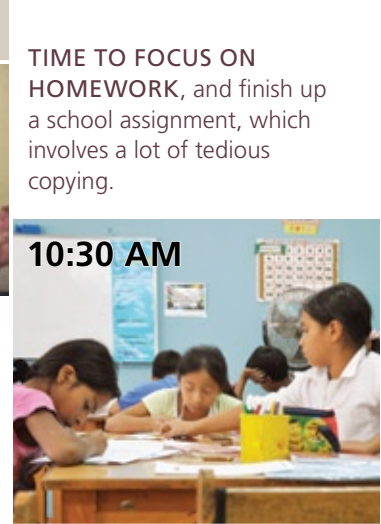
**GYM CLASS!** Ride school bus—walking's not safe—through the community to the "papifut" field. It's a basic physical education class: running, ball-kicking, and socializing with friends.



9:00 AM



**10:00 AM**  
**ENGLISH CLASS** back at the Reinforcement Center. Today you're learning to talk about feelings: "How do I feel?" "Today, I feel 'happy,' because I'm at Safe Passage"



10:30 AM



A teacher helps with questions.

# A DAY IN THE LIFE | Safe Passage Student

*Your help makes this day—and the next ones—possible.*



11:15 AM

**COMPUTER LAB** opens for internet research, games, and typing. High schoolers must pass a typing course.



11:30 AM

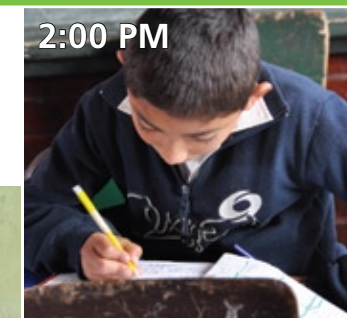


**LUNCH IS SERVED** in the Comedor. Today there's chicken, rice, tortillas, and orange juice—with plenty of seconds available.

**RETURN HOME** to change into your school uniform, including clean white socks and well-shined shoes.

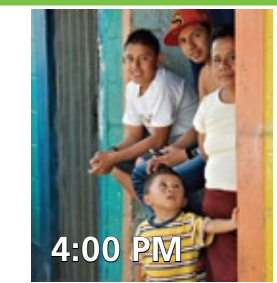


12 NOON



2:00 PM

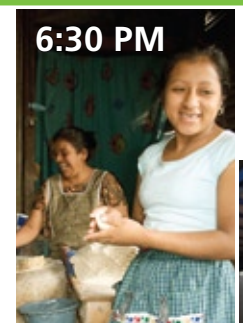
Public schools have separate morning and afternoon sessions. How much can be taught in just a few hours?



4:00 PM

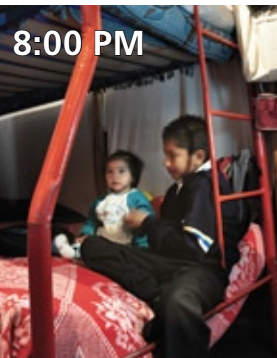
**AFTER SCHOOL,** Mom needs help at home, washing and sorting trash that she collected in the garbage dump and cooking rice and beans for a simple dinner for the family.

Dinner is cooked on a makeshift stove, if there's propane to light it. Options are limited without an icebox, light source, or even a table to sit around.



6:30 PM

**AT NIGHT** the TV, scavenged from the dump, is the only form of entertainment.



8:00 PM



9:00 PM

**BED TIME.** You fall asleep with your siblings on the twin-size mattress you share.

**1.9m** In Guatemala, 61% of 1.9 million adult illiterates are women. The national rate of literacy is low, at 72%.<sup>2</sup>

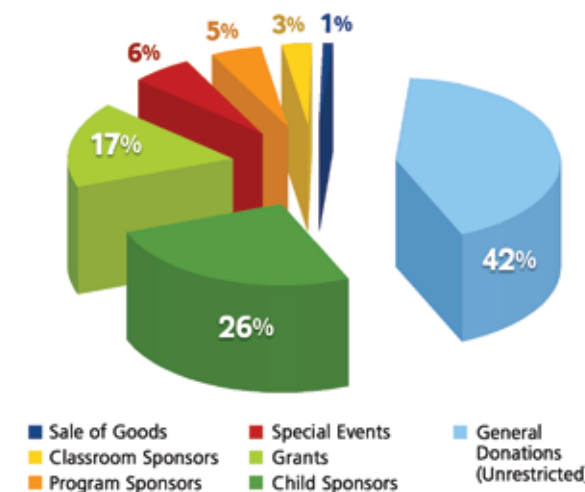
**96** In 2010, 96 women and men are studying in the Adult Literacy Program at Safe Passage, working towards their sixth-grade equivalency diplomas using a curriculum approved by Guatemala's National Committee on Adult Literacy. All students looking to pursue higher education and job training can do so with the help of Safe Passage scholarships.



