



*Photo by Lexie Harrison-Cripps*

# THE PATH FORWARD: TURNING HOPE INTO OPPORTUNITY

## 2021 CAPITAL CAMPAIGN FOR THE INNOVATIVE LEARNING CENTER

Just over twenty years ago, a young American school teacher visited the dump-scavenging area of Guatemala City. Struck by bleak conditions, she sold her possessions to open a neighborhood drop-in center for children in this community. Hanley Denning had a bold vision which has since grown into an innovative, accredited full-day school serving 600 students, Pre-K through 9th grade. Safe Passage's integrated education model helps our students and their families break the cycle of poverty.

This year, we are raising \$1.2M to complete the final piece of our school campus - The Innovative Learning Center. This structure will include construction of the Hanley Denning Middle School and renovation of an existing building for our Health and Wellness Clinic and centralized Operations Hub. Join us as we complete our campus, putting students on a path towards career opportunities and a life beyond poverty.



**Safe Passage**  
Camino Seguro

**Mission:** Safe Passage works to transform lives by providing students with an excellent education, a higher quality of life, and pathways to a job with dignity so they can achieve a better future for themselves and their families.

# THE CHALLENGE

## *Our students live in a marginalized community where choices are severely limited*

To grow up in the Guatemala City dump neighborhood is to live in over-crowded, often temporary homes, with unreliable water, sanitation, and electricity. Families live on less than two dollars per person each day and malnutrition is widespread. Children face social violence, health risks from a toxic environment, and underfunded and overcrowded schools - if they can even afford to go. Many students abandon academics after a few years of primary school to support their families in recycling businesses and caring for younger siblings. Others wind up becoming parents before they have the resources to support a child. At Safe Passage, we know that a viable job can help ensure health, security, and well-being; we can provide the education and life skills necessary to secure one.

## *Our model can break this cycle of poverty*

With two decades of experience, we now have an innovative and successful model of how to help our students navigate the myriad challenges in their community and to complete formal schooling. We use the Expeditionary Learning methodology, which promotes active learning through discovery and teamwork, fortified by a sense of belonging and learning the value of aspiring to excellence. Teaching and learning is rigorous, relevant, and empowering—which is what our students need to stay engaged, succeed in school, develop strong social skills, and find good jobs in the modern economy.

Addressing children's psychological and physical health is another key component. Social workers, psychologists, doctors, dentists, and nurses all work with our students and their families regularly. For our students to succeed, their parents must be actively involved in their children's learning. Parents attend regular parent-student-teacher assessments and presentations and are encouraged to continue their own education through our affiliated adult organization, [Creamos](#).

## *Middle School is the cornerstone*

Across Guatemala, dropout rates are highest among early adolescents. Students face mounting pressures to work, explore new relationships, have a child, take risks, and sometimes, join a gang. These challenges make it imperative that we offer students an alternative option during these formative years - our full-day middle school. After 9th grade, Safe Passage partners with specialized high schools and technical schools to match our students' professional interests. Our Next Step Program (Próximo Paso) provides after-school support for high school students with certificate courses in English, computer technology, job readiness training, internships, and a bridge to formal sector jobs.



*Photos from our first 6th grade graduation in 2018*



## THE SOLUTION

### MIDDLE SCHOOL YEARS ARE PIVOTAL TO OUR SUCCESS

#### WE NEED A PERMANENT HOME FOR OUR MIDDLE SCHOOL

This year, Safe Passage has reached full-enrollment, with our 9th graders completing 12 years of a Safe Passage education. However, we have surpassed the limits of our current facilities and are housing our 120 middle school students in sub-optimal, temporary classrooms. The pandemic delayed our expansion plans, but now we feel ready to move ahead with the new facility that we began planning for three years ago.

#### THE INNOVATIVE LEARNING CENTER IS ALREADY DESIGNED AND IN THE PERMITTING PROCESS

We are well on our way to beginning construction on a property we purchased near our primary school. In partnership with a leading Guatemalan architectural and construction firm, Atelier, we have submitted the plans for permitting, finalized the budget, and are scheduled to begin construction in October 2021. We hope to open our new middle school doors by January 2023.

