

# Solidaridad



*Solidaridad is published four times a year by the Teosinte Committee of the St. Sebastian Parish.  
One in solidarity with our sistering community in Teosinte, El Salvador.*

**JUNE 2006**

Dear St. Sebastian Parish Community,

At our latest meeting of the El Salvador Committee, we discussed the need to keep you better updated and informed about life in the village we call our "Sister Community". Teosinte is a real community, with real people dealing with their own daily struggles and joys -- just like all of us. We are recommitted to a monthly correspondence with them, and today's issue of *Solidaridad* includes a translation of a letter that we received from Yudit Isabel Guardado Mena. Yudit is the current secretary of their community council, called the "Directiva". Please take a few minutes to read this letter and become more familiar with our friends in Teosinte. Feel free to contact any of us on the El Salvador Committee if you have any questions, comments, concerns, or suggestions! You can also learn more about Teosinte by visiting a web site created for the community: [www.teosinte.org](http://www.teosinte.org)

May 3, 2006

*Dear Brothers and Sisters of St. Sebastian Parish,*

*May you receive a fraternal and affectionate greeting from the entire community of Teosinte. We hope that this finds you very well in your daily work, your families, your church, and the other sister communities.*

*Teosinte is located in the north of El Salvador, in the region of Chalatenango and the access routes are: Tejutla and San Francisco Morazán. The first is 9km away and the other is 7km. From Teosinte to San Salvador is approximately 72km. (1km = approximately .6 miles) The majority of the residents of Teosinte are ex-refugees from a camp in Honduras. We returned to El Salvador on August 16, 1988. We will celebrate 18 years of repopulation this year.*

*Teosinte is surrounded by hills, pines and other forestry. Surrounding us also is a river that is very raging in the winter and in the summer there is very little water. We are 52 families. The organization of our community has seen some structural changes in the common council in the past seven months.*

*President*

*Geovany Alcidez Hernandez*

*Secretary*

*Yudit Isabel Guardado Mena*

*Treasurer*

*María Elena Cartegena Guardado*

*Public Relations*

*Abel Sibrian Nuñez*

*Vocal Secretary*

*María Elena Alas*



*Our community is organized into 4 sectors. Each one has a coordinator and 2 assistants. We are about to legally form an association for water and the environment with the objective of improving water service in the community, since in the summer, the majority of us do not receive vital source of water. Instead, we collect our water from a well (cistern) which is situated in the conchita of the community. Also, through this association, we hope to improve the environment toward keeping it clean and establish a reforestation project.*

*Health in Teosinte: We have a clinic at which we have a nurse, a health promoter and a doctor (who comes every 8 days to give consultations to the children and adults.) The nurse is there everyday of the work week. The promoter is assigned to 5 communities, including: El Tremedal, Teosinte, Cañitas, Higueral, and Izotalillo. This person works on vaccination campaigns, healthy environments, and prenatal controls.*

*Education: There are 3 teachers working in the central school. Two of them are from the community and have worked as such since we repopulated. They are: Yudit Isabel and Herminia Alvarena a Mejía. We also have a teacher who is from another nearby town. Her name is Norma Fuentes. This school goes from pre-school to 9th grade. There are about 80 students. One of the limitation of the school is that there is no library to help reinforce what the students are learning or to facilitate research. We want to ask support from our International solidarity to help us obtain books and to be able to have a library in our school. Also, to be able to be more efficient in regards to academia on all levels. High school students travel daily to their school in order to take classes. Some go to San Francisco Morazán and others go to Tejutla. There are 30 students in high school and there are 15 university students. Education, both local and university level, is very difficult to finance. It comes at a great cost, sometimes enduring hunger, walking to school and missing class because we do not have the scholarships. This is one of the priorities of the community and we hope for support from the solidarity so that the students may be able to get scholarships again.*



*The Church: In Teosinte, the community is firmly planted in the faith of the Catholic Church. There are catechism classes for 1st Communion, baptismal groups, and confirmation groups. The infrastructure of the church is built in 216 square meters with cement block brick, with a tin roof. The floor, doors, windows, benches, bell tower, sacristy, pathway, etc. are still missing and under construction.*

*Well, brothers and sisters of St. Sebastian Parish, now that you know that reality of Teosinte, we say goodbye with much love and affection from us. We love you and remember you.*

*Sincerely,  
The Teosinte Town Council*

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## SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM ENDS FOR TEOSINTE

Many of you have given generously through the years to the Teosinte Scholarship Fund. Since its inception, scholarships were funded and managed through an organization called the Women's Empowerment Partnership, led by a woman named Sylvia Gregory in Eugene, Oregon. Unfortunately, this past December, Sylvia has decided that the Women's Empowerment Partnership will no longer fund and manage the scholarship program.

What does this mean for Teosinte? It means that there are no funds to assist students who attend high school and university. In 2005, the Women's Empowerment Partnership funded 18 students in high school at a cost of \$635 per year and 16 students at university levels at a cost of \$936 per year, for a total annual cost of \$26,376.00.

What does the future hold? The St. Sebastian El Salvador Committee was able to send \$3,000 for students to begin the school year in January of 2006. However, this is far short of the almost \$30,000 needed annually. We know that students have begun the school year, but are unsure how they will finish without funds. The El Salvador Committee continues to explore ways to assist our sister community to obtain funding for schooling at the high school and university levels. If you are interested in working with us to secure funding for the scholarship program in Teosinte or have questions, please contact Ann Gehred at 414-475-5892.

### MEMBERS OF THE ST. SEBASTIAN EL SALVADOR COMMITTEE:

Sarah DiPadova  
Mary Beth Duffey  
Ann Gehred  
David Goehner  
Beth Hammer  
Judy Hill  
Connie Holzinger  
Duane & Mary Pickering  
Sandra Swietlik

