



Newsletter | August 2026



AS NEW STUDENTS JOIN US
your monthly support keeps the doors open

How We Welcome *New Students* to Safe Passage

It's one of the questions we hear most often: *how does a family enroll their child at Safe Passage?* With enrollment season underway, we wanted to share how the process works.

Every July and August, Safe Passage opens applications for students to join us the following January. Most new students enter our earliest classrooms, two sections for three and four year olds totaling around 40 children, with a smaller number of openings across Early Childhood and Primary as families move on. In total, we offer around 50 new spots each year, and this year those spots drew roughly 250 applications.

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Because a spot at Safe Passage can shape a child's entire path, our enrollment committee, made up of education directors, psychologists, and social workers, takes eligibility seriously. They look at economic need, prioritizing families for whom public school costs are out of reach or who face food insecurity, along with whether a family lives within our service area. A family's readiness to partner with us matters too, including full participation in Crianza con Cariño, our parenting and family program.

From there, social workers conduct home visits and interviews, and each child is assessed to confirm Safe Passage can meet their learning needs. When a child needs more support than we can provide, we connect the family with trusted partner organizations.

Word about Safe Passage travels well beyond our own enrollment signs, and families from outside our immediate area often seek us out. Today we serve 530 students with capacity for about 550, and our new Middle School is helping us grow steadily toward that number, one student at a time.



As summer winds down, your *monthly support* keeps things steady

As summer draws to a close, Safe Passage's school year continues without pause. Students are in class, programs are running, and the daily work of education, health, and wellness support continues as it does every month of the year.

The funding landscape has grown more difficult this year. Grant competition has increased, foundations with international priorities are stretched thinner, and some longtime donors are adjusting their giving

stretched thinner, and some longtime donors are adjusting their giving amid broader economic pressure. Monthly giving is one of the clearest ways to offset that uncertainty, since predictable, recurring support lets Safe Passage plan ahead instead of reacting month to month.

Right now, every new monthly gift, or increase to an existing one, is matched dollar for dollar up to \$7,200. Donors giving \$25 or more a month are also recognized with a hand-painted hummingbird tile on our Giving Wall, made by an Indigenous, family-owned business in San Antonio Palopó.

If a recurring gift is something you've been considering, this is a *good moment to start*.

[Become a Monthly Donor, Have your Commitment Matched](#)



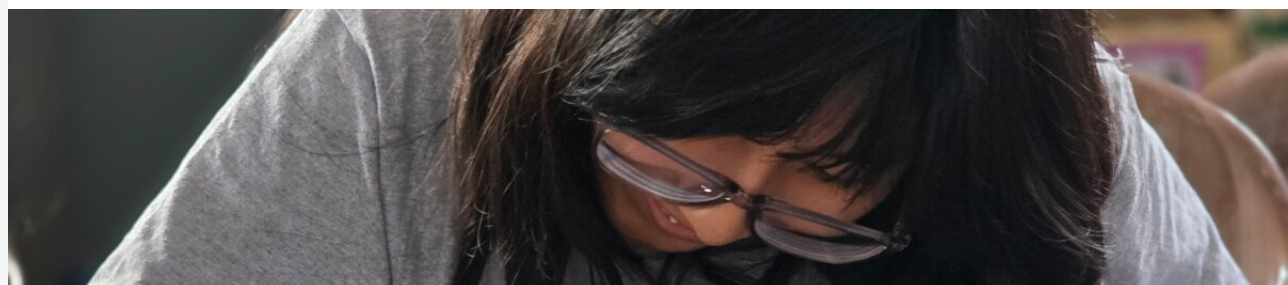
This year's *Art Festival*: the beginning of a new artistic era

Recently, students across Kindergarten, Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, Middle School, and Oportunidades took part in Safe Passage's second annual Art Festival. This year's theme, "El comienzo de

una nueva era artística" (The beginning of a new artistic era), and motto, "Un trazo a la vez" (One brushstroke at a time), carried through every grade level's approach to the event.

Younger students in Kindergarten and Lower Elementary worked with watercolor, wax crayon, oil pastel crayon, and creative drawing, alongside crafts like origami, balloon art, and cardboard piñatas, activities built around color, imagination, and fine motor development. Upper Elementary students moved into more technical territory with acrylic paint, chiaroscuro, embroidery, and clay sculpture, building precision and design skills. Middle School and Oportunidades students worked with oil paint, linoleum printmaking, stained glass painting, and digital art, techniques suited to more complex, identity-driven creative work.

Creative expression is part of how Safe Passage supports the whole student, alongside academics, health, and emotional wellbeing. Working with color, materials, and technique gives students another way to build confidence, process ideas, and communicate who they are, skills that carry into the classroom and beyond it.





Partnership Highlight:

ASOLIDES - Building Leaders, Strengthening Communities

Education is not only about what students learn. It is also about helping them understand their communities, think critically, and discover how they can contribute to society.

The Association for Leadership, Advocacy, and Development (**ASOLIDES**) was founded by professionals who share a belief: creating change in Guatemala requires leaders capable of advocacy and sustainable development for the benefit of Guatemalans and future generations.

At Safe Passage, **ASOLIDES** is bringing that vision into classrooms by investing in our teachers' professional development. Through specialized training, our Social Studies teachers are gaining knowledge and methodologies that bring leadership and civic education into students' learning experiences. Throughout 2026, **ASOLIDES** has offered training on Constitutional Education, Environmental Education and Policy, Student Leadership, Democratic Advocacy, and Responsible Electoral Participation.

The impact extends beyond the teachers themselves. As educators deepen their understanding of these topics, they are better equipped to guide students toward critical thinking and responsible engagement with their communities. A teacher learns, a classroom benefits, and students begin to see themselves as active participants in the future of Guatemala.

We are grateful to **ASOLIDES** for investing in the people who make learning possible every day, and for sharing our belief that education helps build thoughtful, engaged citizens who contribute to a stronger, more equitable Guatemala.



A Journey Through New England: Reconnecting with Safe Passage's Deepest Roots

This past month, Safe Passage hit the road kicking off with a warm potluck with friends in Yarmouth, to presentations at the Boothbay Harbor Rotary Club and Union Church of Biddeford, to coffee and lunch meetings stretching from Camden, Maine all the way to Boston, Massachusetts.

Along the way, we connected with more than 100 individuals, and one thing came through loud and clear: there's a foundational layer of support that has served as Safe Passage's pulse through 27 years of ups, downs, and challenges.

Many we met had joined multiple support teams over the years—42 collective trips to Guatemala among them, and 6 full years of long-term volunteer commitment. Nothing energizes quite like these stories and the interconnections we discover along the way.

They weave a beautiful history of love and action in motion.





Interested in hosting a gathering or joining a meet up?

Reach out to rachel@safepassage.org — we're ready to visit you!

This community keeps Safe Passage moving forward,
month after month. ***Thank you*** for being part of it!

Warmly,
The Safe Passage Team



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