

**We believe in people ● We build community ● We promote leadership**

## 2023 Spring Update

-A SUPREMELY SPECIAL YEAR-

Beloved donors and friends! We greet you once again on behalf of the students and staff of Progres. We write you to share what's happening in the organization, hoping that you are pleased with what we are building together.

In 1973 a small group of Quakers living in Guatemala decided to support a young man so that he could complete his secondary education. This was based in Quaker philosophy which teaches that each individual has the same dignity and the right to the same opportunities as others. Now, fifty years later, this beautiful idea is called Progres and in addition to that first student our program has supported approximately 1600 more individuals.

What Progres has contributed to Guatemalan society during these 50 years, especially among the poor and marginalized, is much more than a group of professionals. Many of our students who receive scholarships become the first teachers, nurses, medical doctors, engineers, etc. in their communities. Consequently, their completion of professional degrees means new services in parts of the country which did not have them before and certainly has saved more than one life. Many of our students have been the first in their families to be able to educate themselves, thereby changing their families' futures. Even those who only study for one semester or one year of university, without graduating, later on, fight so their children or younger siblings can study and achieve what they weren't able to complete.

Some of us currently working with Progres are products of this same support and we can attest to the profound



impact that the program has had on our lives. And for

this, a program that has endured for a half century, we are deeply grateful to all who've made that possible.

We honor and express our thanks to the founders, to you the sponsors/donors, the volunteers, past employees, our scholarship recipients and former scholarship recipients for their/your part in this work.

*This year we will have various activities to celebrate with students, former scholarship recipients and partners. And part of the commemoration will be renewal of our commitment so that Progres continues to offer an alternative to the life most Guatemalans experience.*

*Thank you a thousand times over for being a part of this project!*

### **LISTENING: a change that has transformed us** by Yesenia Perobal, Student Coordinator

*"During recent years Progres has implemented different kinds of activities to be something more than a financial aid organization. We've evolved into a community which supports and accompanies each student through the various stages of formation during life's experience".*





One of these activities is the companionship sessions which are monthly meetings via video-calls between the student and his/her advisor from Progresa. That staff member is the person who will “acompany” the student for one year, tracking the student’s academic progress and personal well-being.

For many of our students, these sessions have provided a safe place where they can discuss the academic challenges they face each semester. But beyond the academic challenges, the sessions have provided an opportunity for intimate and heartfelt conversations about things the student has never shared with anyone else.

Sadly, during the last few years we’ve encountered stories of self-esteem destroyed due to domestic abuse, sexual abuse, violence, substance abuse/addiction within the family-and more. We’ve listened to sobbing, to muffled voices, the deep feelings of young adults who are afraid to talk about what is hurting them. Yet here they’ve found a place where they feel safe enough to muster up the strength to speak about their pain.

In my experience as a Mayan woman from the Kaqchikel sub-group, listening to our scholarship recipients’ stories is even more difficult. In some cases I completely identify with the story, e.g. the first woman to attend university, the first to question roles imposed by society regarding what women ought to be doing. Women whose parents misunderstand them because they are taking a different path than the typical. Some women arrive at Progresa with no hope, with shattered self images, their feelings completely numbed. Many begin university as if it were a dream that they don’t know if they will be able to make happen, yet they want to attempt it.

Through the years young adults come through the program, accompanied by us, seen, and heard. These same sad young people without self-confidence move forward finding their voices, their power, and their inner strength. As is so well stated, “Love is the best medicine”. I like to think of Progresa as a safe space where they find love and a place where they feel important and surrounded by people who believe in their potential. My dream is that Progresa will not only help young adults to become professionals, but also, help them to be good people and good citizens. Thank you! You who believe in Progresa, who donate and make this project possible. You also accompany us on this path!!



## Meet Some Of Our Students /

Gloria is a 22-year-old young woman is in her fourth year of study in industrial psychology at the Mariano Gálvez University in Guatemala. She is the youngest of 4 children. Her family lives in Jocotenango, just outside of La Antigua Guatemala. Her parents were older, ill, unable to work and therefore unable to provide Gloria with any financial support for university. The death of her father in March of this year has been a serious emotional blow to Gloria who had been her father’s caregiver in recent years.

