

SPONSORSHIP HANDBOOK



ENGLISH

OUR MISSION

We empower the poorest, at-risk children of families living in the Guatemala City garbage dump community by creating opportunities and fostering dignity through the power of education.



WELCOME TO OUR GLOBAL SAFE PASSAGE COMMUNITY!



Dear Sponsor,

Welcome to the Safe Passage family! I'd like to offer my sincere gratitude for your commitment as a Safe Passage sponsor. Contributions from our sponsors account for 40% of all the donations we receive—without you, our work would be impossible!

You are part of a growing community of nearly 700 sponsors from 16 different countries, including more than 50 sponsors from Guatemala! Thanks to you, Safe Passage is able to provide all students with holistic educational opportunities, nutrition, family wellness services, and so much more.

Beyond the tangible benefits of your financial investment, developing a connection with your sponsored student can provide him/her with a real boost in self-esteem and self-worth—the value of your sponsorship is immense.

It's important to us that both you and your sponsored student have a positive experience, so please read this Handbook carefully.

On behalf of everyone at Safe Passage, especially your sponsored student, thank you! You are changing a life in Guatemala City. For that we are profoundly grateful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Todd Amani".

Todd Amani, Executive Director
Safe Passage / Camino Seguro

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These are my people.
These are my children.
This is my
responsibility.

VALENTINO
GUATEMALA/CHICAGO



INTRODUCTION TO SPONSORSHIP



Why Safe Passage?

More than 60,000 people live in extreme poverty around the Guatemala City garbage dump. It's one of the largest open landfills in all of Central America. Here, thousands of people make a living harvesting the garbage for recyclables, clothing, and household items that they can sell. Until recently, children were allowed to work alongside their parents.

This community struggles daily with violence, discrimination, and lack of access to education, social support, and critical resources such as healthcare.

Safe Passage helps these families.



Our children and their families live in one of the poorest communities near the Guatemala City garbage dump.

As a sponsor, you play a key role in helping us provide all Safe Passage students with:

- Personal encouragement and support
- Daily nourishing meals and snacks
- Healthcare (through our partner, Shared Beat)
- School supplies, books and uniforms
- Family and community wellness services
- Holistic, progressive education
- Adult Literacy for parents
- *Creamos* employment opportunities for mothers
- Teacher training and professional development
- Classroom materials, technology and books
- Enrichment programs (music, art, sports)

How do my donations help?

When you add up the annual cost of all the services we provide our students, the total spent per student per year equals \$3,000. Sponsors donate any amount between \$50 and \$250 per month toward a child's participation at Safe Passage. Each student may have up to 4 sponsors. The more support for each child, the more children we can add to our holistic program!

Where do my donations go?

At Safe Passage, all of our students receive equal treatment and have the same access to all of our services, regardless of their sponsorship status. To help us invest in every student, sponsorship contributions are pooled in our Sponsorship Fund and go directly to cover program costs.

By sponsoring a child, you are actually supporting all 550 students at Safe Passage!

In addition to helping offset the cost of their Safe Passage participation, sponsorship is an opportunity to develop a special connection with your student. Our students come from difficult backgrounds and many do not receive positive encouragement at home; motivation and care from you provides a real boost in self-esteem and self-worth.

In the garbage dump community¹:

- 1 in 3 residents have never been to school
- The average parent education is 4th grade
- Families of 6 live on less than \$4 a day



WHY SPONSORS MATTER

Why now?

We're evolving into a full-day, accredited school to better meet the needs of our students. We're hiring and training more qualified teachers, implementing progressive curricula and growing our community impact. Our full-day program offers the opportunity for us to address extreme poverty at a much deeper level. Your donations as a sponsor are critical resources that help us meet our growing needs and keep our program thriving.

Guatemalan public schools offer schooling only 4 hours each day. We give students a full-day of education and enrichment.



For a full breakdown of how Safe Passage uses your donations, visit our website at: www.safepassage.org/financials

COMMUNICATION

How often will I hear from my student?

Each year, you will receive two greetings via postal mail from your sponsored student. These greetings are all unique and may include an update on your student's academic progress, a new photo of your student, a handwritten note, or a drawing.

handbook), as the postal service in Guatemala tends to be inconsistent and unreliable. Instead of using expensive couriers, we gather batches of correspondence to be hand-delivered to our Sponsorship Team by a staff member, volunteer, or visitor travelling to Guatemala. As travel can be sporadic, we cannot guarantee a specific delivery date.

How can I keep in touch?

The more you write to your student, the more you'll hear back! Writing to your student is easy, simply send a message (in English or Spanish) via email to our Sponsorship Team in Guatemala at sponsorship@safepassage.org.



We take great care of your messages and hand-deliver all correspondence to each of our students once a month.

What does the process look like?

