
Solidaridad

News from Foundation Todos Juntos and Asociación Pop Wuj

Summer 2017



Pop Wuj turned 25 this year!

The projects existed from the beginning—Mateo (far right) was Pop Wuj's first ever student. Here students are helping reconstruct a public laundry.

Celebrate with us & honor your loved ones
with a [Gift for Guatemala!](#)

Photo courtesy of Pop Wuj

Nutrition in the News

Two major Guatemalan news outlets spotlighted the Pop Wuj Nutrition Program in April! National television station *Guatevision* aired a feature and the *Prensa Libre* newspaper published a two-page spread.

This publicity is essential to gaining the support of local donors and volunteers!



You can check out more screenshots from the TV story on the [Nutrition Program Facebook page](#). The original article can be found on the [Prensa Libre website](#) and its English translation is available on the [Foundation Todos Juntos website](#).

Food as Medicine in the Nutrition Program



Photo by Dr. Carlos de Leon

Twins Joseline and Jacqueline dig into packets of Nutributter on a Timmy Global Health brigade in Pujujil. The Pop Wuj Nutrition Program takes advantage of brigades to serve children who live too far away to visit every month.

By Kendra Obermaier and Elizabeth Barnes

In the rural communities where the Pop Wuj Nutrition Program focuses its work, most children aren't receiving the calories and nutrients they need.

"Corn. Everything made from corn," one mother in La Victoria said of most children's diets in the community. Many families in these communities cultivate their own corn, and it's available cheaply to those who don't. Corn is the base for Guatemalan tortillas, tamales, and atoles—a hot, thick drink. These staples are filling and provide basic nutrients such as carbohydrates, protein, fiber, and Vitamin B. But corn has no Vitamin A, calcium, zinc, or iron—some of the most important nutrients for a child's development.

In fact, growth and development is most rapid during the first years of life. Healthy children often triple their weight in their first year and grow steadily until about age 10, when they hit new growth spurts. A child's brain is also under crucial, formative development. Children acquire the skills they need to communicate, analyze, and learn in the future. To sustain this growth, children's bodies need at least 1,000-1,300 calories daily to supply them with carbohydrates, fats, proteins, vitamins, and minerals. Vitamin A, calcium, zinc, and iron are especially important for bone fortification, brain development, and muscle growth.

Dr. Carlos de Leon, Pop Wuj's pediatrician, often sees that other calorie sources fail to meet those needs. Local shops filled with chips, soda, candy, and other junk foods are common in the rural communities Pop Wuj serves. For most families these options are cheaper and more accessible than healthful foods from the market or a grocery store. Foods with sodium and saturated fat can decrease blood flow and increase blood pressure and risk for other chronic illnesses in the future. The result is that many children are undernourished and developmentally impaired due to lack of nutrients.



Photo by Dr. Carlos de Leon

Snack time at a Pop Wuj Nutrition Program meeting. For snacks Pop Wuj always serves fresh fruit with the supplemental drink, Incaparina.

The Pop Wuj Nutrition Program has always recognized the importance of children's diets at home. Pop Wuj's treatments are designed to provide essential nutrients that

are often missing. In addition to the peanut-based supplements, Pop Wuj provides [Incaparina](#) and zinc when available. The powdered drink mix Incaparina was specially formulated for deficits in the average Guatemalan diet. Based in corn and soy flour, Incaparina is enriched with a number of vitamins. Each family receives 3 lbs. of Incaparina each month to improve the diet of all family members.

In addition, in 2017 Pop Wuj stepped up efforts to provide zinc, which aids organ and brain development and strengthens immune systems. When possible, Pop Wuj provides the zinc in a liquid suspension, due to the age of the babies and toddlers. Zinc in liquid or zinc gluconate tablet form is the Nutrition Program's most-needed item.

"Before my child had these supplements, he was often unresponsive and very tired," said participating mother Doña Luisa. "Two years later, he learns very quickly and is always alert."

Every Nutrition Program meeting also includes an educational component that offers tools to mothers and other family members. Diet is a recurring focus. Director of Social Projects Carmen de Alvarado and Pop Wuj volunteers have presented on healthful diets, recipes using local ingredients, sanitation and hygiene, and reproductive health as well as other nutrition-related topics.

"Before Pop Wuj came, I didn't know my children needed zinc or other nutrients," one mother said. "Now I know they need more vegetables, fruit, and meat in their diets."

With your help, Pop Wuj can continue serving babies and toddlers in Llanos del Pinal, La Victoria, Buena Vista, Pujujil, and Xeabaj. Your donation goes far and even small donations are greatly appreciated:

- [Treat a Baby's Malnutrition for 1 Month - \\$35](#)
- [Incaparina for All Participating Families for 1 Month - \\$290](#)
- [Treat a Baby's Malnutrition for a Year - \\$420](#)
- [Treat a Baby's Malnutrition for the Length of the Program \(2.5 years\) - \\$1,050](#)

Malnutrition is a complex, deep-rooted problem in Guatemala. Treating a child with malnutrition demands not only medical expertise but also cultural understanding, access to appropriate resources, determination, and support—exactly what Pop Wuj, in partnership with our donors and Timmy Global Health, is striving to provide.