#### WE ARE DESIGNED FOR 21ST CENTURY LEARNING

Our new middle school is planned with our Expeditionary Learning methodology in mind. The design maximizes the use of economical yet durable,

recycled, and locally sourced materials to create versatile learning and multi-functional spaces. Students collaborate with creative thinking and experimentation at the forefront of learning.

#### THIS PROJECT WILL ANCHOR OUR CAMPUS

Centrally located, the Innovative Learning Center will be situated close to our three other program sites and will serve as the cornerstone to our campus, with easy access for community members, partner organizations, volunteers, and visitors.

#### JOIN US NOW!

Safe Passage is as strong as it has ever been. However, none of our successes over the last 20 years would be possible without our loyal donors and our supportive community.

You have carried us this far and we once again ask you to be a part of the solution. Join us in raising the remaining funds needed to support our students through this highly vulnerable stage of life. Together, we can provide these teens with the quality schooling they deserve.

Thank you!

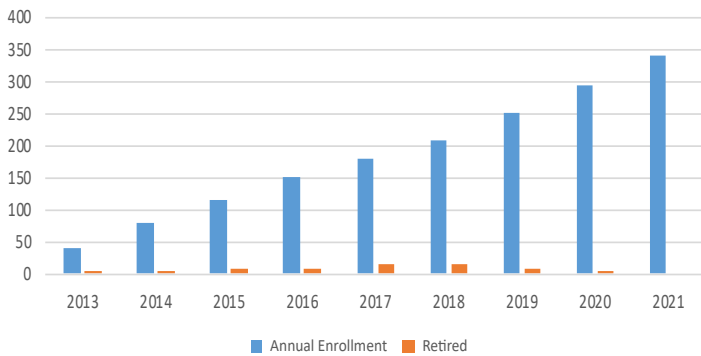
***Please join us as we turn hope into opportunity for our students.***



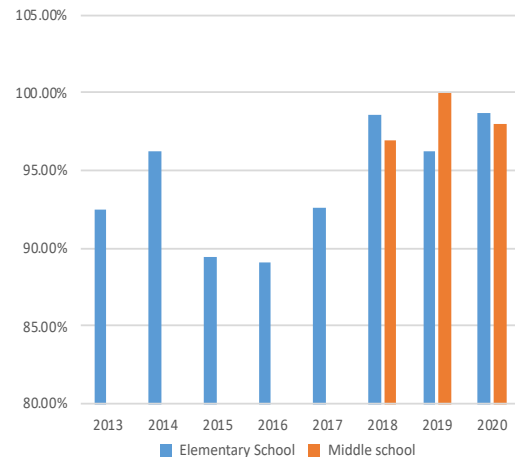
# OUR STUDENTS ARE POSITIONED FOR SUCCESS

Annual Enrollment of Primary and Middle School

\*Pre-K is an additional 120 students



Promotion Rate



*Common in Guatemala, the drop off rate for students in middle school rises due to pressures to work, gang activity, teen pregnancy and sex trafficking, and other toxic social issues.*

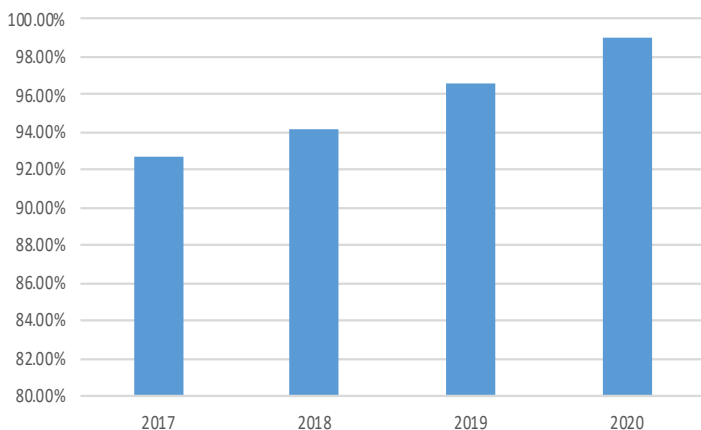
*Student promotion rate reflects the percentage of students who successfully move up to the next grade level. Note that since 2017, percentages reflect a larger student body as a new grade level was added each year-culminating in addition of 9th grade- from 180 students in 2017 to 343 in 2020.*

The completion of our full-day school from Pre-K to 9th grade provides our students with the qualifications they can use for continued education, entry level employment, internships and trade programs. It also empowers our families with math, language, and problem-solving skills that are necessary for entrepreneurial endeavors and greater leadership within the community.