Once we receive your message, we'll translate it to Spanish, deliver it to your sponsored child and assist him or her in writing a response. We'll then translate the response and mail it back to you. If you prefer to send a card or physical letter, please send it to our U.S. office (address in the front of this

When will I receive a response?

Once a month, we hand deliver batches of correspondence to all of our students.

Due to the large quantity of sponsor correspondence we receive and the realities of sending items back and forth from the U.S. to Guatemala, it can take up to 3 months to receive a response from your sponsored child. Thank you for your patience as we process your messages with care!

Safe Passage takes student security and privacy seriously. Please see page 9 for details.

COMMUNICATION AND GIFTS



What should I write to my student about?

Your sponsored child will be excited to hear from you, regardless of what you write about! Here are a few suggestions to keep in mind as you write to your student:

- Ask your student about his or her interests, favorite classes, hobbies, sports, animals, colors, etc.
- Ask about Guatemalan culture, customs, climate, family traditions, etc.
- Send encouraging thoughts to help motivate your student in school and in their personal interests
- Tell your student about yourself, your family, pets, occupation or hobbies
- Encourage other members of your family to write to your student and, if you have young children, consider sending their drawings

Our students also love to receive photos of their sponsors and their sponsors' families and pets! Putting a face to your name reminds your student that there's a real, live person supporting them. You may include 3 photos attached to your messages.

Cultural Considerations

Please keep in mind the lifestyle and living conditions of our students and their families as you're writing to your sponsored child. Please do not mention material possessions or money in your correspondence. Instead, focus on building a friendship based on common ground. Simply receiving a letter from you will make your sponsored child feel special!

Gifts

We strive for equality and provide gifts for all students on their birthday and at the holidays, regardless of whether or not they have a sponsor. We're able to purchase these gifts thanks to donations to our Gift Fund from sponsors like you.

When selecting gifts for your student, please send small items such as coloring books or story books that can fit in an envelope and be easily shared by your student's whole class.

What is the Gift Fund?

The Gift Fund ensures that we're able to provide a gift for all students on their birthday and at the holidays. We'll invite you to contribute to the Gift Fund when your sponsored child's birthday is coming up, and then again around the holidays, but you can donate anytime!

For example, two donations of \$30 to the Gift Fund each year help cover the cost of new clothing we provide twice a year for our students. Donations to the Gift Fund are used to purchase gifts for our students and are a great alternative gift idea for your friends and family members!



Do you have specific questions about gifts and communication? Please contact us: sponsorship@safepassage.org



It's easy to see the appeal of a program like Safe Passage, and I thought I "got it" pretty well. But what you understand in your head and feel in your heart goes to a whole new place when you have the opportunity to spend time with the child you sponsor.

COLLEEN, CHILD SPONSOR MAINE (USA)



SPECIAL GIFTS AND VISITS



May I send a special gift?

We understand that you may want to send something special to your sponsored child. Please send small gifts that can fit in an envelope and be shared by your student's whole class, such as a pack of stickers or coloring books, etc.

Please send all gifts to our U.S. office for transport to Guatemala by a staff member, volunteer or visitor traveling to Guatemala City. Please be sure gifts are **unwrapped, lightweight**, and won't take up too much room in a duffel bag.

May I visit my sponsored student?

Yes! Meeting your sponsored child helps make the connection much more real for both of you. Seeing our programs (and your impact!) in action is also an extremely powerful experience.



Please don't mention potential plans to visit to your sponsored child in case travel plans and arrangements fall through.

More than 110 sponsors from 16 countries have visited our program and their sponsored students in Guatemala City. We'd love to meet you in person, too! Email sponsorship@safepassage.org to coordinate and plan your visit.

What will my visit consist of?

Most sponsors take their student out to lunch. Some add a trip to a museum, the zoo or bowling. You will be accompanied at all times by a member of our Sponsorship staff, who will help with translation and logistics. In some cases, a social worker from our Family and Community Services team will also attend.

Setting up your visit

To set up a visit, email: sponsorship@safepassage.org **at least 2 weeks in advance** so that we can ensure that your visit is as successful and positive as possible. For more information about visit, please request a copy of our Sponsor Visit Guide by emailing sponsorship@safepassage.org.



WHEN STUDENTS LEAVE OUR CARE



Things to be mindful of

Our students and their families live in a very high-risk environment, and these risk factors can cause some of our students to transition out of our program before reaching high school graduation.

The community we work with is particularly vulnerable and faces major challenges each day, such as:

- Dangers in the garbage dump, such as landslides, fires, and exposure to hazardous chemicals
- Prevalent substance abuse and addiction
- Gang violence, discrimination and corruption
- Lack of access to quality education, healthcare and proper nutrition

Graduation

When your sponsored student graduates from Safe Passage, your sponsorship relationship with that student will come to a close. Some sponsors choose to attend their sponsored student's graduation, which is always a very special, emotional and celebratory visit! Safe Passage graduates have the opportunity to continue their participation at Safe Passage through our *Próximo Paso* (Next Step) program, which assists graduates in preparing for interviews and university entrance exams, as well as connecting them with local companies for internships and jobs.

