



# CasaSito

Through education we help students to reach their dreams

Sacatepéquez: Calle del Virrey Lote 37C, 03001 Antigua Guatemala

Alta Verapaz: 3ra Calle 11-16 Z1 Cobán, Alta Verapaz Guatemala

[www.casasito.org](http://www.casasito.org)

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# ANNUAL REPORT

2014





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## Introduction

Dear CasaSito Friends,

It is our pleasure to present to you our 2014 Annual Report. We accomplished many goals this year not only with our partner projects and scholars, but also as an organization.

As part of CasaSito's strategic plan, we looked at ourselves with a constructive eye and through this ongoing and in depth self-reflection, we developed a pedagogical strategy with realistic and achievable goals, outcomes, and indicators that guide our path on academic and professional development, mental health, life skills, and non-violence. Based on our analysis, we hired a social worker to strengthen the scholarship program.

Our scholars are strongly motivated to obtain a University education and we witnessed personal and academic growth in our students. CasaSito has seen youth increase their academic and personal abilities, interests, and capacities so that they can be productive and contributing members of society. They have greater abilities to make good decision and find alternative solutions to solve problems they face. Our first two university scholars completed the required course work and next year they will get ready to take their final examinations!

CasaSito supports local educational centers by funding teacher salaries, supporting nutrition programs, and assisting with operating costs. We are proud of our working relationship with Semilla de Esperanza y Amor, EducArte, Los Patojos, Las Voces del Silencio, and Brillo de Sol. These grassroots educational centers offer children living in poverty unique opportunities that they would not have otherwise!

Please continue reading to learn more about our scholarship program and our partner associations. Enjoy!

Maritza del Carmen Ortiz  
Executive Director



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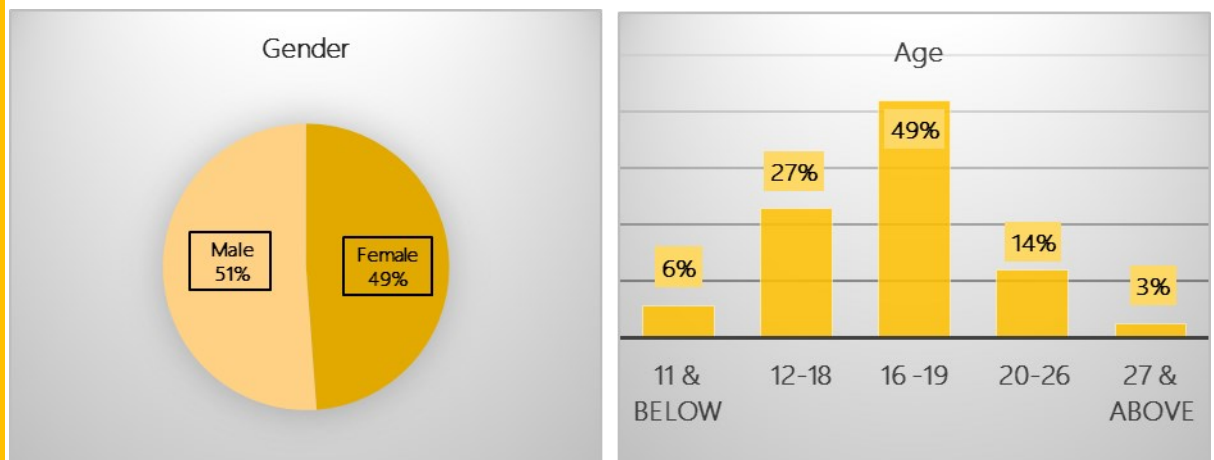
## Scholarship Program 2014

CasaSito's comprehensive Scholarship Program combines financial aid with individual personal support and development to respond to the social, educational, and cultural context that our youth face. Through their participation, CasaSito's young scholars not only develop the interpersonal and professional skills to improve their circumstances and job prospects, but also become confident young leaders, able to cause change in their own family, community and country.

All our scholars go through a rigorous application process that includes filling out an application, a home visit by our psychologists and/or social worker, and an interview with the scholarship committee. The scholarships are awarded based on academic performance, youth's motivation to get an education and succeed in life, parental support, and financial need. The scholars that meet or exceed CasaSito's requirements are able to renew their scholarship.

In 2014, CasaSito's scholarship program served 170 scholars.

