FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Hello Friends and Supporters of Mayan Families,

2019 was quite a year! I am so grateful for the wonderful opportunity of directing Mayan Families, and deeply proud of the progress that we have made in doing impactful, intentional, and community-centered work that elevates the culture and strengths of the children and families that we are so honored to work with in Guatemala.

In 2019 our community achievements include: assuring that 1497 brilliant young students have access to education; delivering high-quality early childhood education and nutrition to three to five year-olds in three communities (four in 2020); delivering 1133 food baskets, 94 water filters, and 78 clean cookstoves to families in need; facilitating workshops on women’s health and cervical cancer screening for 47 women in the communities of Tierra Linda and Peña Blanca; giving 43 adults job skills training through our Trade Schools; and putting earned income in the hands of 190 talented local artisan women through sales of their artwork.
In addition to great work in the community, in 2019 Mayan Families executed important internal work assuring that we have the expertise in place to do impactful community-led work in the Lake Atitlan region, and the internal systems and controls to be excellent stewards of our resources, which will serve the organization and the communities that we serve for years to come. We worked diligently to hire talented staff to lead our work, to evaluate our programs and assure that we are doing the RIGHT work with a measurable impact, and that we have the capacity to learn, evolve, and make a difference to families to live with dignity in the communities that they love. Our foundational work in 2019 set the stage for 2020, to greatly deepen our malnutrition work, expand our clinic with a talented indigenous doctor and nutritionist, grow our Artisan Program, and continue to evolve our Sponsorship Program to assure that students don’t just graduate, but do so with needed leadership and job skills that will expand their opportunities and help their families to break the cycle of poverty.

We are so grateful for your support, and for our long-time supporters, for your patience through a difficult transition. We look forward to many more years of doing impactful, needed, life-changing work in partnership with community and the donors and partners that make it possible.

With gratitude,
Erin Mooney
Executive Director
THE FOUNDATION OF OUR WORK

VISION

Mayan communities in the Lake Atitlan region of Guatemala are strong, vibrant, and self-sufficient.

MISSION

Advancing education, nutrition and health, and economic development, through community-led initiatives which build on existing resources and knowledge.

An important step in our evolution as an organization this year was working together to define the vision, mission, and values that will guide our work and our approach in the years to come.

VALUES

Cooperation - We work as a kind, effective and supportive team, and in collaboration with the communities we serve.

Integrity - We act honestly and ethically, thereby earning the trust and confidence of both communities and supporters.

Transparency - Our processes and use of resources are reasonable, justified, and clearly communicated.

Respect - We treat all people kindly and fairly, with dignity and empathy.

Humility - We recognize our role as facilitators, centering and valuing local expertise. We evolve based on constant learning and self-improvement.

Accountability - We thoughtfully and responsibly manage our resources to ensure both efficient use and intentional impact.

Reciprocity - We believe in dignified, equitable relationships with the community that we serve, promoting agency, active participation, and service to others.
It is only by having deep collaboration with community members and a true understanding of the self-identified needs and strengths of the community that we can offer programs that are truly impactful. To help us improve as an organization on these fronts, Juana Ajiquichi and Juan Skinner joined our team in 2019, bringing many years of experience in the region and passion and skills around building indigenous leadership, voice, and rights.
I was brought onto the Mayan Families team this year in part to help design and execute a socioeconomic study, with the intentions of having an ongoing framework and structure for assessing needs, capacities, opportunities, and resources within the communities where we work in a more systematic way. One of the major objectives of the study is to ensure that we are able to hear directly from the community members about their current economic situations, the difficulties they have faced, and their future dreams for improving their living conditions and communities. In 2019, we conducted a pilot of the survey, which was completed by 62 families. After completing this pilot, we began work on improving our approach and designing a general study that will be used across our communities to inform the way we manage our programs in the years to come.

Juan - Outreach and Strategy Consultant

I joined Mayan Families this year in a newly created role, that of Community Relations Facilitator. It has been my job to evaluate how we can build our relationships with the communities where we work, and encourage active leadership, participation and collaboration on the part of community leaders. We’ve done this by deepening our knowledge of the sociopolitical context within which each community operates, by approaching families and students with empathy and friendship, and by working together with local leadership to ensure that our projects are developed in parallel with community needs and strengths, and that they leverage current infrastructure.