We work closely with our social workers to keep students safe, healthy, and in school.

Pre-graduation Exit

There are many reasons a student might leave Safe Passage before high school graduation. In addition to the risk factors

already mentioned, our students are faced with a multitude of challenges that can make staying in school feel impossible:

- Lack of support and motivation at home
- Unstable family circumstances
- Pressure to contribute to the family income
- Unmotivated, under-qualified teachers at public schools
- Unplanned pregnancy or unexpected health issues

How our social workers help

Each student is assigned to one of our Safe Passage social workers, who monitors his/her case, visits his/her home on a regular basis, and takes immediate notice when there is a change in his/her attendance.

The social work team, in collaboration with Safe Passage psychologists and teachers, works tirelessly to ensure that our students and their families receive the support they need.

Occasionally, despite much effort, other factors in a student's life are too significant, and he or she permanently leaves Safe Passage. Although it's difficult to say good-bye, please know that your commitment as a sponsor provided hope and opportunity to your sponsored child that will have a lasting positive impact in his/her life.



For privacy and security, all communication with your sponsored student must go through Safe Passage Sponsorship staff.

What happens next?

Once a student leaves Safe Passage, whether before or after graduation, we will transfer your sponsorship to another student. This way, you can continue to have a lasting impact and help us work toward our mission of breaking the cycle of poverty in the Guatemala City garbage dump community. Transferring your sponsorship is critical to our ongoing work and support of all 550 of our students.

PRIVACY AND PERSONAL COMMUNICATION



Our guidelines

We take the safety and privacy of our students and sponsors very seriously. **Please do not communicate with your sponsored child through social media, email, or any other channel outside of Safe Passage.**

We cannot be responsible for communication not facilitated by Safe Passage Sponsorship staff. We care about your privacy, too. Please don't share your last name, address, phone number or any other type of contact information with your sponsored child. We want to ensure that you're never put in the position of receiving a request that could strain your relationship.

May I share my sponsor story with others?

We would love for you to share stories about your sponsorship experience with your friends and family! For the privacy and security of both you and your student, please use only your sponsored student's first name, especially if using social media.

Can I stay in touch with my student after he or she graduates?

If you would like to communicate with your sponsored student after graduation, we will pass along your contact information, then it's up to the student to take the next step. Keep in mind, we

cannot be held responsible for communication after graduation. We appreciate your understanding as our graduates make a life-changing shift after graduation into university studies or the workforce and may not be able to write as often as before.



Please note: in some cases it may not be possible to communicate with your sponsored child after he/she leaves Safe Passage.

Ending your sponsorship

Sponsorship is both a special relationship with your sponsored child and a financial commitment to Safe Passage. We rely on support from our donors to keep our program thriving! Because of this, if your sponsorship payments fall 3 consecutive months behind, we will need to cancel your sponsorship.

Many sponsors agree that one of the best benefits of sponsorship is personal communication with your sponsored child. If your sponsorship comes to an end, you will no longer have access to sponsorship benefits. This means you will not receive updates from your sponsored child, and you will no longer be able to communicate with your sponsored child personally. We understand that this can be a very difficult transition, and we're here to help! Please contact us if you have questions or concerns about our policies.

Thank you for being a sponsor!





QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS ABOUT SPONSORSHIP?

You matter to us and we want to hear from you! If you would like to visit our U.S. office in Yarmouth, Maine or our program site in Guatemala City, please contact us in advance so that we can welcome you when you arrive.

HOURS

8AM – 5PM (GMT)
9AM – 5PM (EST, USA)

PHONE

207-245-1091 (Rings in Guatemala)
or 207-846-1188 (U.S. Office)

EMAIL

sponsorship@safepassage.org

SKYPE

[safepassage_sponsorship](https://www.skype.com/join/safepassage_sponsorship)

Camino Seguro/Safe Passage Offices

GUATEMALA CITY

6a. Avenida 11-95 Zona 7
Colonia Landivar, Ciudad de Guatemala

ANTIGUA

Calle del Hermano Pedro Sur #4
Antigua, Guatemala

USA

81 Bridge St, Suite 104
Yarmouth, ME 04096, USA

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Ever since I first learned about Safe Passage and Hanley's love for these children I wanted to get involved in some way, so we started sponsoring Hyony. After the first time our two children met and played with Hyony, we felt a special connection with her. She is a lovely girl, with a wonderful smile. You can feel her gratitude and appreciation in her eyes. We thank Safe Passage for this opportunity not only to help this cause and change the life of a child, but also for allowing us to teach our children about giving.



RONNY, LUISA, LUISITO, MANOLA AND MARCOS, SPONSORS GUATEMALA



HOPE. EDUCATION. OPPORTUNITY.

www.safepassage.org

