

Kateri Tekakwitha Fund
PO Box 906
Pacifica CA 94044
Phone: 650 738 9551
Email: info@kateri-fund.org

We're on the Web
kateri-fund.org

The Kateri Tekakwitha Fund is a small 501(c) (3) nonprofit corporation. It exists to empower Guatemalan women to break the cycle of poverty by having a positive impact on their lives, families, and communities through collaboration, educational scholarships and support, so that the next generation will reach its full potential.

The Kateri Education Fund supports the education of Indigenous women through two programs:

Secondary Education Program whose goal is to support twenty young women each year. In 2018, the program supports eight young women in *diversificado* (high school career training) and three in *basico* (junior high).

Intern Program that places recent high school graduates in positions to gain the experience they need to secure stable employment.

Mission: Guatemala Women's Development Project facilitates self identified projects with women in Chumazanana, Chichicastenago, Quiche and Santa Clara la Laguna, Solola.

We've Moved



Our address is still PO Box 906, Pacifica CA 94044, but our office is at 750 Oddstad Blvd. #119A. You can call us at 650 738 9551.

We are still doing the same work in Guatemala with the same staff and important programs. We have downsized our office here in the US, but the Guatemalan staff continues their work from our Chimaltenango office!

Kateri Tekakwitha Fund The Mission

July 2019



Aura is Proving Herself in the Real World

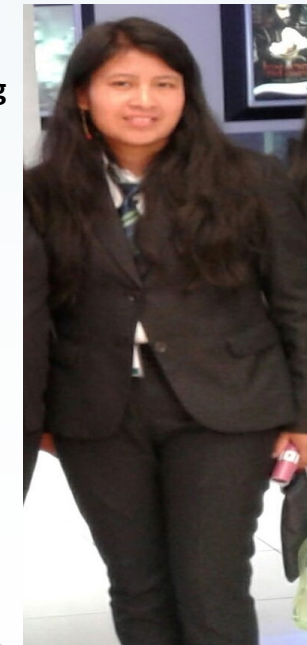
In January, we were not sure that we could offer internships, but our donors stepped up and now five high school graduates are testing out their academic skills in the workplace.

Aura is one of the young women . Aura writes, "Thanks to your support, I am working at an accounting firm called Finance and Business Consultants. My first week, I entered information in the books by hand. When they asked me what I knew how to do, I told them, so they assigned me clients to check payments against bills. I did those well, so they assigned me other tasks. Now I am in charge of the cash transactions for the G & T Bank and one accounting client. As cashier, I attend to the people who come to deposit cash, cash checks, withdraw money, etc.. The work goes well, and I am learning a lot every day."

"The manager of the accounting firm says that it is important that I overcome my shyness. When I attend to the clients, I am very nervous, but I am struggling to present myself with confidence, saying, 'It is a pleasure to serve you. Can I help you in something more?' "

"I want to do an excellent job and I am working hard to accomplish my goal. I feel very happy to be working in the office. It is an opportunity to strengthen my knowledge of my profession.

Thanks to those who donated Aura is able to prove herself in the real world. All of you who helped can be proud of what she has accomplished,



BOARD

Kay Sweeney
Managing Director
Secretary

Yvonne Lorvan
Treasurer

Susan Scott
Director

Janice Justice Oswald
Board Chair

GUATEMALA STAFF

Carmela Paz Bal
Education Fund
Coordinator

Candelaria Sut,
Office Manager
Women's Development
Project Manager

Angela Atz
Bookkeeper

Making a Connection

To make a connection between the young women in Guatemala and their sponsors in the U.S., the students write a letter monthly. It gives them a chance to share their goals and dreams.

Darli and her younger sister are orphans who live with their aunt and uncle. She studies hard, but also enjoys a lot of fun with her extended family.

In her May letter she said, “ I have studied hard. We celebrated my uncle’s birthday. He is an important figure in my life. On Mother’s Day , we had a fiesta. We gave lots of hugs to my aunt because she is a great mother to my sister and me. “

Susan Scott, her sponsor, said, “ I am filled with joy when Darli reaches a goal or realizes a dream come true.”



Darli



Ingrid

Ingrid lives with her parents and six siblings. Talented, she speaks her Mayan tongue, reads, speaks and writes Spanish, and is studying English. Her letters, give us a view into her life.