*Safe Passage has an outstanding retention rate of nearly 100%, particularly as it is compared to the average retention rates in Guatemala of roughly 60%.*

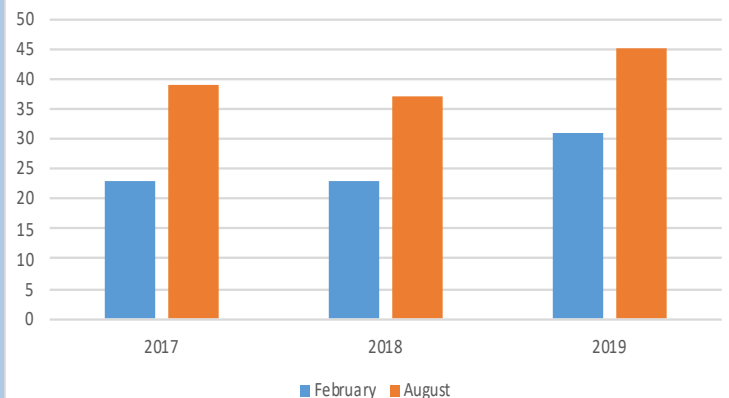
*Our student's "Learning Abilities" (reflecting habits of work, student engagement, and capacity to learn) consistently increases and has improved over the last five years.*

Student Retention Rate



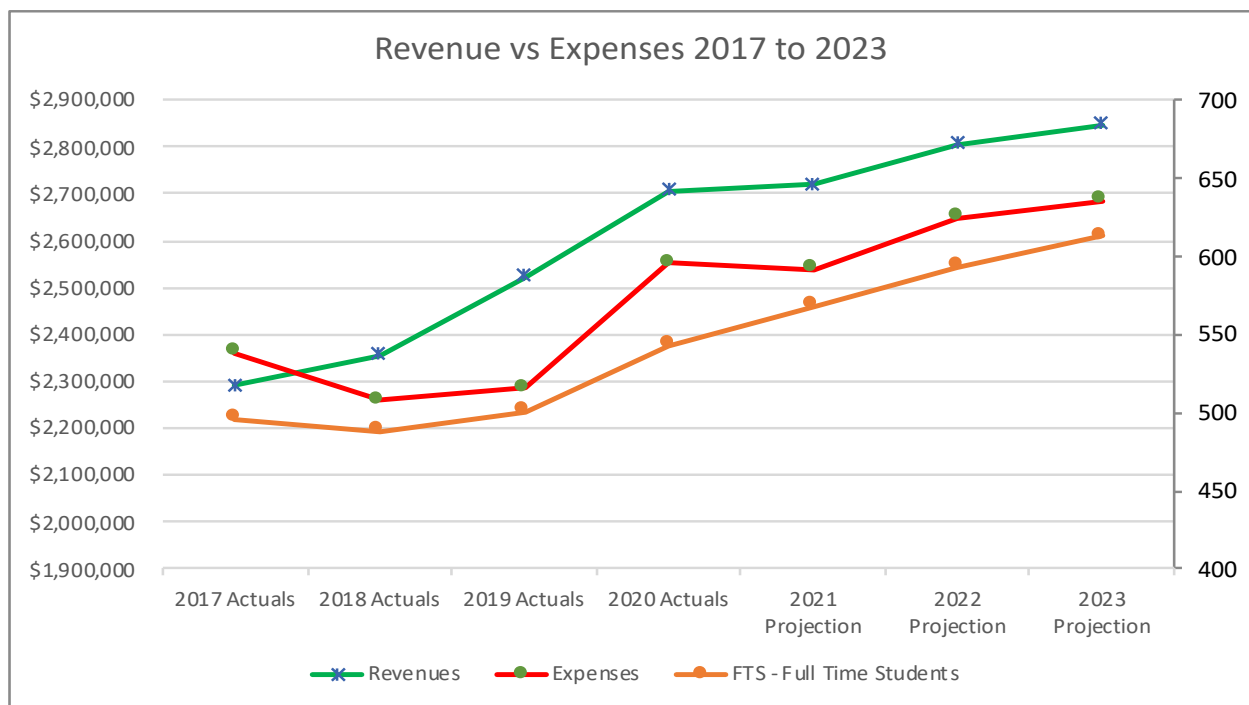
Average Learning Abilities

Source: TAE (School Abilities Test)