The main breadwinner in her household is one of her older sisters, who works in an appliance store and is a single mother. Another sister provides partial support and Gloria sometimes is able to get temporary jobs. Of all the siblings, Gloria is the only one who has continued her studies at the university and, despite her challenges, has remained a good student. Her plans for the future are to support workers who often have emotional problems due to the stress of work and the poor conditions in which they work. She would also like to find work in an NGO that supports the mental health of children and young people in becoming productive adults with emotional and mental balance. We hope to find a sponsor for her who can support her with \$1500 for the whole year, which would help her cover almost all her study expenses. If you are interested in supporting her please contact us.



**Gloria Noemí  
Quel López**



## Débora Jocabed Ajú Yojero



Debora is a 22-year-old Kaqchikel young woman who lives in Patzún, Chimaltenango. This year she began the first year of her social work degree at Rafael Landivar University. She comes from a large family, in total there are 6 siblings, of which she is the fifth. Most of his siblings still live at home with their father and stepmother. The father works as a day laborer, for which the income is very low. Each of the children works in different jobs, some as day laborers too, others as weavers or some other not-so-formal job. Everyone contributes some money for household expenses and everyone pays their own personal expenses. In Débora's case, she has worked in small stores or as a waitress and with this she helps her family. However, paying for her studies on her own is very difficult for her. In addition, Débora has told us that in her family there are different opinions about education. Some think that education is not something worthwhile, especially for women. For that reason, from her father, she received an education only until the ninth grade and then had to work to pay for her high school studies herself.

Fortunately for her, one of her older sisters finished high school and is currently studying at the university as well. This sister has been Débora's inspiration and encourages her to continue studying. After a couple of years without being able to study, Débora finally found out about Progresá and applied and is now studying her first semester of social work. Despite the fact that she comes from a family without much formal education, we are glad to see her enthusiasm and appreciation for higher education. She chose social work because she believes that with this profession she can help young people and women to organize and empower themselves to achieve their goals.

We would like to find a sponsor who can contribute \$1100 to help with her study

## Angel Gabriel Sipac



Angel is 21 years old and originally from the village of Vista Bella de Tecpán, in the central highlands of the country. This year he is studying his first year of medicine at the University of San Carlos in Guatemala City. His family is quite simple, very typical of the rural area of Guatemala. In total there are 5 children of which Angel is the second. The economic situation is challenging because the father of the family separated from them years ago and rarely gives them support. The mother is the main source of income through various jobs such as weaving, washing clothes, and doing housework for other people. The older children also carry out different jobs and activities to generate some income and contribute to the family expenses. For these reasons, studying medicine was an unattainable dream for Angel, since the family was barely able to cover their basic expenses. We decided to accept Angel because of his family's difficult financial situation, but also because of his desire to support his family and community.

He wants to graduate as a doctor to be able to offer his services in his village. He has observed that many people in rural areas do not have easy access to a doctor and that is why many simple cases become complicated. He has also observed that malnutrition is a major problem in his community and this is mainly due to a lack of health education. He hopes that when he graduates as a doctor, he will help his younger brothers to continue studying, since the family does not have the resources for that. Because the medical course is one of the most expensive and Angel's family cannot much financial support, our program has agreed to pay \$2,300 of his expenses. For this reason we hope to find a sponsor, or several, who would be willing to support him.

“Contact us if you  
have any  
questions”

Web page  
[www.guatemalafriends.org](http://www.guatemalafriends.org)

E-mail  
[progres3@gmail.com](mailto:progres3@gmail.com)



# News From Former Scholarship Recipients



**Laura María  
Pixcar Bonilla**

Laura participated in Progresa from 2017-2019. She majored in radiology and diagnostic imaging technology. Currently she works in the Quetzaltenango Regional Hospital and fills radiology image requests from medical doctors in the area. Additionally, she continues professional training in proper use of equipment and minor problem-solving of x-rays machines used in the hospital setting. She's also studying to become a clinical lab technician. She is profoundly grateful for Progresa's support which allowed her to help her family financially and to make a life for herself as an independent woman.