### OVERALL DEMOGRAPHICS







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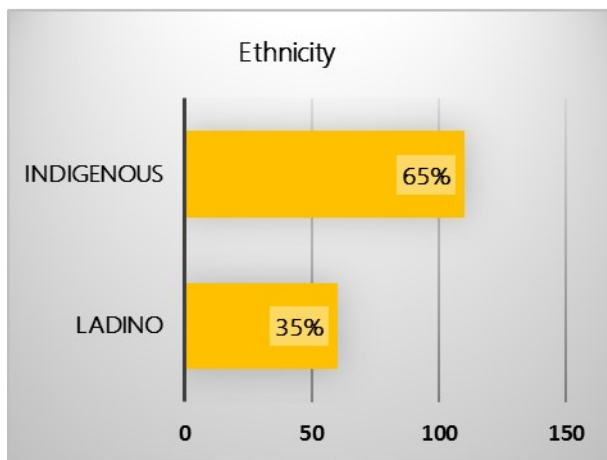
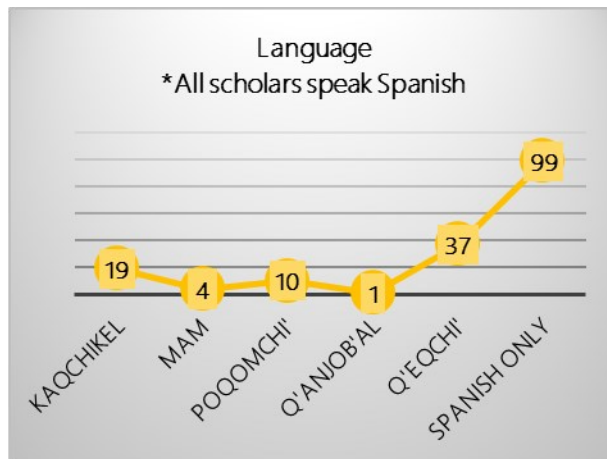
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## Scholarship Program 2014

### OVERALL DEMOGRAPHICS





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## SACATEPÉQUEZ SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The 2014 population in the Sacatepéquez Scholarship Program totaled 117 students and a total of \$86,609 was invested in the program.

### AVERAGE FINANCIAL AID PER STUDENT

Scholarship Type/Grade Level	Number of Students	Average financial aid per student per year (\$)
Primary School	1	\$ 155
Básico (Middle School)	25	\$ 230
Diversificado (High School)	54	\$ 672
University	16	\$ 700
Special Education	21	\$ 253

The program's impact is measured by its retention and graduation rates. We define retention rate as the percentage of the scholars who remain in the program by meeting all the requirements and completing the school cycle each year. In 2014, our retention rates were: 92% at the middle school level, 96% at the high school level and 75% at the university level. The graduation rate, at all levels, was 100%. This means that all students who were due to graduate, successfully graduated.





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## Scholarship Program 2014

### SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOLASHIPS

CasaSito supported the education of 21 special education students during 2014 from Las Voces del Silencio (LAVOSI) and Brillo del Sol. LAVOSI is a specialized educational center for children and teenagers with auditory disability. LAVOSI offers a complete primary education imparted in Guatemalan Sign Language, while providing the students with a sense of community and tools for social integration. On the other hand, through individualized teaching and rehabilitation methods, Brillo del Sol serves students diagnosed with a learning disability, serious emotional problems, and/or are over age. Its educational base is the national curriculum, but they also provide non-traditional classes that focus on developing socialization and cognitive and motor skills.

### *BÁSICO, DIVERSIFICADO, AND UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIPS*

#### Individual Support and Monitoring for Students:

One of the most unique aspects of CasaSito's scholarship program is the individualized attention each student receives to develop personally, academically, and professionally. Because we believe this is key for the success of our youth, a psychologist or a social worker meets with each student every month to assess their development, provide guidance and encouragement, and respond to any difficulty that may arise. When necessary, the scholar and their family receive psychological counseling from our two staff psychologists.

For CasaSito, it is important that students form bonds of friendship and support within the group - both with each other and CasaSito staff - as a model for forming healthy relationships within society as a whole. It is for this reason that CasaSito organizes twice-yearly recreation and integration activities to bring the students together and empower them.







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## Scholarship Program 2014

### Individual Support and Monitoring for Students (cont.):

Scholars also receive personal development workshops on themes such as time management, self-esteem and bullying to gain invaluable life skills, confidence and organizational abilities. Overall, there was a 90% attendance rate amongst the students at these workshops, and a 93% attendance rate at the workshops for parents.