*\*Due to temporary school closure, testing has not yet been done for 2020 and 2021*

# SAFE PASSAGE FINANCES ARE STRONG



## Our net performance has improved every year for the last 3 years

From a DEFICIT in 2017 of \$68,162 to a surplus of \$97,917 in 2019 and finally \$238,050 in 2020. \*

## We maintain a weighted average direct cost per student of \$1,842

This includes teacher salaries, educational materials, food & hygiene, social workers, and health & wellness programs.

## The Hanley Denning Endowment Fund is performing well

The fund enables annual operations support of about \$80,000 and has a balance of \$3,046,000 as of March 31, 2021.

## Our active donor base is thriving

Despite the pandemic, we had a total of 2,483 active donors in 2020, who gave an average of \$1,011. This includes 487 NEW donors.

## Recurring donors remain consistent

We have a total of 793 donors with active, recurring gifts, 281 of whom have been giving for more than 10 years, for roughly \$590,000 a year in support.

\*For more information on our financials visit our website at [www.safepassage.org/who-we-are/financials](http://www.safepassage.org/who-we-are/financials) or send a message to [info@safepassage.org](mailto:info@safepassage.org). You can also find more information on our Guidestar Platinum rating at [www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org).

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## HOW MANY STUDENTS ARE CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN OUR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM?

As of January 2021, we have reached full-enrollment, with 480 students in our Pre-K through 9th grade school, registered with the Ministry of Education as the *Colegio Experimental Hanley Denning*. Each grade consists of 2 sections of 20 students each. An additional 100 high-school-age students and recent graduates participate in our *Oportunidades* enrichment program and our *Próximo Paso* (Next Step) job-readiness program.

## HOW MANY STAFF DOES SAFE PASSAGE EMPLOY?

We currently employ 99 staff in Guatemala: 42 educators, 10 in the Health and Wellness Clinic, 27 in operations (kitchen, procurement, transport, maintenance, security), and 20 in finance, admin, and management. Our Maine fundraising and finance office employs 6 staff. Pre-pandemic, we also hosted 20-30 international and Guatemalan volunteers each year who served as classroom assistants, tutors, sports coaches and in other specialized roles. We expect to recruit similar volunteers to complement our staff in the future.

## WHAT IS THE DIRECT COST OF EDUCATING OUR STUDENTS?

The direct costs per student include teaching, pedagogic materials, food, health and wellness visits, social work and psychology, and classroom maintenance. As of 2021, average yearly cost-per-student across Pre-K, primary, and middle school is US \$1,842 equivalent.

## WHY DOES SAFE PASSAGE FORMAL SCHOOLING END WITH 9TH GRADE?

Safe Passage does not plan to expand to high school because the paths open to 9th grade graduates are many and diverse. Upper grade levels in Guatemala are more specialized in their educational curriculum and offer high-quality instruction. Formal schooling options include: a two-year *Bachillerato*, or liberal arts degree; a three-year *Diversificado*, or professional-track degree (e.g. preparing students for careers as architectural assistants, accountants, nurses assistants, bi-lingual secretaries, etc.); or a specialized technical training certification (e.g. in IT networking, mechanics, etc).

## HOW DO WE ASSIST OUR POST-9TH GRADE STUDENTS TO COMPLETE THEIR FORMAL EDUCATION AND TO GET A GOOD JOB?

Beginning in the final year of middle school, Safe Passage helps students to decide on a strong path forward. We help in a variety of ways, whether that is matching them with local area high schools and technical schools, assisting with enrollment and scholarships, or simply offering school supplies and uniforms to ensure their successful path to high school graduation. Our *Oportunidades* program supports high school students by offering after-school courses in English and computer literacy, as well as access to WiFi and homework help. Our *Próximo Paso* (Next Step) program offers job readiness training, internships, and a bridge to formal sector employment or university studies.