Her May letter says, “I would like to tell you a little bit about what has been happening in my life this month. Thanks to my sponsor, a big part of my time has been spent on my studies. “

“During Holy Week, we didn’t go out anywhere. We ate traditional white beans with fish and egg, bread with honey, and izote flowers in chuchitos. We use tortilla dough and put tomato sauce and meat on it, wrap it in cornhusks, and tie it up. Then we cook and eat it.”

The scholarship sponsors receive a letter each month from their student. It is a wonderful connection to another culture and a great support for the young woman. Sponsors donate \$50 a month. If you would like to become a sponsor, you can sign up at our website www.kateri-fund.org.

Continuing to Reach for her Dream

Loyda, is continuing to work toward her dream of being a secondary school teacher. She is in her second year at University . When she graduated from the Kateri scholarship program in 2015, she was unable to find a job in her career, so she went to work in an Internet Café to help with the family finances.

In 2017, she entered the Kateri Intern Program to gain experience in her career to help with her job search.

The internship led to a job as a school secretary. While there she decided teaching was for her and she switched careers at the University. She now is continuing her studies.

In her letters to her sponsor, she says, “ I am studying to do well and earn the grades I desire. I continue to work and support my family in any way that I can. I help run the Children’s Church. School. I enjoy working with the children. “

“My father is recovering from an accident. We are all sad because he is the pillar in the family and is the one who supports my little brother in his studies.”

“The support I have received allows me to achieve my dreams and goals. Thank you”

It was clear from the first that Loyda was determined and would achieve her dream of teaching in a secondary school. Her sponsor elected to help finance her college studies. She continues to meet all expectations. **Loyda will reach her goals, with a little help from a FRIEND.**

We are continuing to add to the intern program. If you wish to help, go to our website www.kateri-fund.org and designate your donation for the Intern Program.



Support Kateri Fund

Matching Gifts

Does your employer match gifts made by employees. PG&E and Kaiser Permanente are two companies that have matching gift programs. **Check with your HR department to double your gift.**

Stocks and Bonds

Donations of stocks and bonds are welcome. **Contact Kay for details.**

Monthly Donations

Become a member of the **Kateri Angel Circle** by setting up a monthly donation plan. **Contact Kay for details!**

Legacy Giving

If you would like to leave a gift for the Kateri Fund in your will, insurance policy, or annuity have your lawyer write: Kateri Tekakwitha Fund, a 501(c) (3) organization, Tax ID 65-0812097 on your beneficiary form.

Women's Initiative Realized: New Fruit Trees Propagated

In the last update, we told you about the women's desire to learn fruit tree husbandry. Candelaria Sut, Women's Development Program Manager, arranged the first workshop in April. The Chumanzana Women's group members are now able to multiply their fruit trees. Now the fruit trees they already have can be a source of income.



Maria was very happy to learn this new skill - Propagating new fruit trees by layering. It was very simple to do. She had never seen this method before. Now that she has learned how, she plans to prepare many new trees from the apple, avocado, peach, and plum trees she has on her land. She can use what she learned to produce new trees to sell, bringing in more needed income for her family.

She thanks YOU, through the Kateri Fund, for providing activities like this, which help her learn things that

can provide an income for her family. She was very happy to participate with the other women in this activity. A \$10 donation will pay to provide other life changing workshops for these hard working women. Go to www.kateri-fund.org to donate.



A Note about Migration from Guatemala to the US from Susan Scott, Kateri Fund Board Member

Were you not appalled at the attitude toward the caravan of Central Americans who tried to enter the US in March? I personally felt that the coyotes were opportunists who were taking advantage of simple people from the Guatemalan highlands by promising a better life in the States in exchange for enormous sums of money. However, after doing more research, I realize that the motivation to walk to the border is not just to find a fantasy life of ease, but is motivated by actual physical hunger and dire poverty from which there seems no escape.

The coffee crop is weakened by forces attributed to climate change, the NW highlands have experienced unusual drought, children are suffering from "stunting" due to malnutrition, men are mortgaging their small land holdings to raise money to travel to the US, and mother's and children are left behind to struggle to live. This is happening in the state of Huehuetenango, but other highland states are vulnerable, too.