**Brenda Marisol  
Ismalej Osorio**



Brenda participated in Progresa during 2016-20. She studied nursing in the city of Cobán, Alta Verapaz province. Currently, she's working in a private hospital in Guatemala City. Initially, it was difficult for her to leave her family and community to come to the city, but now she enjoys her work. She's discovered that administration also interests her because through it one can develop and manage projects which better serve poor people. She plans to continue studying this specialized area. Brenda is very grateful to the program for its economic support and belief in her ability.

**Henry  
Jiménez López**



Henry received scholarship assistance from Progresa during 2018-20 when he studied engineering, specifically sciences and systems. During those years he'd started his own business dedicated to bringing internet access to some of the more isolated communities in Huehuetenango. (Internet service is still very limited in Guatemala.) Now many families in these areas have access to information for their children who are in school or to better communicate with family members in the US. Currently, Henry employs four people and plans to implement more businesses which would offer more development to his community and more for his family.

## Our 50 years logo!

Our former student and now collaborator Janeth Ramirez designed a special logo for our jubilee. The image highlights three main elements: the number 50, the Mayan glyph Noj meaning wisdom, and the name of Progresa.

The Noj glyph is more colorful and youthful to symbolize the energy and diversity of our students and the joy of this celebration.





# - 2023 Student Roster -

| Major/Names                            | Age | Language    |
|--|-----|-------------|
| <b>Medicine (6 years)</b>              |     |             |
| 1 Angel Gabriel, Sipac Bulux           | 21  | kaqchikel   |
| 2 Brenda Leticia, Saloj Palax          | 24  | Kaqchikel   |
| 3 Chaim Mishell, Velásquez Cardona     | 26  | Mam         |
| 4 Cleily Michelle, Batzin Yos          | 23  | kaqchikel   |
| 5 Cristian Isaí, Monterroso de León    | 22  | Spanish     |
| 6 Daril Zulyvan, Ovalle Rodríguez      | 22  | Spanish     |
| 7 Elder Fernando, Tuyuc Semeya         | 23  | Kaqchikel   |
| 8 Elver Jonatán, Hernández Hernández   | 24  | K'iche'     |
| 9 Emily Yuliana, Simón Ajú             | 21  | Kaqchikel   |
| 10 Estefany Alejandra, Talento Barrera | 19  | Spanish     |
| 11 Eva Fátima, Pú Uz                   | 21  | K'iche'     |
| 12 Jairo Amariel, Xocop Chuta          | 26  | Kaqchikel   |
| 13 Lady Clarisa, Sánchez Asicon        | 18  | Ixil        |
| 14 Lisbeth Isabel, Subuyuc Toma        | 20  | Kaqchikel   |
| 15 Luis Enrique, Tum Ajú               | 27  | Kaqchikel   |
| 16 Madelyn Migdalia, Batz Patal        | 25  | Kaqchikel   |
| 17 María Julia, Pineda Meléndres       | 24  | Spanish     |
| 18 Pedro Alexander, Barrios Gómez      | 24  | Sakapulteko |
| 19 Rut Yessenia, Ibaté Cuá             | 25  | Kaqchikel   |
| <b>Social work (5 years)</b>           |     |             |
| 1 Catalina Esmeralda, Soc Carrillo     | 29  | K'iche'     |
| 2 Clara Maribel, Bolvito Canahuí       | 35  | Achi        |
| 3 Clarissa Anaité, Xitumul González    | 19  | Achi        |
| 4 Consuelo, Carrillo Sánchez           | 34  | Ixil        |
| 5 Debora Jocabed, Aju Yojero           | 22  | Kaqchikel   |
| 6 Elda Isabel, Toma Zacarías           | 19  | Ixil        |
| 7 Irma Verónica, Xicay Miculax         | 29  | Spanish     |
| 8 Jorge Adalberto, Pú Petz             | 26  | K'iche'     |
| 9 Juana Ofelia, Cocom Tzoc             | 30  | K'iche'     |
| 10 María Elena Ixchel, Patux Acual     | 25  | Kaqchikel   |
| 11 Matilia, Cedillo Cedillo            | 45  | Ixil        |
| 12 Pamela Macedonia, Toledo Felipe     | 24  | Sakapulteko |
| 13 Petrona, Ixcoy Baten                | 24  | K'iche'     |
| 14 Reyna Magalí, Bocel Castro          | 27  | Kaqchikel   |
| 15 Sara Leticia, Socón Morales         | 29  | Kaqchikel   |
| 16 Verónica Nathalia, Ajucum Cuá       | 20  | K'iche'     |
| <b>Criminology (5 years)</b>           |     |             |
| 1 Dominga Janelly, Tomás Felipe        | 21  | Sakapulteko |
| 2 Lizmenia de los Angeles, Avila       | 23  | Spanish     |
| 3 Yaquelin Mariela, Miculax Lajuj      | 25  | Kaqchikel   |
| <b>Animal husbandry (5 years)</b>      |     |             |
| 1 Adilene Analí, Mérida González       | 29  | Mam         |
| 2 Juana Beatriz, Sic López             | 21  | K'iche'     |