## DOES THE INNOVATIVE LEARNING CENTER DESIGN OFFER GOOD VALUE?

The proposed size and design for the new middle school is the product of careful study and calculation. We took into consideration our current enrollment, while ensuring flexible teaching and learning spaces for our modern, team-focused curriculum. Construction materials are durable and low maintenance, meet Ministry of Education building code standards, and offer low energy requirements for occupants. The estimated cost per square meter is consistent with the costs of Safe Passage's existing Pre-K school construction and similar to that of other modern schools in Guatemala City. Our design-construction firm built its reputation on delivering quality, on-time, and on-budget.

## WHAT IS THE COMPOSITION AND ENGAGEMENT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS?

The Board of Directors is an elected group of Guatemalans, Americans, and other international professionals. As of January 2021, the Board composition included three Guatemalans, seven Americans, and one German, for a total of eleven. Directors serve a three-year term, with the majority extending for a second full term. The Board meets four times a year, historically twice in Guatemala and twice by conference call. Directors engage in substantial committee work, fundraising outreach, and personal philanthropy.

# Safe Passage Current Facilities and Future Site of the Innovative Learning Center


 Hanley Denning Preschool (Jardín)

 Multipurpose Center (Centro)

 Blue Building Offices (Casa Azul)

 Hanley Denning Primary School (Colegio)

 McAdams Family Learning Garden, Playground & Annex

 Site of the Planned Innovative Learning Center, including the Hanley Denning Básico (Middle School), Health and Wellness Clinic, and the Operations Hub



Location: Zone 3 and Zone 7 in Guatemala City

# OUR TIMELINE:

## TWO DECADES OF INSIGHT AND PERSEVERANCE IN PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

**1999**

Hanley Denning visits the Guatemala City garbage dump, compelling her to create Safe Passage to meet the educational and nutritional needs of at-risk children working in the dump.



**2000-2002**

Safe Passage becomes an official 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, inspiring donors, supporters, and volunteers from around the world. The Camino Seguro constitution was officially ratified on Valentine's Day 2002.

**2004**

We open our Educational Reinforcement Center building (now the site of our primary School) to provide after-school enrichment including a comprehensive tutoring and mentoring program.



**2006**

Family Nurturing, Adult Education, and expanded Family Support Programs are added to address the needs of families.

**2007**

Hanley Denning dies in a tragic car accident.

The Fran Doonan Walter Early Childhood Education Center opens to continue her legacy.



**2009**

The Health Clinic is expanded with our partner, [Shared Beat](#). The University of Washington Peace Garden is inaugurated.

**2012**

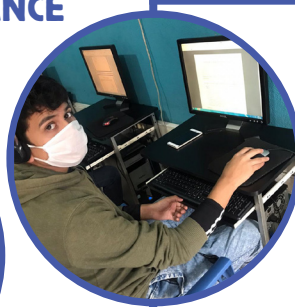
The Board of Directors approves transition from a half-day reinforcement to a full-day school of our own.

The Colegio Experimental Hanley Denning is certified by the Guatemalan Ministry of Education. A database office is added to track all organizational inputs and outcomes.



**2020-2021**

We add 8th and 9th grade classes to our middle school, which is the culmination of our vision to provide students with a full-day education until high school. The pandemic also required the implementation of our innovative remote and hybrid-school options.



**2019**

The middle school is inaugurated with our first class of 7th graders. Site preparation and construction begin on The McAdams Family Learning Garden and Playground and its Annex. The Board approves a three-year strategic plan that includes construction of a new middle school building on the "Blue Building" property, in fulfillment of our mission and vision.



**2018**

The primary school is fully enrolled by adding 6th grade. A Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) pilot is successfully implemented in all primary grades. The school library expands to include bilingual books and online resources. A lot adjacent to the primary school is acquired for a future playground and outdoor learning space.



**2016**

The Multipurpose Center is built with volunteer and in-kind contributions as a facility for all part-time program activities, including after-school tutoring, the Next Step Program, Creamos, skills building workshops, and Saturday clubs.

**2015**

The Expeditionary Learning culture and curriculum is formally selected as the guiding pedagogy for our primary and middle schools.