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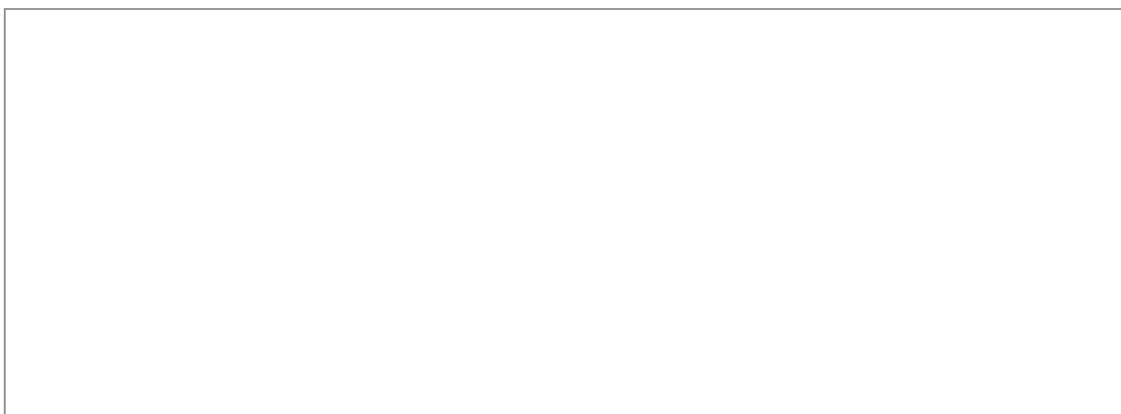




Photo by Elizabeth Barnes

Evelyn reads to Yosvin and Andrea on the patio of the new Family Support Center. Project participants read or are read to every day.

Family Support Center Finds a New Home

Despite an unexpected move and staff changes, the project is better than ever

By Elizabeth Barnes

Homework finished, 11-year-old Evelyn heads outside to the sunny patio and finds a balcony-shaded spot to read to Yosvin and Andrea, both three years old. Several Family Support Center (FSC) peers roll hula hoops across the pavement, while others work on assignments in their classrooms or poke heads into the kitchen to preview today's snack.

This year is the first that Family Support Center participants and Pop Wuj staff and volunteers have congregated at this FSC location. Last year the project was housed in the Centro Polifuncional Ixcanul Noj. The multiuse community center was just across the street from Doña Delfina Cruz's house, the previous location of the project. Doña Delfina still prepared and hosted meals and snacks in her home even though the rest of the activities took place across the street.

Although the setup at Ixcanul Noj had drawbacks, Pop Wuj was able to use two classrooms rent-free, and the space was much more suitable than rooms in a family's home.

Unfortunately in mid-January, 2017, the Ixcanul Noj leader informed the Pop Wuj directors that the existing FSC contract would not be renewed. Pop Wuj's directors and FSC staff made the difficult decision to search for a new location and push back the re-opening date.

Finding a suitable new space in Llanos del Pinal took time. Few properties are available to rent in the community, and potential spaces were identified only through word of mouth. Finally Pop Wuj found a home for the Family Support Center with a large unused space even better suited to the FSC's needs than Ixcanul Noj. After much preparation, the project officially opened on February 27, a few weeks later than normal.



Photo by Elizabeth Barnes

Santos's class does their homework with Pop Wuj student volunteer Jamie Mace. The new site has allowed the FSC to return to shared tables rather than individual desks.

The new FSC location is less than a 5-minute walk from the public elementary school in Llanos del Pinal and less than a block from the bus stop. Pop Wuj's space includes two spacious classrooms and a kitchen with space for dining. These rooms open onto a large enclosed patio. The building also hosts the [Pop Wuj Nutrition Program](#) meetings, [mobile clinics](#), and [Timmy Global Health](#) brigades, all previously held at Ixcanul Noj.

The FSC also had some staff changes in January. Lidia Cruz, a long-time employee, took a new position at Nuevos Horizontes, a local domestic violence organization. Angelica Istazuy Pérez and her mother María Silvia Pérez Aguilar are sharing teaching responsibilities for the youngest class. Like her brother Santos, who is still teaching the second-youngest group, Angelica graduated from the FSC and is also pursuing a university degree. Doña Delfina has retired after more than 15 years as cook and meal planner, and Kevin Jimenez has joined the staff in her place.



Photo by Elizabeth Barnes

FSC cook Kevin Jimenez keeps an eye on sixth graders Arturo and Julio as they flip pancakes for everyone's afternoon snack. Kevin encourages FSC participants to help in the kitchen—particularly boys—as cooking is often considered women's work in Guatemala.

Although these unexpected changes caused a lot of extra work and worry at the beginning of the year, everyone has adjusted well. The new location has been excellent, and Pop Wuj has received positive feedback from participating families.

[Donate](#) today to contribute to Pop Wuj's programming at the Family Support Center:

- [Support a Child's Participation for a Week - \\$18.75](#)
- [Support a Child's Participation for a Month - \\$75](#)
- [Sponsor a Week of Snacks & Hot Lunches for 25 Children - \\$150](#)

Want more updates?

Check out the [Pop Wuj Projects Blog!](#)

You can read more about the [FSC move and this year's activities](#), progress in other programs like the [Safe Stove Project](#), and more!

Photo by Mary Gramiak



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Photo by Emily Rempel

Tax-deductible donations may be sent via check to:

Foundation Todos Juntos
P.O. Box 533
Honey Brook, PA 19344

[Online donations](#) are accepted via PayPal.

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[Foundation Todos Juntos](#), a 501(c)3 non profit, was founded in 2001 by former students of the [Pop Wuj Spanish School](#) to facilitate ongoing collaboration with various projects in



[Pathways \(Abriendo Caminos\)](#) is a small, Guatemalan non-profit association working to support individuals with developmental disabilities in Xela, Guatemala. Pathways offers support services to increase social, employment, and daily living skills for children and adults with developmental disabilities.

To support Pathways, simply [donate](#) via Foundation Todos Juntos and request a donation designation for Pathways. Gracias!

and around Quetzaltenango (Xela), Guatemala.

Today the Foundation supports educational, medical, social, and public health projects in the Western Highlands of Guatemala.

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