Juana - Community Relations Facilitator
If I hadn’t had a sponsorship through Mayan Families, it would have been a lot more difficult to attend college. Stability - that’s what the sponsorship gives you. You can take off that load of constantly thinking, ‘How am I going to pay for the next month?’ And that is a lot of help.

Perla Alejandrina, Sponsored University Student
When I was presented with the opportunity to join Mayan Families in June 2019 as the new Director of Education, I was excited for two reasons. Firstly, after a career dedicated to improving the systems of education in my country, I saw this role as a great opportunity to continue to drive change at a systemic level. Secondly, as a Mayan, I was particularly attracted to the ability to help Mayan students access the education they deserve and feel proud of their identity by promoting an approach to education that focuses on cultural and bilingual relevancy and strength.

2019 was a transition year in the Education department and Sponsorship Program; our focus was on supporting our 1497 students, ensuring our multidisciplinary, multicultural team was operating in a collaborative way, and seeing that we had the internal policies and structures in place to ensure that both our students and their sponsors have a positive and impactful experience through our programs.

It is my vision that this program can serve as a strong advocate for change within the public school system here in Guatemala, and serve as an example for change at the national level. We seek to make this change by promoting intercultural, bilingual education, and by strengthening the identity, culture, and worldview in the communities where we work, and through this, eradicate discrimination against the Mayan people. This will only be possible in strong partnership with our students and our families, and if the support we are providing truly allows them to make decisions about their education and finances with autonomy, and builds their leadership.

In order to achieve this vision, much change is needed in our programs, and as the biggest department in Mayan Families, we acknowledge the need to approach this change thoughtfully. I am honored to be one of the stewards of this change, and I thank you for your support in making this vision a reality.

Sincerely,
Edgar Morales Choy
Director of Education
SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

Our Sponsorship Program focuses on reducing existing barriers to education for Mayan students by providing financial support and resources which are tailored to the needs of each student. In 2019 we focused on evaluating and implementing new policies to guarantee the protection and rights of the students sponsored through our program, adapting and deepening the support provided to students, and fostering a greater sense of community, equity and reciprocity between Mayan Families and the families we serve.

TUTORING PROGRAM

83% of the students participating in tutoring passed the school year - this is above average for their grades.

42 number of students participating in tutoring

Our Tutoring Program provides extra support to students in Tierra Linda and Panajachel, two of the communities where we have seen the lowest grade point averages and most failed classes amongst our sponsored students. The biggest change we made to the program in 2019 was to change the tutoring timetable, to ensure the program was accessible to more students.
In 2019, we operated two Preschool Nutrition Centers in Tierra Linda and Peña Blanca, two rural communities which lack access to preschool education. Our preschool centers focus on delivering bilingual education that prepares our students for kindergarten and elementary school, and providing much-needed nutritional assistance to students at this critical age in their development. The preschool in San Antonio Palopo also opened in October, in collaboration with the municipality.

Educationally, we implemented evaluation systems for our students to measure and assure their academic progress, and also put in place new, more effective teaching methods through teacher training and curriculum development. Nutritionally, we developed a new menu to ensure our students are receiving well-rounded, nutrient-dense and age-appropriate meals!

In 2020, we are opening all four of our Preschool Nutrition Centers, expanding our Tutoring Program to support middle school students, and continuing to deepen our relationships with and presence in the communities where we work, to keep ensuring we are best meeting the needs of our students and their families.
Even though I already have two children, I really had very little knowledge of sexual health topics previously. I feel more informed now, with a stronger and more open mentality.

Maribel, Women’s Health Initiative Graduate
It is a pleasure for me to join Mayan Families as the leader tasked with transforming our Strengthening Communities programs into a unified department directly focused on developing Nutrition and Health initiatives in collaboration with our communities.

Much work was done this last year on re-imagining our programs through the lens of Nutrition and Health, and we simultaneously accomplished a lot in 2019. We continued to operate many of our long-running programs focused on generating access to basic needs such as safe housing, clean water, and nutritious, well-balanced food, as well as evaluating opportunities for improvement. As in other departments, another huge focus area for us was strengthening communication and trust with the families we support in order to work together in partnership to truly meet their needs.