**2014**

In preparation for future grade expansion, a new property "Blue Building" is purchased close to our primary school.

Creamos, our women's social entrepreneurship program, becomes an independent association.

**2013**

Next Step Program (Próximo Paso) is created to assist high school graduates transition to internships, jobs, and opportunities for continued education.

# INNOVATIVE LEARNING CENTER: PROJECT BUDGET 2021-2023

*Safe Passage/Camino Seguro's capital campaign will raise funds for the construction, licensing and equipping of the new Innovative Learning Center, including a new middle school building and the rehabilitation and remodeling of one of our existing buildings for the Health and Wellness Clinic and a centralized operations hub. New and renovated construction will occur on the "Blue Building" site. The total cost of the project is \$1.2 million, with licensing and fundraising to be completed in 2021, and construction carried out from the last quarter of 2021 through 2022, with a target opening date of January 2023.*

## BUILDING COST ESTIMATES

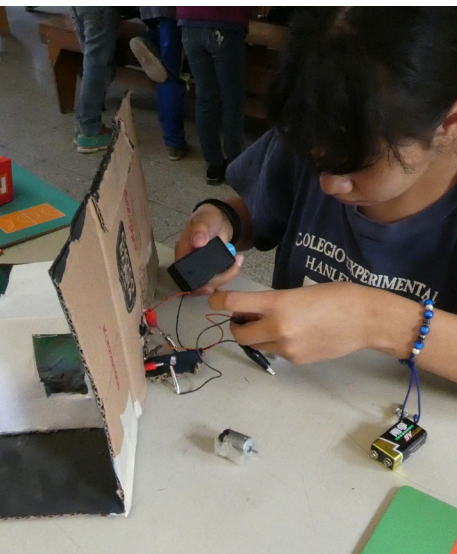
ITEM	COST
<b>Permits: Water, sanitation, structural and ministry licenses</b>	\$13,000
<b>Site Preparation: Demolition, terrain cleaning and leveling</b>	\$12,000
<b>Primary Construction:</b>	
First Floor: Admin, Patio, Labs/Art, Dining Room, IT, Classrooms	\$244,000
Second Floor: Classrooms, Meeting Rooms, Collaborative Areas	\$258,000
Third Floor: Classrooms, Teacher Area, Library/Learning Commons	\$258,000
Fourth Floor: Sports Area and Blue Building Renovation and Clinic	\$105,000
Architectural Finishing: Landscaping, Parking, Facades	\$14,000
Efficiency Elements: Solar, Rainwater, Louvers, Stack Effect	\$30,000
Construction Contingency (5%)	\$47,000
Construction Management & Administration (10%)	\$93,000
<b>Construction sub-total</b>	<b>\$1,074,000</b>
<b>Occupation License</b>	\$20,00
<b>Internals: Computers, Equipment, Furniture, etc.</b>	\$106,000
<b>Comprehensive Project Total</b>	<b>\$1,200,000</b>



Over my 15 years of volunteering and Board engagement, I have been awed by the steady progress and success of Safe Passage. We are a community of students, staff, volunteers, and supporters that lives the values we teach in the classroom - compassion, inclusion, high expectations, and persistence. The new middle school will fulfill our mission and model a learning community that makes a sustainable difference in the lives of our students and has an impact well beyond - on the future of education in Guatemala.

Susanna Place, Co-Chair of Capital Campaign

Photograph by Lexie Harrison-Cripps



Photograph by Lexie Harrison-Cripps

Photograph by Michele Stapleton



As a life-long educator and head of an independent school, I know what distinguishes a first-class education: the relationships between students and their teachers. When I walk into a classroom at Safe Passage, what I notice first is that the teachers care deeply about their students and are able to respond to each student's individual needs. Next, I see sound pedagogy skillfully deployed to deliver a rich curriculum in support of inspired student learning. This powerful combination results in impressive outcomes for these children! At my own school, I know that we need facilities that are worthy of the remarkable teaching and learning they support. My hope is that the international community will recognize what I do: that the children and teachers of Safe Passage today – and for generations to come – need and deserve a middle school building that supports the magic that is already happening at the school.

Kolia O'Connor, Safe Passage Board member, Head of School, Sewickley Academy, Pennsylvania