



Newsletter | June 2026



Introducing the 2026 *Annual Report*

Twenty-five years ago, a small but determined group of people helped Safe Passage take root next to Guatemala City's largest garbage dump and refused to let that be the whole story. Today, as we share our 2025 Annual Report, we do so with full hearts, knowing that what has grown here is nothing short of extraordinary: a living testament to what happens when education, love, and unwavering belief in young people converge.

This past year, we gathered to celebrate in Guatemala, in Maine, in Boston, in California, in North Carolina, and in Germany. Longtime friends stood alongside new partners and reflected on how far we have come. Board Co-Chair Santiago Bolaños,

who first visited Safe Passage as a middle schooler himself, stood before a crowd at the inauguration of our new middle school building and said it best: "This anniversary is not an endpoint... it is like any 25-year-old, there is so much life and living still ahead."

That spirit is exactly what moves us forward. We have work and we have so much good to do together.

We invite you to read the stories, accomplishments, and impact you have been a part of, and to share Safe Passage with someone new this year. In a complicated world, this opportunity to do good work together is a rare and precious gift. Thank you for walking alongside us, for your generosity, your trust, and your belief in the futures our students are building.

[Read the Full Annual Report](#)

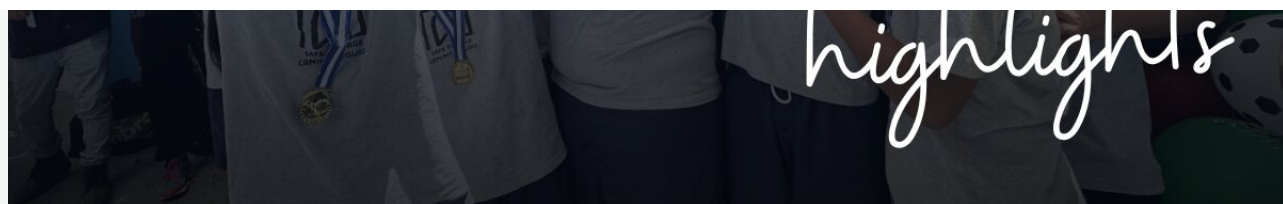
Sustaining our Mission; Month by Month

Education takes sustained support and your ongoing gift helps us to plan for the future of our programs. Just sign up once and your gifts, made on a recurring basis of your choosing, help us maintain stability and more accurately budget.

When you make a commitment of \$25+ per month you will have a hand-painted tile included on our Giving Wall, demonstrating to the youth your part in a circle of global support who are invested in their future.

[Become a Monthly Donor](#)





Learning Beyond the Classroom: How the *World Cup* Came to Life at Safe Passage

Language is more than vocabulary and grammar. It is a skill that grows through practice, curiosity, and connection.

This year's English Festival opened with preschool students presenting Choral Presentations representing different World Cups throughout history, bringing enthusiasm and confidence to the very first moments of the celebration. From there, students across the school explored 18 countries qualified for the World Cup, researching their cultures, traditions, and connections to Guatemala through writing, listening, speaking, and presentations in English.

The festival also gave birth to something entirely new: the first-ever Hanley Denning Experimental School Soccer Championship. The connection was intentional. Just as athletes improve through training and consistency, so does language learning. Students from Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, and Middle School formed mixed-grade teams and competed throughout the tournament while continuing their academic work tied to the World Cup theme. The championship finals were held in the Middle School building, the first student-centered activity to fill the space, and the energy inside carried well beyond its walls.

Teachers from multiple departments, classroom educators, and volunteers all contributed to making the experience possible. Every classroom visited the final country presentations and completed reflection activities, with participation earning students tickets exchangeable for prizes. The English Festival became a shared experience of learning, teamwork, and discovery, a reminder that we grow stronger when we learn together.