This shift we are making to be focused on Nutrition and Health initiatives is a response to one of the biggest problems in Guatemala - chronic malnutrition in children. This issue disproportionately impacts the indigenous communities of Sololá where we work, where 67% of children under the age of 5 suffer from malnutrition. By focusing our future activities on the prevention and care of chronic malnutrition in the rural areas of Sololá, as well as providing access to necessary health services, we can make a true difference in the lives of our students, families, and communities.

We could not be more excited by the work we have done this year to transform this department, and we are convinced of the positive impacts these changes will have for the Mayan people in Sololá. We hope that our friends and donors share the same enthusiasm and vision of the actions for 2020, and that they continue to be our allies in this deeply important work!

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Perez Cholotio
Director of Nutrition & Health
FOOD ASSISTANCE

This program aims to provide food security to families suffering from malnutrition by delivering food baskets once a month, full of healthy household staples. In 2019, we delivered 1113 food baskets to families in need.

STOVES AND FILTERS

This program is dedicated to improving the living environments in family homes by installing Ecofilter water filters, to provide clean water, and ONIL stoves that are more fuel efficient and reduce the amount of smoke present in the home. In 2019, we installed 94 water filters and 78 stoves.
WOMEN’S HEALTH INITIATIVE

This program focuses on promoting sex education and health, with a particular focus on the early detection of cervical cancer, which is the number one cause of death amongst women of a reproductive age in Guatemala. In 2019, 47 women graduated the course, and over half opted in to receiving their first ever pap smear exam.

CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM

This program focuses on providing safe and secure housing for the families in the communities we serve. In 2019, we completed 4 home renovation projects that benefited 34 people, as well as supported 3 large-scale community infrastructure projects.
ELDERS SUPPORT

In 2019, 40 elders received nutritional support and participated in enriching activities through the generosity of Rotary clubs and individual donors.

MEDICAL CLINIC

Thanks to the generous time of Dr. Lyle Waldman, long-time volunteer and talented Canadian family physician, our medical clinic offered free health care and prescriptions to students, their families, and the community for 6 months in 2019.
NEW PROGRAMS IN 2020

In 2020, we are adapting our current programs and are launching three new programs to better focus our actions on providing access to nutrition and health in the rural communities where we work. We’ve generated new programs centering cultural context and appropriateness within our communities, focused on preventing and treating malnutrition, which is one of the largest problems in Guatemala.

CRECIENDO SANO - OUR FLAGSHIP NUTRITION PROGRAM

In collaboration with our Preschool Nutrition Centers, we’ve created this new nutrition program which provides support to expecting mothers and children within their first 1000 days of life to prevent malnutrition, as well as children and families suffering from chronic malnutrition.
ELDERLY CARE - AN INTERGENERATIONAL CENTER

In Santa Maria El Tablon, we are opening an intergenerational center focused on elevating the dignity of community elders, providing needed health and nutrition support, and connecting them with younger members in the community.

GENERAL MEDICAL AND DENTAL CLINIC

We are proud to re-open our Medical Clinic, which provides general medical services to both our beneficiaries and the general public, and focuses specifically on preventing and treating malnutrition. We hope to open a Dental Clinic for the first time to complement this work, in partnership with Dr Steven Hewitt.
I want to share what I’ve learned with members of my community, so that they can learn a new skill too.

Pasqual, Welding Course Graduate

There are always female artisans with ability and talent who are willing to work, they just need the opportunity

Juana, Artisan Program Participant
I feel very proud to have been chosen to lead the newly-formed Economic Development department here at Mayan Families. It is our mission as a department to help families earn a level of income that allows them to adequately cover their needed expenses, achieve a true quality of life, and contribute to the development of their greater communities.

This new department was formed in 2019 by unifying our Artisan Program, which offers local artisans a market for their products, and our Trade Schools, through which this last year we offered intensive courses in sewing, carpentry, and metalworking. Both of these programs offer opportunities for individuals to improve their economic conditions, whether it is helping an artisan receive a fair wage for her products, or by helping adults who haven’t had access to formal education learn new, economically-viable skills.