### Academic and Personal Enrichment Activities

#### Debate Club

The 5th Annual Debate Club ran for 12 weeks and taught its participants how to research, analyze information, build and defend arguments, and speak in public. These are important skills that are not usually imparted in Guatemalan schools. Through very practical and interactive exercises we built the skills of the 25 participants until they were ready to practice debate techniques. It was wonderful to observe timid, insecure, soft-spoken youngsters become, week by week, more confident and forthright.

The Debate Club culminated with the Finals on two topics: "Social networks isolate the youth" and "Street vendors should be prohibited in Antigua". After two very interesting debates, the judges chose the team of Carlos Ildelfonso and Maleno Mixteco as the winners of the "Copa Shelley" – in memory of the late Shelley Eby, donor and avid supporter of CasaSito's Debate Club. The students, in addition to having their name engraved on the Cup, also won two laptop computers.





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## Scholarship Program 2014

### Theater of the Oppressed

This is an educational and therapeutic tool in which participants create a play based on their real life experiences. Eleven students participated in the club. All but one student had participated two years or more. This year the play was about ethnic discrimination against indigenous Guatemalan people and especially the discrimination CasaSito youth have suffered. "Caites" tells the story of an Indigenous and a Ladino young woman who transgress prejudice and become friends. They face contempt from parents, teachers, and peers who claim that the young Ladina is lowering her social status. Through the program, youths learned to defend their rights. As one of the participants shared, "Like I said, I have had this done to me, but... no I didn't defend myself...But after the theater. Yes!"

The play was a success and praised for its esthetics, music, and powerful message at the Second National Theatre of the Oppressed Festival in Quetzaltenango. Its evaluation gives evidence that all the youth gained a sense of pertinence, increased self-esteem, analytical and critical thinking, resilience skills, and emotional intelligence, which are components that will help them navigate life's challenges.







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## Scholarship Program 2014

### Math Club

The Math Club was established to provide academic support to struggling students and to give them the opportunity to learn or re-learn math concepts through engaging and participatory methods. Through participation in the club, the students involved have experienced improvement in their mathematical abilities and have learned to use new tools and techniques to solve math problems.

### English Club

English continues to be a desired and much needed skill for our youth. Forty-eight interested students from *Básico* and *Diversificado* were able to receive tutoring, practice and conversation in English, thanks to the collaboration of three young leaders among our scholarship students who have a good level of English and a desire to help their fellow students.

### ALTA VERAPAZ AND QUICHÉ SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Year 2014 marks the fourth year of the Scholarship Population in Alta Verapaz and El Quiché. From 2013 to 2014, the number of scholars increased from 18 to 53 students from different municipalities of Alta Verapaz and El Quiché. A total of \$43,991 was invested in the Scholarship Program for Alta Verapaz and Quiché in 2014.





## Scholarship Program 2014

### AVERAGE FINANCIAL AID PER STUDENT IN ALTA VERAPAZ AND QUICHÉ

Scholarship Type/Grade Level	Number of Students	Average financial aid per student per year (\$)
Básico (Middle School)	29	\$ 230
Diversificado (High School)	21	\$ 672
University	3	\$ 700

In 2014, our retention rates were: 93% at the middle school level, 94% at the high school level and 66% at the university level. The graduation rate, at all levels, was 100%. This means that all students who were due to graduate, successfully graduated.

### Festivals and Workshops

Students from *Básico* truly surprised everyone by organizing beautiful events that celebrated creativity, self-expression, and showcased their indigenous culture! In July and August, 2014, scholars organized three festivals at the *Básico* institutes where CasaSito scholars study. Students participated in cultural and artistic activities such as folkloric presentations, theater, music, dances, poetry and painting.

CasaSito held various workshops to empower students and parents, and create a family environment where they felt comfortable. We were pleased because despite the long distances, we had excellent attendance rates. Some of the workshops topics were leadership, empathy, responsibility, healthy family relationships, and personal hygiene. Additionally, students in third grade of *Básico* participated in vocational guidance that included psychometric testing to select a career.







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## Community Projects 2014

### LAS CONCHAS (Alta Verapaz)

During 2014, CasaSito continued the food program at the middle and high school boarding school at *Las Conchas*. The school allows students who come from far-away villages to live in the school dormitory. A total of 375 lunches per month were served to 50 students. The director and teachers are very committed, responsible and show excellent coordination.