Safe Passage has received a \$300,000 gift to be used towards improving our academic success over the next three years.

## 2009 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

### SOURCES OF OPERATIONAL INCOME, 2009



### Important Financial Measurements, 2009\*

**ADMINISTRATIVE OVERHEAD** 7.7%  
as a percent of total operating expenses.

**FUNDRAISING EXPENSES** 6.9%  
as a percent of total raised in 2009.

\*From IRS Form 990 (2009), filed May 2010

### INCOME AND EXPENSES (CASH)

INCOME		EXPENSES	
Contributions	\$ 2,109,198	Programs and Operations	\$ 2,075,485
Other Income (net)	29,448	Transfers to the Denning Fund	40,547
Hanley Denning Fund Gifts	40,547		
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$ 2,179,193*</b>	<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 2,116,032*</b>

\*This includes \$233,297 of in-kind donations.

### BALANCE SHEET AS OF 12/31/2007, 12/31/2008 AND 12/31/2009

	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009
Cash on hand	\$ 211,112	\$ 350,562	\$ 417,229
Hanley Denning Fund	\$ 1,872,033	\$ 2,423,230	\$ 2,822,838
Property and Equipment	\$ 1,016,595	\$ 1,002,520	\$ 983,145
Pledge Receivables	\$ 473,625	\$ 149,669	\$ 118,068
Other Receivables	\$ 111,846	\$ 43,082	\$ 31,510
Current Liabilities	\$ (85,067)	\$ (89,927)	\$ (144,300)
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 3,600,144</b>	<b>\$ 3,879,136</b>	<b>\$ 4,228,490</b>

These figures represent a preliminary report of Safe Passage's 2009 Fiscal Year. The complete financial report, conducted by the firm of MacDonald Page & Co., is available on Safe Passage's website. Copies of Safe Passage's audits, 990s and other financial information can be found at [www.safepassage.org](http://www.safepassage.org) or by contacting the Safe Passage office.

## TREASURER | John C. Gundersdorf

I AM PLEASED TO REPORT THAT SAFE PASSAGE'S FINANCES ARE SOUND. We were most fortunate that, despite the economy, donations continued to be strong. At the same time, we are committed to controlling costs resulting in a small surplus in 2009. Our balance sheet, thanks to the Hanley Denning Fund, is sound as the Fund grew to \$2,822,838 in value during the year.

For the first time, we began to make distributions from the Hanley Denning Fund at a conservative rate of 3.5% of the Fund's value. We also began full operations of a new accounting system that provides a more accurate picture of our expenses, and will be used by both the Finance Committee and staff to help control costs and better plan for the future.

Many thanks to the members of the Finance Committee, Board and staff who are committed to prudent management of our resources, transparency in all phases of Safe Passage operation and operating in a sustainable manner. Their participation has been invaluable.

All of us are honored to be stewards of such generous support and are committed to operating Safe Passage in a way that sustains Hanley Denning's vision of providing hope and opportunity to the children of the Guatemala City dump for many, many decades.

– John C. Gundersdorf, Treasurer; Portland, Maine

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:** John Gundersdorf, Treasurer; Charlie Gendron; Maureen Ghublikian; Jim Highland; Richard Howe; Rachel Meyn; Susanna Place; Deborah Walters

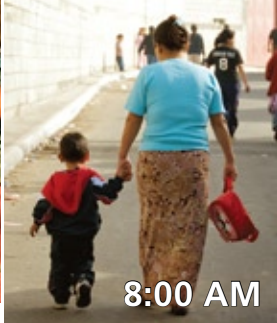


**THE SAFE PASSAGE SPORTS PROGRAM,** "Empowerment through Play and Game," continues developing children's leadership skills. One sport gaining popularity is martial arts, which teaches discipline, self-respect, working toward goals, and self-defense.