By uniting these two programs under one department, we hope to improve the services we offer to communities, in order to allow our students and artisans to achieve their own economic independence. We hope that the programs offered by this department allow our beneficiaries to be truly self-sufficient, and in turn, help create more economic opportunities within their communities in the future.

Sincerely,

Herlinda Barreno
Director of Economic Development
TRADE SCHOOLS

Our focus in 2019 was ensuring we had the right space, instructors, and curriculum for our three Trade Schools. We increased the space dedicated to the sewing classroom, and renovated a new space in our main office to house our carpentry and metalworking spaces which had previously been conducted in a separate location.

We hired two amazing new instructors to teach our sewing and metalworking courses, and evaluated the curriculums to ensure that our students were learning skills that were truly marketable. Over the course of the year, we taught 43 students across the three courses, and for the first time ever, 100% of the students graduated!

ARTISAN PROGRAM

In 2019, we helped 190 female artisans and their families earn direct income by offering opportunities for them to commercialize their artisan products in new markets, and we are just getting started!

To help increase sales opportunities, we hired a new Sales and Marketing Assistant, who is the first Guatemalan to fill this role. And, to ensure our Artisan partners receive a fair and consistent income for sales made through our program, we increased the amount paid to our artisan partners by 15%.

$58K DIRECT INCOME EARNED BY OUR ARTISAN PARTNERS

100% GRADUATION RATE ACROSS ALL TRADE SCHOOL COURSES
CARPENTRY SHOP

Our carpentry shop serves two purposes - to build the furniture donated to our sponsored students, and to create fine wood products and custom orders as a means of raising funds for our Trade Schools. This year, we fulfilled 94 furniture donations, and earned over $2,000 of profit from our social business that was reinvested back into the Trade Schools.

CHANGES IN 2020

In 2020, we are excited to continue to grow the Artisan Program by investing in the development of new products and growing our roster of wholesale clients. For our Trade Schools, particularly in carpentry and metalworking, we are dedicated to continuing to reimagine our curriculum and course objectives to ensure our students have the tools they need to earn income upon graduation.
EXPERIENCES

You have to come in person to experience it firsthand. Bonding with the students I sponsor, visiting the communities and understanding how big the needs are, made a huge difference in the way I perceive the help I provide.

Melinda J, Student Sponsor
Nothing brings our Development Team at Mayan Families more joy than being able to share our work and incredible community with visitors.

In 2019 we welcomed over a dozen groups from across North America, as well as over 100 individuals. Each visit brings new excitement as visitors have the opportunity to experience Guatemalan culture, languages, and art, to enjoy the beauty of Lake Atitlan, and to see and support community-led development work in our region. Groups and individual visitors have the opportunity to learn with Mayan staff members and the families that we partner with, to share in a rich cultural interchange and build friendships.

We are grateful for many projects which we collaborate on with visitors, such as painting or making improvements in our preschools, building efficient cookstoves or delivering water filters, community infrastructure projects, and (depending on the expertise of visitors) conducting research projects including water testing or community surveys.

As we look farther into 2020 and beyond, we hope to open our doors to friends from across the globe, as well as expand our outreach to invite more Guatemalans to get involved, volunteer, and experience Mayan Families for themselves. By walking in our doors and working alongside us, you’ll be able to see firsthand the impact, the fun, and the learning that we can experience together in the communities around Lake Atitlan.

Our team is more than happy to help with travel arrangements and can create a custom itinerary for your trip.

Join us!

We look forward to having you!
FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS
In 2019 Mayan Families focused on stabilizing after a difficult transition with our former in-country partner, establishing a new Guatemalan organization, and putting in place stronger financial management systems and checks and balances than ever before. We are acutely aware of our responsibility to manage our funds efficiently and transparently, keep administration costs low, and invest our resources in community impact.

**USE OF FUNDS**

- **Education** 36.5%
- **Nutrition & Health** 18.6%
- **Economic Development** 15.5%
- **Transition Costs** 9.5%
- **Administration Costs** 15.6%
- **Experiences** 4.3%
### SOURCES OF OPERATING REVENUE

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FROM OUR BOARD DIRECTOR

I am so pleased to sit on Mayan Families’ Board of Directors, which allows me to see the organization’s growth from a different perspective. The Board consists of a group of talented, dedicated, and gifted professionals who are truly dedicated to the success of the organization and serving the communities in the Lake Atitlan area of Guatemala.