Susan Scott

Our students and their families have always seemed so stable to me from the distance that separates us. I never thought that they could be living such a tenuous existence. Fortunately, the majority of Kateri students are the ones choosing to remain in Guatemala and strengthen their families and communities by working to overcome ignorance, hunger, prejudice and poverty.

Your support for these families is making generational poverty a thing of the past. Our girls and their families have hope and power, not misery and despair. Thank you.

There is much being written about Central America now. You might like to read this article:

<https://digital.olivesoftware.com/Olive/ODN/sacbee/shared/ShowArticle.aspx?doc=MSB%2F2019%2F06%2F09&entity=Ar14606&sk=8BC32071&mode=text>



Manuela Continues Gardening

Manuela is continuing to use the gardening skills she learned from a Kateri Fund workshop provided by the Atkinson Fund. Because of the new skills she learned, she is able to grow nutritious foods to supplement the diet of her family. In the past, it consisted mainly of corn and beans, Now they eat spinach, carrots, and many more fresh vegetables. She is able to grow enough in a small space with a raised bed garden to provide for their daily needs. **Everything is possible with a little help from a FRIEND**

Focusing on Change: Envisioning the Future

Each month, the Kateri scholars come to Chimaltenango to participate in a workshop. The workshops are planned to widen the vision of the young women and support them, as they become strong, educated women.

In June, the meeting was focused on the upcoming elections and how it is important for women to participate. A facilitator from the organization Defenders of the Indigenous Woman, the organization founded by the government after the Peace Accords, which ended the Civil War, was signed. Its purpose is to defend the rights of Indigenous women.

The facilitator talked of the factors that keep women from participating in the election. The biggest is the thinking of the men that women are not capable of participating and the fact that women have accepted that thinking. The problems in society can only change if women and men change their idea. The only way for that to change is for women to start to participate. A good sign that there is change happening is that in the 2019 election an Indigenous woman ran for president and in a field of twelve candidates finished in the top four.

The facilitator stressed that the change needs to start with each person. A beginning is to prepare themselves well and use their vote wisely. Have a vision of themselves as an important person in their Community. The young women drew pictures of that vision. Margarita saw herself as a lawyer helping women secure their rights. Milvia envisioned being the Director of the National Police. Mayra thought to become a member of COCODE, an organization that promotes the same opportunities for men and women. Ana would support women as a judge and Darli as a lawyer. Alicia and Ingrid saw themselves as business owners who would create small businesses for women. Loyda will be a leader in her Community. Seeing an image of themselves as people of importance is a good start.

The facilitator had them do another exercise that gave a window into how each young woman saw herself. She asked them to draw a picture of the element of nature with which they identified. She said she identified with a tree as a strong woman. Loyda drew a dove who could fly wherever it wished. Alicia identified as a tree because it could withstand whatever storms. Mayra's drawing was a river that runs without stopping and is a benefit to others. Darli drew a sun because it could give light to others. Ingrid's drawing was a river because it always looks for its way and breaks down barriers. Milvia drew a river with rocks because it can do everything even though it seems impossible. It has difficulties but it overcomes them to succeed. Yessica identified with a turtle because even though it was slow, it was sure.

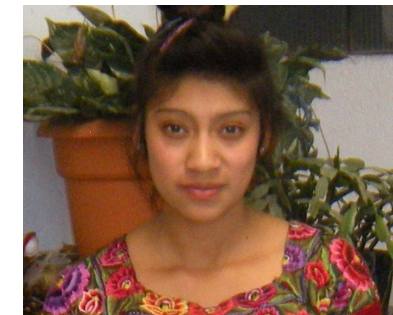
This workshop was well received by the young women. The facilitator gave them a picture of the obstacles they had in front of them as women and why they needed to vote and become involved as citizens. She helped them to see themselves as important and able to effect change. These experiences little by little give the young women a new vision of themselves.



"I identify with a river because it runs without stopping and is a benefit to others." **Mayra**



"I identify with the sun because it gives light to everyone." **Darli**



"I identify with a tree because it can withstand whatever storm" **Alicia**



"I feel like a river with rocks. It can do anything even though it seems impossible. It has difficulties, but it overcomes them." **Milvia**