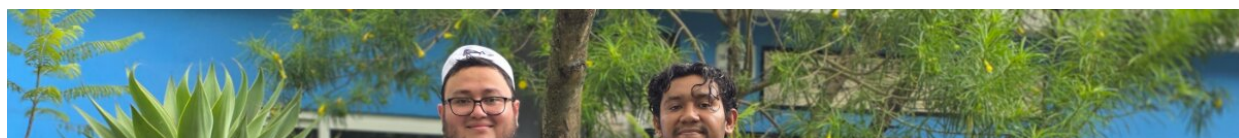
Partnership Highlight: *Grupo Apolo* Showing Up Where Change Happens

Partnership can take many forms, but some of the most meaningful begin with simply being present.

Grupo Apolo, a Guatemalan real estate company that has evolved for three generations, recently joined Safe Passage as a corporate partner, committing to their affirmed belief that building a stronger Guatemala is a shared effort and that meaningful change happens when communities invest in one another. Their support extends beyond an annual financial contribution. Grupo Apolo has also chosen to become part of the everyday moments that bring our mission to life.

Through volunteer activities, Grupo Apolo team members have spent time in our classrooms, connecting with students, participating in learning spaces, and gaining a deeper understanding of the experiences and aspirations of our school community. These moments create something that goes beyond what numbers can capture: a stronger sense of belonging, a deeper human connection, and a reminder to our students that there are people who believe in them and choose to show up for them.

Grupo Apolo's commitment reflects a powerful idea: that transforming lives through education becomes possible when people not only witness and give, but take action and participate.





A Note of Deep Gratitude and a Vision Ahead

We write today to share news that is bittersweet for our community: after 12 remarkable years with Safe Passage, our Director of Education, **Patricia (Patty) Barneond**, has made the decision to step back from her role to spend more time with her family and have some much-deserved rest.

Patty's vision, leadership, and expertise have been fundamental to building our transformational educational model and school community. Over her 12 years with us, Patty led the team to define, shape, and evolve our **Expeditionary Learning model**, strengthen our English curriculum, and ensure our students have the safety, structure, and quality education needed to flourish.

Patty's leadership leaves a lasting imprint on our school, our students, and our teachers — and we are deeply grateful for everything that she has given to this mission, our community, and our strong foundation.

We wish Patty and her family all the joy and rest they deserve.

At the same time, we are excited by what comes next. Safe Passage is stepping into a new chapter of our long organizational history — one focused on **student leadership, creativity, and the continued deepening of our educational and healing model** in ways that reflect the full potential and the strengths of the young people we serve. Our team is strong, our values are clear, and our commitment to community-centered development in partnership with students and families will guide this phase of our work together.

We look forward to sharing more about this transition with you in the months ahead.

Thank you, as always, for your partnership in this work.

Con amor y gratitud,

The Safe Passage / Camino Seguro Team



Visiting Safe Passage: What to Expect and *How to Get Involved*

A visit to Safe Passage is one of the most direct ways to understand what 25+ years of community-led education looks like in practice. On campus in Zone 3 of Guatemala City, visitors meet students and staff, observe classes, and see how learning, health, and family support come together in a single place.

Individual visitors are welcome on the last Wednesday of each month. For groups, school trips, or workplace teams looking for a deeper experience, Safe Passage also coordinates short-term Support Team visits throughout the year, from January through October, in partnership with Old Town Outfitters.

This June, we welcomed Trinity Episcopal School from Georgia as our first Support Team this year, under a new three-day working model. The visit brought students and staff directly into the life of the campus, and it marked a new way of structuring how groups engage with our community.

To schedule a visit or learn more about joining a Support Team, write to infoquate@safepassage.org.



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“I have enjoyed all the time I’ve spent with the kids, and I know this experience will have such an incredible impact on me.”

— Trinity Episcopal School Visitor

Thank you for being part of this community!

We are glad you are here, curious, engaged, and part of transformative change in Guatemala.

Warmly,
The Safe Passage Team



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