6:00 AM

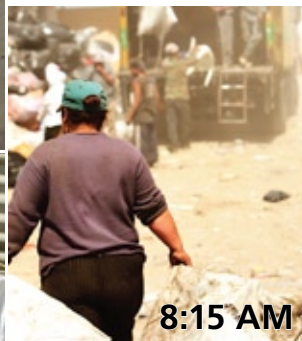
WAKE UP TO DO CHORES, including washing clothes by hand and sweeping the dirt floor... all in the dark.



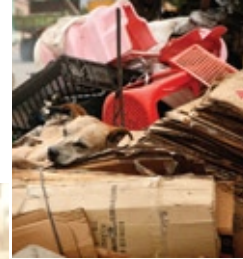
8:00 AM



DELIVER YOUNGEST child to Safe Passage's Guarderia so you can go to work and school.



8:15 AM



WORK IN THE GARBAGE DUMP, collecting anything that can be resold, salvaged, or eaten.

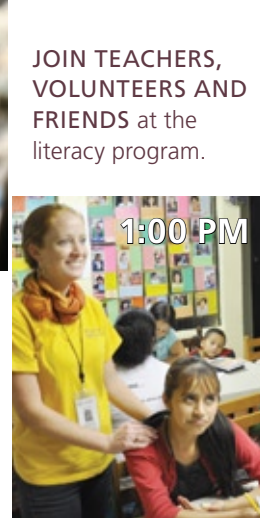


LUCKY FINDS might include a TV, a table, microwave, or storybook to read to the children.



12:30 PM

AT-HOME VISIT from a Safe Passage social worker checking on a child's absence from the project and discussing a serious medical problem.



1:00 PM

JOIN TEACHERS, VOLUNTEERS AND FRIENDS at the literacy program.



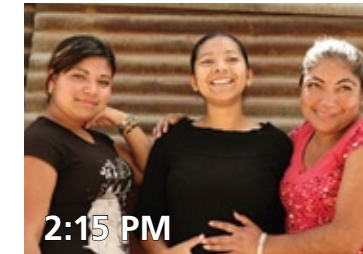
1:15 PM

CLASS LESSONS PROGRESS. First you learned numbers and letters; now you're working on math equations and reading the newspaper, and you'll graduate from the sixth grade next year.



INDEPENDENT WORK in a notebook or on the computer, and socializing with the other women at Safe Passage.

Socializing and networking in a secure space balances out grim realities of daily life: single motherhood, family and friends falling victim to drug abuse and domestic violence, tragic accidents in the dump and neighborhood.



2:15 PM

# A DAY IN THE LIFE | Guatemalan Mother

*These moms are the lucky ones.*

PARTICIPATE IN WORKSHOP to develop much-needed parenting skills, business savvy, or healthy relationships.

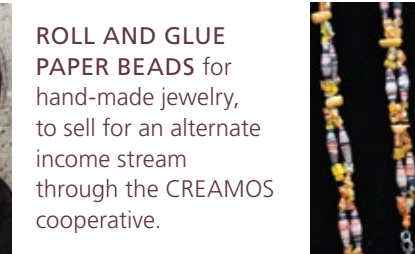


3:45 PM

PICK UP CHILDREN and monthly food bag-from Safe Passage. Will these supplies last the whole month?



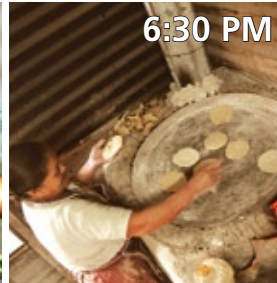
Your family relies on this monthly sustenance to meet your children's nutritional needs and supplement groceries you work hard to afford.



ROLL AND GLUE PAPER BEADS for hand-made jewelry, to sell for an alternate income stream through the CREAMOS cooperative.



4:30 PM



6:30 PM

PIECE TOGETHER A MEAL, even if it's only beans and water: Is there a stove? Any propane to light the burner? Enough light to oversee your preparations?



STUDY THE BIBLE before the sun sets; with limited or no electricity, there's no chance for serious reading later tonight.



8:00 PM

PUT THE CHILDREN TO BED, then return to washing, sorting, cleaning in the dark.