I came to know Mayan Families for the outstanding organization that it has become through my local Rotary Club. We like to do “hands-on” international service projects and Mayan Families was the perfect fit. Our club members have been back to Guatemala for 7 years and we have built homes, stoves, provided water filters, sponsored students, visited the preschools and elderly. Now, being on the Board allows me to see the organization from another side.

We were honored to have Erin Mooney join us as our new Executive Director in early 2019. In her report, you will see the achievements through the programs and in building a talented team, so let me mention how the Board has been active serving you this past year.

One of the key accomplishments during 2019 was our emphasis on being a community-centered organization: providing programs that the community tells us they need. This means valuing and respecting their opinions and suggestions; do with rather than for. This shift takes time, but 2019 laid the foundation for positive relationship-building, which will be built upon along with some changes in 2020.

A key element of any Board is to provide governance for the organization, which includes the big picture view. The Board and staff in 2019 updated the Vision, Mission, and Values of Mayan Families (please review “Looking To The Future” on Page 4). We also analyzed Board policies and practices, and made sure we were in compliance with local and federal regulations. And most importantly, ensuring that we continue to be outstanding stewards of donated funds. That leads me to give a final BIG THANK YOU to each and every financial donor, volunteer, & staff – we could not have done it without you!

Best Wishes,

Bill Dutton
Board of Directors
WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

We encourage our supporters to get involved in a variety of ways, whether it's making a financial contribution, coming to visit us and getting directly involved in the work, or spreading the word!

DONATE
We encourage you to make general donations [here](#), or you can make a donation to a specific program. By contributing to Mayan Families at the organizational level, it allows us to ensure that your donations are being put to use where needed most.

SPONSOR A STUDENT
Our Student Sponsorship Program is our biggest program and going into 2020, we have many incredibly talented students in need of a sponsor. Being a sponsor through our program is an amazing way to make generational change happen here in Guatemala, and as a part of the program you are able to be connected with one of the students receiving a scholarship through our fund. We encourage you to learn more about the program and sign up [here](#).
COME AND VISIT US!
We love when our supporters come and visit and get to participate directly in the work we do. We offer a variety of trip options for both groups or individuals, and encourage you to reach out to experience@mayanfamilies.org today if you'd like to get started planning a trip!

SHARE YOUR STORY!
Are you interested in getting more involved with the work Mayan Families does and expanding your impact? We'd love to help! Whether you'd like to share your story to your local church, Rotary Clubs, or simply your friends and family, we can help! Email us at partnerships@mayanfamilies.org and we can share with you materials and ideas to get your community involved with us!

BE AN ADVOCATE!
In 2020, we are working on building a more formalized Advocate Program, where supporters can get involved in helping us spread the word about Mayan Families and participate in fundraising initiatives. If you are interested in becoming an Advocate or getting involved more directly with fundraising, please email us at partnerships@mayanfamilies.org. And, whether or not you are interested in signing up to be an official Advocate, we encourage you to follow us on Facebook and Instagram, as well as sign up for our newsletter here.
THANK YOU!

Our work would not be possible without the generosity of our amazing donors and supporters.

We'd particularly like to thank all of the individual donors and contributors, Rotary Clubs, university groups, and committed volunteers who have worked alongside us and continued supporting us throughout the difficult transition, and we are excited to continue working together in the future.

Special thanks goes to:

Upper Arlington Rotary Club
Optimist
Paso por Paso
Santa Barbara Rotary Club
Former Board Chair Beth McFadyen
The Ohio State University
Ironton Rotary Club
Wilson Sheehan Foundation
University of Calgary
Greg and Wick Miesner
Michael Toppel and Stephanie Tsuruda
Marta Schultz
Ed Nash
Tri Village Rotary Club
Ethical Fashion Guatemala
Former Board Vice President William Reyes
Dr Steven Hewitt
Top of the Lake Coffee
Los Tarrales Reserve Coffee