



Meet Nilda Girón New Director Same Direction

With the retirement of Teresa Quiñonez in May of this year, Open Windows veteran Nilda Girón has taken the reins. Nilda has been working at Open Windows more than ten years and comes well prepared for her new position by the wide range of her responsibilities over the years. She has often worked “behind the camera,” as she puts it, doing the accounting and bookkeeping, generating reports, writing the newsletter and tracking the scholarships; but she has also worked with children in workshops and taught classes.

Nilda’s goal is simply to continue Teresa’s work and she shares Teresa’s passion for instilling a desire to learn in the children who come to Open Windows. She gets excited when she sees them working hard and reaching their goals, but she knows that it takes a lot of people to make this happen: teachers, parents, volunteers and the broader community.

Nilda credits her parents with giving her an education. They paid her way through high school and, using the accounting skills she learned there, she was able to work and pay for all four years at university. In the middle of her university experience, she spent the four years traveling across Central and South America, as well as Switzerland, an experience that “gave me a different vision of life and the world.”



I think education is the solution to poverty, to war and to indifference and ignorance. I think children and young people are the future of the world, but they need a thorough, integrated education, including values, goals and support. And I think Open Windows can give that to them.

Nilda Girón

Starting Them Early



Your child is six years old; it is time for her to start school. But that presents a problem: you cannot afford the tuition.

Wait! Since when do you have to pay tuition for primary school? Since forever – if you live in Guatemala. And because of that, many children start later and never catch up. They view school as a luxury at best and never quite understand what an education can do for them. After all, their parents never got one.

Open Windows staff and volunteers do understand the value of education and have been providing children with tutoring, supplementary classes and a library for over 16 years. Now, almost by accident, we are teaching five and six year-olds who are not in school to give them a strong foundation and to make learning

important to them.

First, just a couple of these youngsters showed up at Open Windows with their older siblings, and our teachers started helping them to read and do some basic arithmetic. Then, some of their friends started coming and what had been informal tutoring started looking like classes. We now have 17 five and six year-olds attending regularly and have begun to think about expanding our resources for them. In return for the head start Open Windows is giving these children, the parents have all agreed to send their children to the public school next year.

Our next step will be to get more books geared to their age and to buy some appropriate furniture: chairs that let their feet touch the floor and tables whose tops they can see without standing or kneeling on the chairs. We want them to know that learning can be fun.

Thank You to All of Our Volunteers



Open Windows is committed not only to helping children learn but also to developing the communities in and around San Miguel Dueñas, and we have had a lot of help over the past few months.

In March 16 students from Sa-Hali Secondary School in Kamloops, Canada, built a room and a bathroom for Griselda Matias and her three children. Then, in April 15 students from the Father Mercredi High School in Fort McMurray, Alberta, built a room for Romeo Palencia and a kitchen for Sandra Palencia. Both of these efforts were sponsored by Developing World Connections and included teachers, as well as team leaders.

DWC also sponsored a group of adult volunteers in April led by Chris Hills which built a new room at the Duenas fire station to allow the women firefighters to have a separate sleeping space. Then, in June students from Wichita East High School in Kansas painted the three houses built for the Matias and Palencia families. Their effort, organized by Global Legacy Programs, brought a lot of smiles to the faces of the children and their parents.

Thank you all so much!



The Learning Center's Library



From small beginnings with only 300 books in 2001, the Open Windows library has grown to over 12,000 volumes. At the same time, the number of children we serve has also grown, to over 1,000. We are constantly acquiring new books to keep current with changes and discoveries in

geography, biology, history and mathematics. Every book is catalogued using the Dewey decimal system and the information on every book is maintained in a computer database. New books are always welcome, especially stories for the youngest children to get them interested in reading at an early age and stories for teens about personal achievement and fulfillment.

Computer Literacy

Both children and adults take advantage of Open Windows computer classes. Adults usually attend on Mondays and Tuesdays in the morning, although they can come in the afternoon if their work schedules prevent them from taking advantage of the morning sessions. Children are taught in the afternoons and divided into three groups, progressing from very basic computer skills to working with Movie Maker and internet programming. Ninety-five children and five adults are receiving computer training now.

All of this is done with just 20 computers donated to Open Windows 15 years ago. Moreover, operating computers in Guatemala is more expensive than it is elsewhere, because we have to protect against frequent power outages. We do that with machines which are a combination battery and surge protector. The surge protector component prevents damage to the computers when the electricity spikes, while the battery allows the students to save what they have done when the electricity goes out. Using these machines increases the cost of each computer by more than \$100, but they make it possible to continue to teach skills that both the children and the adults will need if they are to have good job prospects.



More Eco-stoves Coming!



This fall, again with the help of the Canadian organization, Developing World Connections, Open Windows will be installing more than 100 eco-stoves in the area around San Miguel Dueñas. Most Guatemalan families cook on open fires, and that has both economic and health consequences. Open fires consume a lot of wood and firewood is expensive, either in the

time it takes to collect dead wood (up to four hours!) or in the money required to buy it. In addition, open fires fill the houses with smoke and affect everyone's health. Eco-stoves use only one-third of the firewood of open fires and they send the smoke outside through a chimney, saving families money and doctor's visits.

Want to change a child's life today?

Send a tax-deductible check to:
Open Windows Foundation
c/o John Davis
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Tempe, AZ 85283

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