



OCIMA

Overseas and Continental Independent Mercy Association

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www.ocimaya.org

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November 2021

Dear Friends of O.C.I.M.A.,

Thank you for your generous response to our call for help last year. Your heartfelt gifts over the years have supported OCIMA's mission to help improve the health, medical care and education of the poor in Guatemala and Ecuador.

This past year has been heart-wrenching to see the deleterious impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education and the general well-being of Guatemalans and Ecuadorians. What struck us most is the isolation and despair that some of the sisters in Guatemala have expressed to us. These women are incredibly strong people, having accomplished so much, but the effects of the pandemic in their communities have been overwhelming.

In Santa Rosa

OCIMA supports a dormitory residence and scholarship program for girls. Here, the rate of COVID infections is worrisome. Toward the end of the school year, which ended in October, not a day went by without a student, teacher, relative, friend, or neighbor having an active COVID infection. Only a small percentage of the community is vaccinated. Deaths are common, with same-day burials. Medicines and oxygen are not available. Members of the Health and Education Ministry have made appearances, but they are ineffective and of no help. There is a high dropout rate in the schools and teachers do not show up to teach class.

In the midst of all this, there were 18 girls who lived in the dormitory this past year. Fourteen received full scholarships for the 2021 school year. Three of the girls contracted COVID-19, and recovered. We are happy to report that two of our students graduated in October. There were no dropouts, but unfortunately, two students lost a year due to difficulties in virtual learning.



2021 Graduating Class

Santa Rosa is a tight-knit community. The sisters have been collaborating with parents and community leaders in an effort to safeguard everyone – from a 92-year-old man living on the street to the young girl (Esmerelda) whose family cannot afford medical treatment for her rare illness. With your help, not only have you supported the education of 18 young ladies, but you also made it possible to provide additional services to the community, including housing for the 92-year-old man, medical care for Esmerelda, care packages for those in quarantine, mattresses for the poor and infirm, and the list goes on.



92-Year-Old Man

In Santa Elena

The orphanage is home to seven girls ranging in age from 10 to 15. Classes, family visits and other activities are all virtual due to the pandemic. Virtual learning has proven to be challenging for the children at the orphanage. As a result, the sisters have proposed a new project for 2022, which OCIMA is considering. The objective is to improve the academic performance of students by: (1) establishing special learning techniques for the virtual classroom; (2) promoting responsibility, order and cleanliness in the delivery of their homework; and (3) involving the family in the educational process (assuming this is expanded to other children in the community).

The Clinic, also in Santa Elena, is extremely busy and continues to support the medical needs of the poor.



Waiting Area at Clinic in Santa Elena

In San Benito

There is a daycare center, kindergarten, first and second grades, and a facility for adult sewing classes (professional tailoring). Historically, the income from these operations has been self-supporting and OCIMA only provides a small annual stipend to help maintain the facilities. During 2020, these facilities were in lockdown and the five (5) sisters who live there were left with no source of income. OCIMA funds were re-purposed and used to pay for medicines, food, and other living expenses. OCIMA sent additional funds to complete major building repairs to the roof, but not all repairs could be completed due to the increased cost of materials. The Daycare Center and adult sewing classes have played a critical role within the community. But given the high unemployment in the community, the future of these facilities is unclear and we are monitoring closely.

In Morales

The Nutritional Center provides education, food, medicines and medical care to the surrounding villages, some of which are very remote and can only be reached by a combination of four-wheeling (in an old pickup truck) and hiking. The Nutritional Center provides welcome relief in an otherwise very harsh setting. Your donations provide a large portion of the funds needed to accomplish this work.

In Ecuador

OCIMA continues to support projects that benefit the people's hospital in Southern Quito, which is one of the few hospitals available to the poor. This past year, OCIMA also helped to fund the distribution of food to those in extreme poverty.

Your support matters. Once again, please open your hearts and your wallets. And thank you for choosing to support OCIMA!

We are keeping you and your family in our hearts this Thanksgiving and throughout the coming year.

Larry Gatt
OCIMA Board of Directors &
& President

Marie C. Curreri
OCIMA Board of Directors &
Treasurer

Susan M. Hug
OCIMA Board of Directors

FINANCIAL REPORT — 2020

FUNDS AVAILABLE:

Donations:	\$ 123,239 ¹
2020 Endowment Fund Distribution:	7,826
Carryover from 2019:	55
TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE:	<u>\$ 131,120</u>

PROJECT DISBURSEMENTS:

1. GSFEP (Ecuador)	\$ 20,000
2. School in Chapas, Santa Rosa	32,600
3. Nutritional Center in Morales	25,000
4. Clinic and Orphanage Santa Elena	44,000
5. Day Care Center in San Benito	8,500
TOTAL PROJECT DISBURSEMENTS:	<u>\$ 130,100</u>

EXPENSES:

1. P.O. box, envelopes, postage & printing, bank & license fees	\$ 948
TOTAL EXPENSES:	\$ 948 ²
TOTAL EXPENSES & DISBURSEMENTS:	<u>\$ 131,048</u>

<u>CARRYFORWARD TO 2021:</u>	<u>\$ 72</u>
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¹ Includes \$9,810 from the wine tasting event held in early 2020, before the first COVID-19 lockdown.

² Total expenses were 0.72% of total funds available for 2020. In 2019, total expenses were 1.62% of total funds available.