### LA PRIMAVERA DEL IXCÁN

High School at Primavera

In January 2014, the construction of three school classrooms and a latrine were concluded at the high school in *La Primavera del Ixcán*. Most importantly, the school began to operate with 71 students! We observed that 70% of the students are from La Primavera and 30% come from the surrounding communities. In addition to this great achievement, the school received its government school code which means that in 2015 it should be included in the government's budget. The government will then have the responsibility of supporting the school and paying teacher salaries.



Four teacher workshops were held with teachers during 2014 on teaching techniques that encourage critical thinking in the students and learning through ludic activities. Teachers gained valuable skills including the use of games to teach complicated concepts.





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## Community Projects 2014

### Mujb'ab'l yol - Quetzaltenango

Mujb'ab'l yol (MBYL), continues its unrelenting fight to legalize community radios in Guatemala. Despite the crucial role that community radios play in informing and educating indigenous communities, and even though the 1996 Peace Agreements promised their recognition and legalization, still almost 20 years later, community radios are not recognized by the government. MBYL played an important role in many local and international forums and meetings, being the most notable one at the United Nations Fourteenth Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) held in May 2014. Issues related to economic and social development, culture, education, health and human rights were discussed.

During 2014, MBYL continued providing workshops for leaders of community radio programs on human rights, the social and political history of indigenous communities, the role of community radio in a democracy and gender equality issues, among others. These workshops are very important because it is through them that MBYL is able to not only strengthen technical skills of community radio leaders, but also increase the role that community radios play in protecting the rights and culture of indigenous communities.

### Water Project

2014 marked our 9th and final year of collaboration with the Engineers Without Borders - UCLA chapter. Four students and their advisor made the journey to Guatemala to do a final survey trip and were pleased with the results and responses they got from the families. With the remaining money from previous fundraising, our final two rainwater harvesting tank systems were built by the local masons with help from the families. That brings the total to 34 still-functioning systems!

The water project will take a hiatus for the next year. The water replacement filter elements will continue to be delivered to the families for a small fee. We are proud of what the project has accomplished to date, and we remain open to practical new ideas for solving the water-related issues of rural Guatemalans.





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## Partner Projects 2014

### PARTNER PROJECTS

CasaSito supports local educational centers by funding teacher salaries, supporting nutrition programs, and assisting with operating costs. In 2014, CasaSito supported three partner projects in the Sacatepéquez area: Semilla de Esperanza y Amor (SEA) in San Mateo Milpas Altas, EducArte in Ciudad Vieja, and Los Patojos in Jocotenango. These grass-roots educational centers offer children living in severe poverty unique opportunities that they would not have otherwise. Children receive not only tutoring assistance, but also receive complementary education that are not available in most Guatemalan schools. Children participate in extracurricular activities such as sports, arts and crafts, and music. Their nutrition programs are also very important since they provide critical nourishment to the children, thus helping them be better prepared to learn. Combined these associations serve approximately 400 children.



Through various donors, CasaSito provided funds to: 1) assist in partially covering all three centers' operational costs; 2) pay three teachers in SEA and six teachers in Los Patojos, and 3) support two invaluable food programs that combat malnutrition and provide hot and nutritious lunch to youth at Los Patojos and SEA. Combined, these two projects serve over 1,500 lunches and healthy snacks on a weekly basis.





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## Festivals 2014

Five hundred children from over 10 schools in Sacatepéquez and Alta Verapaz, including our partner projects Brillo del Sol, Comunidad La Esperanza, Semilla Esperanza y Amor, EducArte, Carpentry Project, LAVOSI, and Los Patojos participated in our annual Sports, Art & Music festivals. In the planning the festivals, the key objectives focused on personal development and empowerment of youth so they may influence their lives and environment through their participation in artistic and sporting events.



## Art and Music Festival



Taking place in November 2014, the Art and Music festival differed from the other festivals because the youth were involved in artistic training process during three months up to the festival. With emphasis on the development of their creativity and imagination, CasaSito ensured that the day of the Festival not only provided a single day of joy for children - but that they could continue to be inspired to experiment and create new forms of art.





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## Festivals 2014

### Art and Music Festival (cont.)

In Cinematography, they formed ideas, wrote scripts, filmed, acted and produced a final products. At their literature workshop, they learned to express themselves, developed their creativity and vocabulary, making literature accessible to all children. Capoeira developed the youth's improved motor skills, flexibility, dance, and sensitivity to music as well as participated in a capoeira circle with professional dancers.