**49%** In Guatemala, 49% of children have growth that is stunted due to malnutrition.<sup>2</sup> One in two children under five is chronically malnourished; this is the highest rate in Latin America, and the fifth-highest in the world.<sup>3</sup>

**100%** *At Safe Passage, where all children have access to the on-site health clinic and each has a set of medical records, 100% of children maintain a body height and weight that is proportional to their age. None of the nearly 550 children are malnourished, as daily meals, snacks, and multi-vitamins are offered at the program.*



## ¡MUCHAS GRACIAS! THANK YOU!

- To the Guatemalan teachers, social workers, administrators and staff, working daily with dedication to help our children pursue their goals;
- to the Friends Groups and volunteers around the world, keeping Safe Passage in their hearts and minds despite the distance;
- to the nearly 4,000 donors, giving selflessly so that hope, education, and opportunity may remain in reach for hundreds of Guatemala City's children and families;
- to the 80 "Amigos por siempre," making gifts of \$5,000 or more and, in so doing, ensuring the program's longevity;
- to the 781 Child Sponsors, 24 Mother Sponsors, 46 Classroom Partners and 160 Safe Passage Partners, offering specialized and devoted attention to people and programs that matter;
- to Marta Gomez and her band of talented musicians, celebrating our Tenth Anniversary with beauty, dignity, and an inspired song "I Imagine;"
- to One Spark Films, capturing and telling Safe Passage's story in a memorable and empowering documentary, film "Manos de Madre;"
- to the long-term volunteers, building lasting friendships and trust within a vibrant but at-risk community;
- to the Board of Directors, contributing valuable experience and insight that's rooted in our shared vision;
- to the 272 Volunteers, 227 Support Teams Members

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

**SAFE PASSAGE WELCOMES VOLUNTEERS** and offers a variety of opportunities for you to spend valuable time with the children, families, and staff in Guatemala. Volunteers work for weeks or months at a time, while Support Teams spend a week.

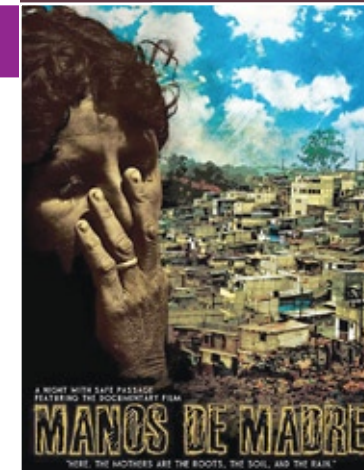
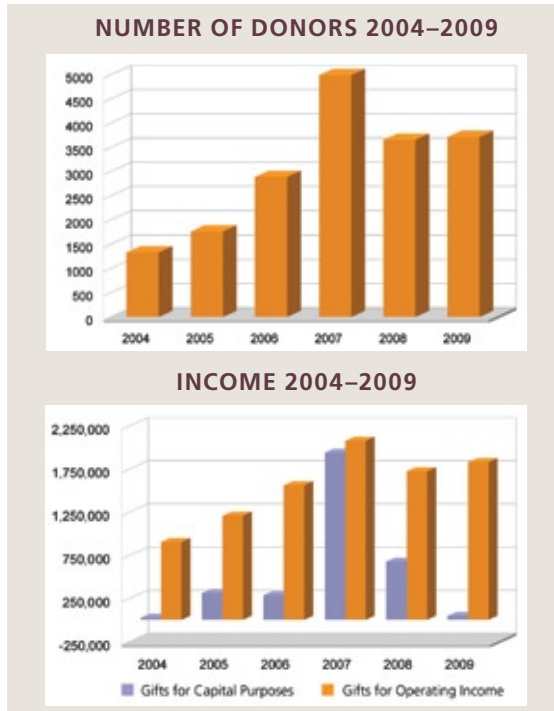
### OTHER NOTABLE POSSIBILITIES INCLUDE:

**MOTHER/DAUGHTER TEAMS** will volunteer in the summer of 2010, with an itinerary designed to bring together mothers and their daughters from around the world with Guatemalan moms and daughters at Safe Passage. Please contact [teams@safepassage.org](mailto:teams@safepassage.org) to learn how you can participate.

**PHILANTHROPIC TRAVEL** with Safe Passage is geared toward experiencing our program and the country of Guatemala as a socially-conscious tourist. For information about these customizable trips, please contact [director@safepassage.org](mailto:director@safepassage.org).



**SAFE PASSAGE VOLUNTEERS** come from all walks of life. No two volunteers are alike, with a few key exceptions: all are here to give of themselves, and all leave with more than they expected. If you're looking for the chance to make a lasting difference, consider becoming a Safe Passage volunteer. Contact [volunteers@safepassage.org](mailto:volunteers@safepassage.org).



