



Safe Passage  
Camino Seguro

2017 ANNUAL REPORT

ESPERANZA  
EDUCACIÓN  
OPORTUNIDAD

18 Years of Perseverance



## Promoting Hope and Perseverance **IN A PLACE OF GREAT POVERTY**

The families we serve are among the 60,000+ people living in extreme poverty around the Guatemala City garbage dump, one of the largest open landfills in Central America.

These families define perseverance, working tenaciously day in and day out despite the incredible challenges they face. Their community is plagued with violence, 1 in 3 residents has never been to school, and the average family of 6 lives on \$4 a day.

Thanks to your support, Safe Passage provides education, support and opportunities, empowering the families we serve to make real change in their lives.

[www.safepassage.org](http://www.safepassage.org) | [www.camino-seguro.org](http://www.camino-seguro.org)

Outside the walls of Safe Passage, reality is grim.

Photograph by Patrisha McLean





Photograph by Patrisha McLean

## MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT

Little did I know when Hanley recruited me as a volunteer in 2005 that I would become President of the Board of Directors. It has been an honor to serve this amazing organization dedicated to Hope, Education, and Opportunity.

Key to our mission are people like you who believe in the power of education. Through the following stories of perseverance and grit, you'll see what your investment in our work has achieved thus far. You will also see glimpses of where we're heading next, reflected in our updated mission statement, including the expansion of our new school by a grade each year and preparing our students to get a job upon graduation.

Safe Passage is very blessed to have your support. Together we help the kids and families of the Guatemala City Dump community achieve success despite great odds. We are changing lives. On behalf of my fellow board members, our staff and the children and families we serve, thank you for caring.

With gratitude,  
Sandra Aguilar de Gonzalez



### HANLEY'S LEGACY

We're guided by the vision of our founder, Hanley Denning (1970-2007), who started Safe Passage with 40 students in 1999. Read Hanley's story and view our timeline on our website:

[www.safepassage.org/history](http://www.safepassage.org/history)

## PROGRAM highlights

### Preschool Reading Skills

We placed an increased emphasis on pre-reading, reading, and writing skills for our youngest learners.

### Full-day School Expansion

We expanded our full-day school to include 5th grade, and in January 2018 will add two 6th grade classes.

### Expeditionary Learning (EL) Partnerships

We received two grants to further teacher training through collaborative partnerships with well-established EL schools in the U.S.

### On-site Health Care

Physical exams, vision screenings and hearing tests were provided for all students by our health partner, Shared Beat.

### Support Teams in the Classroom

227 Support Team members joined students in their classes, providing one-on-one attention and support

### Celebrating our Alumni

A 2016 survey concluded that 59 of our 118 high school graduates are either working, studying or both.