Through the Puppets workshop, youth used their body, voice, and movement, making simple puppets and working with puppet expressions on a small stage. Basic Theatrical Creation fostered self-expression, creativity, vocabulary and ability to dream.

Using recycled materials, the Percussion workshop inspired rhythm and theatrical staging while developing coordination, and teamwork. Communication workshop stimulated communication and creation without using the voice, and covered topics such as mime and corporeality. Basic Photography taught youth how to tell a story with a picture, encouraging love for this art. And last, the professional music lessons which fostered and increased their music abilities.







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## Festivals 2014

### Sports Festival

This year's Sports Festival was a healthy and positive adventure for our youth as they not only learned new technique, using their body and mind, but also had a lot of fun running around, competing in athletic challenges and playing rugby and foot-ball with professionals. They gained strength in the lungs, heart, and released energy. Four workshops were given to youth prior to the Festival in order to foster friendships, prepare them physically and mentally for the day, and most importantly to enjoy exercising. Values such as perseverance, humility, respect, responsibility, solidarity, and honesty were key to the success of the event!





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# Financial Report 2014





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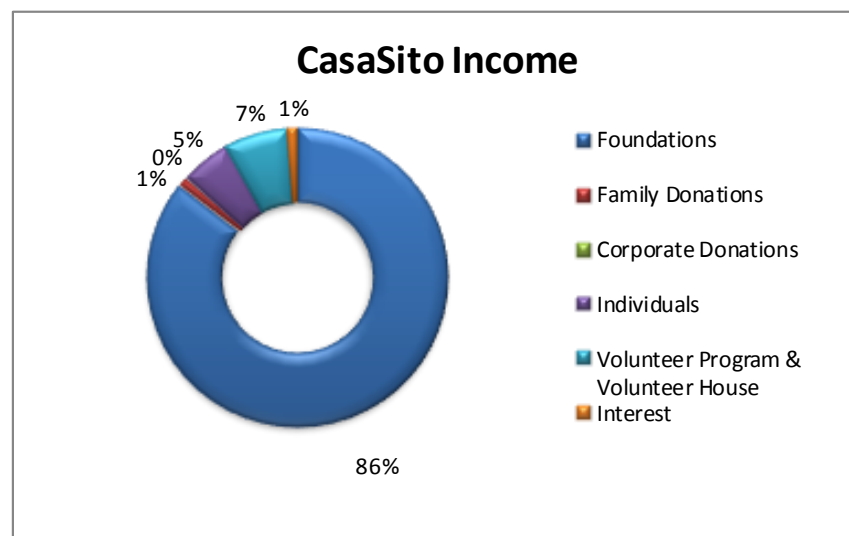
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## Income 2014

SOURCE	AMOUNT
Foundations & Grants	\$311,071
Family Donations	\$3,317
Corporate Donations	\$410
Individuals	\$19,578
Volunteer Program & House	25,176
Interest	\$4,031
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$363,584</b>





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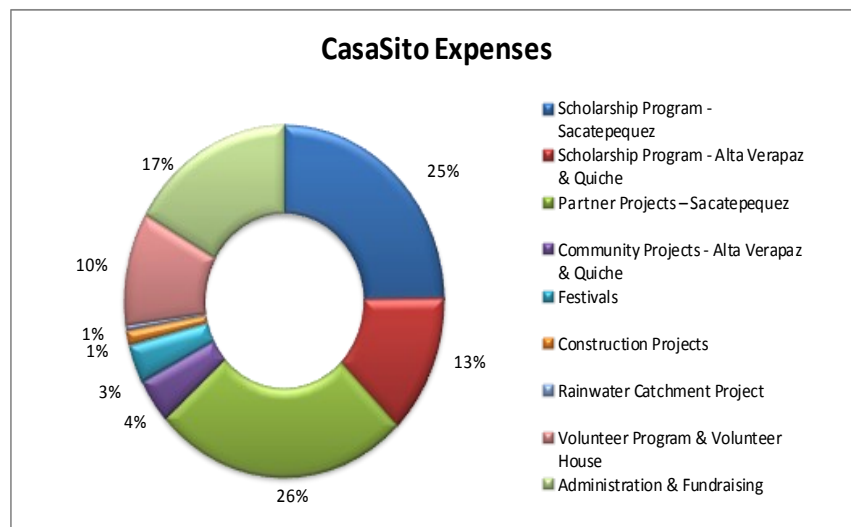
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## Expenses 2013