| Major/Names                              | Age | Language  |
|--|-----|-----------|
| <b>Nursing (3-4 years)</b>               |     |           |
| 1 Ashly Patricia Mallbely, Coy López     | 19  | Spanish   |
| 2 Crusita Elizabeth, Chalí Mux           | 22  | Kaqchikel |
| 3 Damaris Gisela, Itzep Hernández        | 20  | K'iche'   |
| 4 Gelga Yojana, Tzaj Sirín               | 19  | Kaqchikel |
| 5 Heydi María Elisa, Torres Elías        | 20  | K'iche'   |
| 6 Jéssica María Luis Láinez              | 22  | Spanish   |
| 7 Juan Alex Humberto, Jor Xol            | 24  | Q'eqchi'  |
| 8 Juana Hermelinda, Chaj Pastor          | 27  | K'iche'   |
| 9 Juana Roselia, Riz Morente             | 33  | K'iche'   |
| 10 Mandy Yoima, Miranda Jiguan           | 24  | Mam       |
| 11 Marta Mariana, Tejax Chiroy           | 19  | Spanish   |
| 12 Oriasis Zuleyka, Alvarado Noriega     | 19  | Spanish   |
| 13 Rosario Evarista, Say García          | 21  | K'iche'   |
| 14 Sandra Martina, Yaxón Julajuj         | 20  | Kaqchikel |
| 15 Sergio Ramón, Urizar Urizar           | 21  | Spanish   |
| 16 Candy Gabriela, Saquic Conoz          | 22  | K'iche'   |
| <b>Agronomy (5 years)</b>                |     |           |
| 1 Alvaro Rudy Franklin, Ichich Can       | 23  | Q'eqchi'  |
| 2 Elizabeth Noemí, Ajanel López          | 24  | K'iche'   |
| 3 Ester Marina, Ixcot Cojón              | 23  | Kaqchikel |
| 4 Evelyn Yesenia, Méndez Díaz            | 19  | Mam       |
| 5 Juan José Luis, Toyon Tum              | 33  | Mam       |
| 6 Karla Roxana, Azurdia Cuat             | 29  | Kaqchikel |
| 7 María Isabel, López Micán              | 19  | Kaqchikel |
| 8 Mayra, Pablo Pablo                     | 25  | Mam       |
| 9 Sacarías, Pérez Carrillo               | 22  | Mam       |
| <b>Psychology (5 years)</b>              |     |           |
| 1 Diana Victoria, Cerrate Calderón       | 21  | Spanish   |
| 2 Gloria Noemí, Quel López               | 23  | Spanish   |
| 3 Griselda Elizabeth, Sol Cajbón         | 39  | Kaqchikel |
| 4 Lesly Patricia, Valle Hernández        | 27  | Spanish   |
| 5 Nayeli Azucena, Gómez Rodríguez        | 22  | Awacateco |
| <b>Business administration (5 years)</b> |     |           |
| 1 Dulce María, Urbina Ramírez            | 23  | Spanish   |
| 2 Filiberto Orlando, Figueroa Soza       | 22  | Spanish   |
| 3 Lourdes Dilian, Acuta Rumpich          | 28  | Kaqchikel |
| 4 Yulisa Elizabeth, Bixcul Yaxón         | 21  | Kaqchikel |
| <b>Accounting -CPA (5 years)</b>         |     |           |
| 1 Elmer Rubén, Sabán Car                 | 25  | Kaqchikel |
| 2 Erika Beatriz, García Armas            | 23  | Spanish   |
| 3 Irma Elizabeth, Tuyuc Salazar          | 28  | Kaqchikel |
| 4 Yesica Marleny, Quex Acán              | 21  | Kaqchikel |
| <b>Electronic engineering (5 years)</b>  |     |           |
| 1 Margarita Leticia, Ajpop Sipac         | 24  | Kaqchikel |