65

students received individual tutoring in English

135

patients visited our on-site clinic each week, on average

24

families attended our Family Nurturing program sessions

68

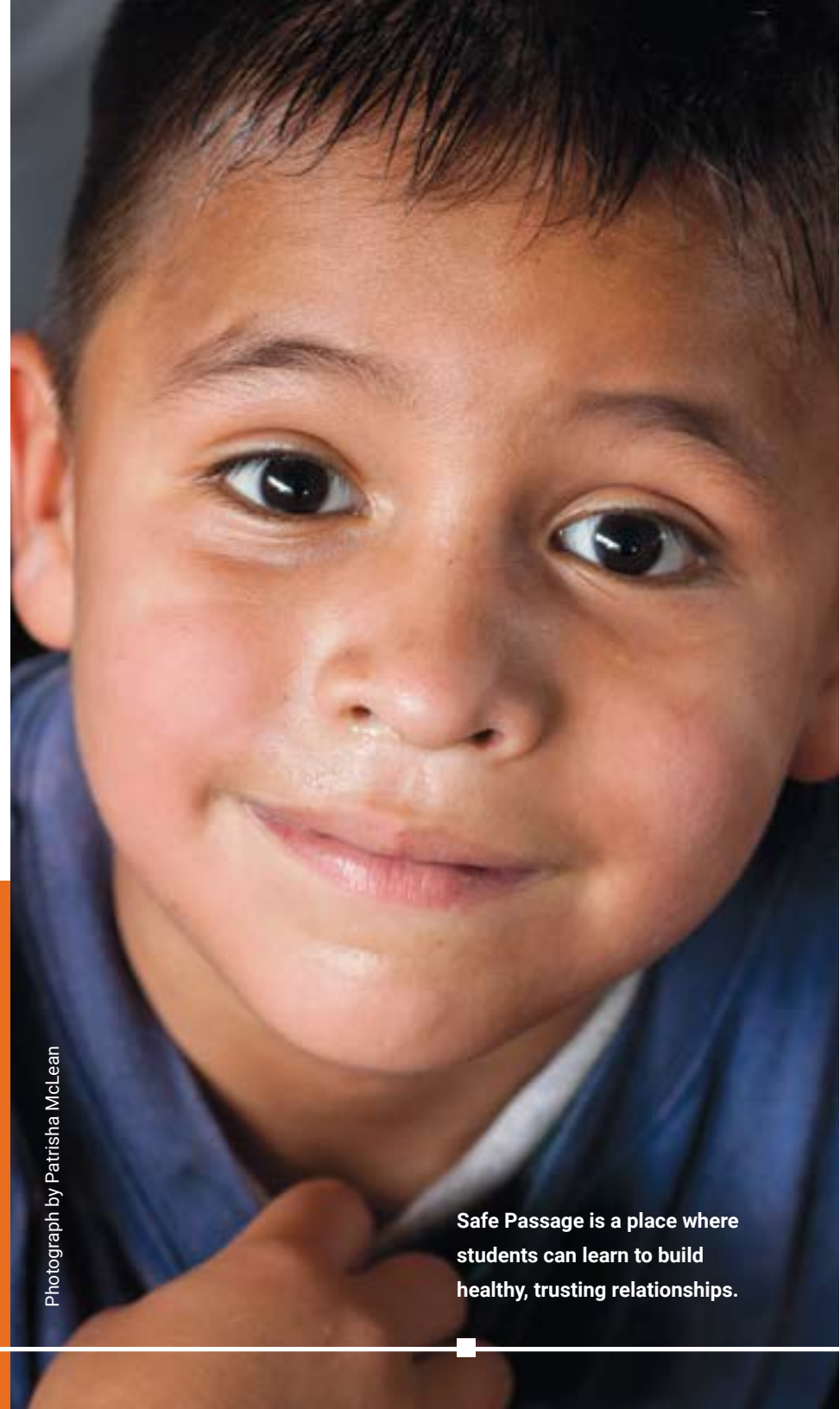
parents participated in Adult Education

200

students participated in Saturday clubs

86%

of students passed their grade level



Photograph by Patrisha McLean

Safe Passage is a place where students can learn to build healthy, trusting relationships.





**LESLIE & CARLOS**

## PERSEVERING together

How a mother and her son inspire each other

Unable to afford school tuition, Leslie started working in the garbage dump when she was eight years old.

At age 18, she decided to change her life and entered Safe Passage's Adult Education program as a first grade student.

After years of night classes and long days working in the dump, Leslie earned a high

school diploma. She no longer works in the dump and now supports herself and her family exclusively with the income she earns from the Creamos social entrepreneurship program.

"My biggest dream was always to continue studying and to be successful. My motivation was to inspire my own children," says Leslie.

Leslie has five children—two are currently enrolled as full-time students at Safe Passage. Her daughter, Leslie, is a 7th grader and her son, Carlos, is in 5th grade. Leslie is grateful that her children's road to graduation and meaningful employment will be less difficult because of Safe Passage.

Leslie's son Carlos started attending Safe Passage in 2007 when he was 2 years old. Thanks to the support and encouragement of his mother and teachers, Carlos is determined to graduate and become a scientist.

"Carlos is a very smart boy," Leslie says. "He has been able to develop because of how he's been learning at Safe Passage. He has been empowered to think for himself."

For Carlos, Safe Passage represents "a hope for children most in need to achieve their dreams and desires." For us, Carlos and his mom represent the hard work and determination needed to overcome challenges—an inspiring example of true grit.