**"MANOS DE MADRE"** ("Mother's Hands") premiered in Guatemala in October 2009, for the 10th Anniversary celebration. The film focuses on Irina, a Safe Passage adult literacy student and single mother of five, but it also tells the story of Safe Passage's fight to provide opportunities to children in a world where hope is in desperately short supply. Request a copy by emailing [outreach@safepassage.org](mailto:outreach@safepassage.org).

**\$3-4** In Guatemala, the legal minimum wage is about \$3-4 U.S. per day.<sup>4</sup> About half of workers earn even less than this.<sup>5</sup>



HANLEY DENNING, late founder of Safe Passage, began the program in 1999 with a vision that thrives beyond its first decade. An avid runner with a taste for conquering the seemingly impossible, Hanley inspires us to make big strides—together.

**>\$4** Women making and selling jewelry in Safe Passage's CREAMOS cooperative can earn minimum wage, unlike other women who earn less from work in the garbage dump.



SAFE PASSAGE PRESENTS

SATURDAY,  
SEPTEMBER 25, 2010

(Dates may vary between locations)

**RUNNING & WALKING**

in a Community Near You!

Our goal: **5,000 people worldwide, running and walking together**, in **friendship, hope** and **solidarity**, to **honor Safe Passage's vision** of helping families build better lives for themselves beyond the garbage dump. The children in Guatemala will be running a 5K as well!

There are races planned in **communities worldwide**, as well as a **"Virtual 5K"** for runners and walkers unable to travel to an arranged race site.

Visit [www.safepassage.org/5K](http://www.safepassage.org/5K) for locations, registration instructions, and more!

It's **easy**. It's **fun**. It's **healthy**.  
It's a chance to **build your own community** while **connecting with ours**.



**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Deborah Walters, Chair – Troy, Maine  
 Susanna Place, Vice Chair – Milton, Massachusetts  
 John Gundersdorf, Treasurer – Portland, Maine  
 Margaret Downing, Secretary – Yarmouth, Maine  
 Xavier Andrade – Guatemala  
 Jacob Carter – Boston, Massachusetts  
 Drew Casertano – Millbrook, New York  
 Jordan Denning – Yarmouth, Maine  
 Sandra Gonzalez – Guatemala

Jenny Hartsell – Boerne, Texas  
 Richard Howe – Milton, Massachusetts  
 Liz Incze – Cumberland, Maine  
 Leslie Iwerks – Santa Monica, California  
 Arnie Katz – Durham, North Carolina  
 Rachel Meyn – Sonoma, California  
 Juan Mini – Guatemala  
 Sharon Workman – Cedar, Michigan

**SAFE PASSAGE THANKS**

THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THIS REPORT:

Betsey Andersen, Karen Bolmer, Z-Z Cowen, Barbara Davis, Rachel Farahbakhsh, John Gundersdorf, Lisa Jensen, Barbara Nijhuis, Deborah Walters, Marc Wuthrich, and others. Photographs were taken by Daniel Davis, San de Vries, John Erickson, Kenna Klosterman, Phyllis Kwedar, and others. Design by Arielle Walrath and printing on FSC-certified paper by JS McCarthy Printers of Augusta, Maine.

STATISTICS ABOUT GUATEMALA and Latin America appearing in the Annual Report come from:

- 1 "Dropping out of school. An obstacle to achievement of the Millennium Development Targets," Social Panorama of Latin America, 2001-2002, by ECLAC, 2002
- 2 UNESCO's "Education for All Global Monitoring Report," 2009
- 3 Center for Economic and Social Rights' "Guatemala Fact Sheet," 2008
- 4 United Nations Development Programme's "Summary: Human Development Report 2003"
- 5 Josef Loenig's "Effects of Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Education on Economic Growth," 2005



**WAYS TO GIVE** | Your gifts to Safe Passage make a meaningful difference.

### **DONATE**

Donations support operating expenses, including school fees, books and supplies; food for every child; literacy classes for parents; physical education for every child; medical care for families; and books for our library. Please make gifts via credit card using our safe and secure online system at [www.safepassage.org](http://www.safepassage.org), or mail checks to the US office at the address below.

### **SPONSOR**

Child sponsors provide financial and emotional support to put each child through school. There are also mothers and classrooms in need of sponsors. Contact [sponsorship@safepassage.org](mailto:sponsorship@safepassage.org) to learn more.

### **PLANNED GIVING**

A gift to Safe Passage is a wonderful legacy. Consider remembering Safe Passage in your will. Contact [director@safepassage.org](mailto:director@safepassage.org) to learn more.

## **CONTACT US**

### **GUATEMALA OFFICE**

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