Matyox  
Kaqchikel

Chjonte  
Mam

Maltyox  
K'iche'

B'antyox  
Q'eqchi'

Yujwal tyoxh  
Q'anjob'al

Jale' inik  
P'aqomchii'

Gracias  
Spanish

Thank you!!





| Major/Names                         | Age | Language  |
|-------------------------------------|-----|-----------|
| <b>Physiotherapy (5 years)</b>      |     |           |
| 1   Elida Gabriela, Teletor Jiménez | 22  | Achi      |
| 2   María Josefina, Cochojil López  | 23  | K'iche'   |
| <b>Law (5 years)</b>                |     |           |
| 1   Brenda Yuliza, Jocholá Boch     | 27  | Kaqchikel |
| 2   Daily Eleada, De León Morales   | 18  | Kaqchikel |
| <b>Food engineering (5 years)</b>   |     |           |
| 1   Diana Ixquic, López Toj         | 29  | Spanish   |
| <b>Forestry (5 years)</b>           |     |           |
| 1   Dayerlin Yoosbeth, Ramos Gómez  | 22  | Spanish   |

| Major/Names                          | Age | Language  |
|--------------------------------------|-----|-----------|
| <b>Graphic design (5 years)</b>      |     |           |
| 1   Teresa Maribel, Churunel Guarcax | 21  | Kaqchikel |
| <b>Music and art (5 years)</b>       |     |           |
| 1   Wilmer Aram, Ajú                 | 30  | K'iche'   |
| <b>Psychopedagogy (5 years)</b>      |     |           |
| 1   Manuela Wendy, Ramirez Cotiy     | 32  | K'iche'   |
| <b>Sociolinguistics (4 years)</b>    |     |           |
| 1   Beberlin Paola, Aju Upun         | 23  | Kaqchikel |
| <b>Systems engineering (5 years)</b> |     |           |
| 1   Jacawitz' Ixchel, Tzunux Tum     | 21  | Kaqchikel |

### *Some statistics about our 90 students in 2023:*

- All of them are studying at the university level.
- 73 (70%) are women and 17 (30%) are men
- 71 (70%) speak a Mayan language plus Spanish, 19 (20%) speak Spanish only.
- Our students come from 13 different departments (states) of the country
- The majors with the most students are: medicine (19), nursing (16), social work (16 each) and agronomy (9).

## “ The Teaching English Experience In Guatemala ”

That's right friends, once again we will have our Teaching English Experience in person in Guatemala! An opportunity to support our program by teaching English to one of our students and getting to know the Guatemalan culture up close. The dates will be December 4 to 12, 2023 and we will do it again at Posada Belén in the beautiful city of Antigua Guatemala.

The cost will be \$1,200 per person, which includes lodging and food for the whole week at the Posada, both for the volunteer and for a Progreso student, plus a donation to the scholarship fund for 2024. If you are interested in participating, please write to us at [progres3@gmail.com](mailto:progres3@gmail.com) before May 31. We need a minimum of 10 participants to carry out the activity. If after May 31 you still want to participate, please write to us to find out if there is space.

This year we will have the official celebration of our 50th anniversary with all our students from December 1 to 3.

If you wish to participate in this celebration as well, you are welcome. Write us to give you details. We clarify that this celebration is totally independent from the Teaching English Experience, with a totally different location, costs and services and is not part of the English course.

We hope to see you again in Guatemala!



50 years of service has been possible thanks only to our faithful donors!  
Please make your checks payable to Redwood Forest Friends Meeting and write "Guatemala Scholarship Program" on the memo section of you check.

Mail your donations to:  
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**P.O. Box 1831, Santa Rosa, CA 95402.**

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