"My mother has worked hard to give me an education," Carlos says. "Thanks to Safe Passage I am where I am today."



## STRONG FAMILIES, STRONG CHILDREN

We bring people together and help strengthen family relationships with fun events such as Family Day and programs like Family Nurturing. Read more about our Family & Community Services programs: [www.safepassage.org/families](http://www.safepassage.org/families)

# EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING

A look at our full-day school

Our full-day students are the first in Central America to experience Expeditionary Learning (EL). In EL, an “expedition” is a unit of study that lasts anywhere from a few weeks to a full semester, incorporating all academic subjects into one overarching theme. Combining on- and off-site activities, EL allows students to learn in an interactive, hands-on way.

Outings are a crucial part of EL, helping students understand how their knowledge can be applied to the real world. For example, students visiting the central marketplace in Guatemala City learn about nutrition for Science, make a budget for Math, and research legends for Language Arts.

## Spotlight on an Expedition

This year, one of our fifth grade expeditions, “Agents of Change,” aimed to help our students see

Expeditionary Learning promotes perseverance by giving kids real-world skills they can use both in and out of the classroom.

themselves as peacebuilders in their own communities.

As part of this expedition, the fifth graders enjoyed visiting an interactive exhibit in Guatemala City called “Why are we the way we are?” The exhibit encouraged students to confront prejudice, historical conflict, and other current challenges in Guatemala. Students were asked to identify signs of violence, as well as models of peace, in Guatemala.

Back in the classroom, students learned about other peacebuilders, such as Gandhi, who have had a positive influence on our world. Students concluded the unit by presenting what they’d learned to other students, teachers, and parents. Presentation and communication skills will serve them throughout their lives as they become leaders of change.



An outing away from the dump community gives kids the chance to see a part of their world otherwise unavailable to them.

**Above:** Students choose items within a budget at the local market.

**Right:** At the botanical garden, students learn about the relationship between plants and worms.







Sometimes I was sad because of things that had happened in my life. But when I came here, everything changed. **People are what make this a special place.**

## FROM STUDENT TO STAFF

Mynor's story of perseverance

Mynor started studying at Safe Passage in 2009 at age 18. Although he could only participate two days a week, he quickly became involved in various aspects of our program and found time to join our Saturday sports club.

Recognizing Mynor's natural skills and leadership abilities, Safe Passage soon asked for his help with the soccer program. Under his guidance, our teams won several local tournaments—you can see the trophies in our main building!

"Physical education is more than just exercising, it is about providing students with a better life quality. It gives them the opportunity to have fun while they learn," Mynor says.

After he graduated high school in 2013 (at 22 years old), Mynor thought his time with Safe Passage had come to an end. He was happily surprised when he was asked to come back as sports program staff! Four years later, Mynor is still here, sharing his story and guiding the physical and social development of our kids.

"I was practically formed inside the walls of Safe Passage. I had a great teacher, Señor Lili, and she is my coworker now. The fact that so many people are here to serve others without expecting anything in exchange amazes me. That is one of the best things I've found here."

Mynor and his brother, Axel, both graduated from Safe Passage. Their mother, Bonifacia, is a member of our Adult Education Program. Read her story on our website: [www.safepassage.org/bonifacia](http://www.safepassage.org/bonifacia)

## LEARNING GUIDED BY VALUES

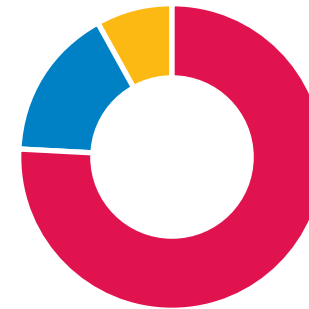
Safe Passage is a bright spot in our students' lives where team-building and leadership activities help them develop character traits that promote our core values. Respect, honesty, teamwork, responsibility, and trust are critical qualities for success beyond the classroom.





## FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS\*

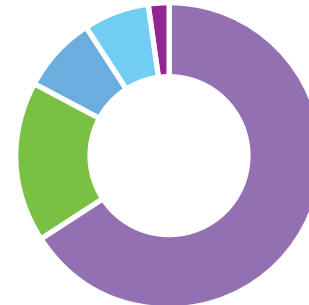
\*Data reflects figures from July 1, 2016 - June 30, 2017



### Use of Funds†

- 76% Program
- 16% Fundraising
- 8% Administration

†For operating purposes.  
Data sourced from IRS 990.



### Program Breakdown

- 66% Education
- 17% Nutrition
- 8% Family Services
- 7% Adult Education + Creamos
- 2% Health and Wellness

Safe Passage is a U.S.-registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Camino Seguro is a Guatemala-registered non-governmental organization. View our complete Financial Statement and IRS 990, audited annually by Macdonald Page & Co, LLC of Portland, Maine by visiting: [www.safepassage.org/financials](http://www.safepassage.org/financials)



## Board of Directors

As of June 30, 2017

**President** Sandra Aguilar de Gonzalez GT  
**Vice President** Susan Egmont U.S.  
**Treasurer** Wayne Workman\*\*\* U.S.  
**Secretary** Ray Tripp U.S.  
 Ernesto Jose Viteri Arriola GT  
 Xavier Andrade GT  
 Drew Casertano\*\* U.S.  
 Jordan Denning U.S.  
 Margaret Downing\*\*\* U.S.

Juan Mini GT  
 Guillermo Montano GT  
 John Paterson U.S.  
 Maureen Pennington de Riojas GT  
 Susanna Place\* U.S.  
 Ellen Meyer Shorb U.S.  
 Tania de Zedan GT

**GT = Guatemala, U.S. = United States**

\*Entering November 2017 \*\*Departing July 2017 \*\*\*Departing December 2017



### GUATEMALA Camino Seguro

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 (502) 2440-4388  
[infofuate@safepassage.org](mailto:infofuate@safepassage.org)

Cover photo by Patrisha McLean. Unless noted otherwise, photos thanks to our staff, friends, and volunteers.

### U.S. Safe Passage

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 New Gloucester ME 04260  
 (207) 846-1188  
[info@safepassage.org](mailto:info@safepassage.org)



My daughter and I participated in a week-long Support Team experience. It was absolutely phenomenal and life changing.

ANDREA, NC



I was thoroughly impressed with the work that is taking place. I feel privileged to be supporting this organization.

VISITOR, MA



After visiting, I saw how incredible, valuable, and necessary Safe Passage is for the community.

VISITOR, NJ

## A message of thanks FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

On one of my first days at Safe Passage a second grader asked me my name and made it a point to say hello whenever she sees me. She is part of the first class to experience our Expeditionary Learning approach and I've watched her grow in confidence and ability. Her mother, who is blind, inspires others at Creamos exercise class, her sisters are learning the latest technology thanks to our new laptops, and her brother is a graduate working at a department store. I treasure how Safe Passage has touched so many lives, including my own.

It has been an honor to lead Safe Passage and continue to build on Hanley's vision these past four years. The growth of our full-day educational program with active, hands-on, experiential learning, the expansion of our physical plant, and increasing focus on preparation for employment are foundations for greater impact in the future. I am so impressed by the commitment, creativity, and passion of those who make all this possible: our staff, volunteers, Board of Directors, parents, and all of you who make this work possible through visits, sponsorships, and donations. Thank you so much for your support!

—TODD AMANI  
2013-2017 Executive Director



We're very grateful for Todd's leadership and wish him all the the best as he continues serving Guatemalan youth through USAID. The new interim Executive Director (October, 2017), Mary Jo Amani, brings years of experience with Safe Passage. The Board has hired the international search firm Carney Sandoe to find our next Executive Director/Head of School.





Safe Passage  
Camino Seguro

## OUR MISSION

We help children in the Guatemala City garbage dump community break the cycle of poverty through education, emphasizing life skills and perseverance in order to thrive in work and contribute to their community.

See our impact in action and get involved:

[www.safepassage.org](http://www.safepassage.org)

HOPE  
EDUCATION  
OPPORTUNITY