CATEGORY	AMOUNT
Scholarship Program—Sacatepéquez	\$86,069
Scholarship Program—Alta Verapaz & Quiché	\$43,991
Partner Projects —Sacatepéquez	\$89,662
Community Projects—Alta Verapaz & Quiché	\$14,221
Festivals	\$11,985
Construction Projects	\$4,544
Rainwater Catchment Project	\$2,021
Volunteer Program & House	\$35,930
Administration & Fundraising	\$58,257
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$346,680</b>





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## CasaSito's Donors

A Big thank you to our donors who make our mission possible! We thank each one of our donors for your ongoing dedication and trust in CasaSito!

### Partner Associations

Developing Scholars Foundation, Canada

Give Kids a Chance Foundation, Canada

(Alice Lee & Maritza Ortiz are the legal representative of these foundations, and all their projects are organized and executed by CasaSito staff )

### Major Donors

Kenoli Foundation, Canada

King Baudouin Foundation, Belgium

Los Niños Foundation, Holland

Mariposa Association, Germany

### Donors

Ege Family, Switzerland

### Contributors

Anne Blanche Saveniers Family, Belgium

Ben Neal, England

Cause & Affect Foundation, USA

Cristina Gómez, Spain

Dell Giving, USA

Dijkmans Family, Holland

Eltham College, Australia

Engineers Without Borders, UCLA, USA

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Martine D. Kellett, USA

Mayan White Water, USA/Guatemala

Reynald & Suzanne Matte, Canada

Rotary Club, Australia

Schwendinger Family, USA

Siegler Family Foundation, Canada

Stan Barrish, USA

Sue Rawlison, USA

University of Redlands, USA

### CasaSito Friends:

Eco-filtro, Guatemala

Qué Pasa Magazine, Guatemala

Revue Magazine, Guatemala

*And our guests of the Volunteers House and many generous individuals!*





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## Staff - Antigua

Maritza del Carmen Ortiz – Executive Director

Lourdes (Sisi) González – Director, Education Program & Psychologist

Miriam Valle – Assistant, Scholarship Program & Psychologist

Cristina Rivera– Social Worker

Jessica Hout – Volunteer & Festivals Coordinator

Salvador González – General Assistant

Elizabeth Lopez – Work-Study Student

## Staff—Cobán

Jose Marcos de la Cruz - General Coordinator

Victor Botzoc - General Assistant

## Board of Directors - CasaSito Guatemala

Name	Position	Nationality	Job	Area of Expertise
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Christoph Ege	Vice President	Swiss	Manager, ViaVenture	Business, Fundraising
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Heini Villela	Secretary	Guatemalan	CEO, Olten, SA	Business
Diane Neuhauser	Active Member 1	USA	President, Neuhauser Leadership	Fundraising, Planning & Evaluation
Felipe Feldmar	Active Member 2	Guatemalan	Professional Interpreter and Translator	Languages
Any Luna	Active Member 3	Guatemalan	Educational Psychologist	Education

## Board of Directors of CasaSito USA

Alice Lee So Fong – Founder

Greg Schwendinger – Co Founder and President

Eric Behrs –Secretary

Amanda Turner - Member



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## Volunteers

Amber Stansbury, USA  
Cristina Gómez, Spain  
Engineers Without Borders UCLA, USA  
Hilke Kracke, Germany  
Jasmine Phelps, USA  
Murphy Byrne, USA

Nelo Mijangos, Guatemala  
Reynald & Suzanne Matte, Canada  
Sa Nimá, University of Michigan, USA  
University of Redlands, USA  
Wayne Brown, USA  
Willy Pivaral, Guatemala

### A special mention to:

Andrea Del Pinal	Guatemala
Colin Scott:	USA
Eltham College:	Australia
Diane Neuhauser:	USA
Felipe Feldmar:	Guatemala
Manuela Rosales	Guatemala
Manuel Álvarez:	Guatemala

Fundraising, Program Evaluation  
Program Evaluation  
Construction  
Strategic Planning  
Translation  
Debate Club, Sports Festival  
Sports Festival

And many other Guatemalan and international volunteers who volunteer at the festivals, events and workshops!