



Primeros
Pasos

2009 Annual Report





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Our Mission

Primeros Pasos aims to improve the quality of life of the rural communities of the Palajunoj Valley of Quetzaltenango, Guatemala, through integrated health education programs and access to medical services, working towards a more sustainable, integrated definition of healthcare. We incorporate and combine clinical care, health education and community outreach programs as the critical steps that will lead us to our goal of healthy schools and healthy lives.



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Message From The Directors

Access to healthcare and health education is something that many of us take for granted. Even with the downfalls of the “1st World” healthcare system, we have security in knowing that our school systems offer preventative health education and that we can access primary healthcare for ourselves and our families. Unfortunately, not everyone living in rural Guatemala has that luxury. We are dedicated to reaching the under-served people of the Palajunoj Valley by providing them with the comprehensive healthcare and health education they need to live healthy lives and make informed decisions about the health of their families.

Primeros Pasos is a medical clinic located in Tierra Colorada Baja, one of the ten communities of the Palajunoj Valley, a primarily Mayan Quiche community located just outside of Quetzaltenango, Guatemala. The clinic works with the surrounding schools to offer free primary healthcare, dental care, lab work, medicines and health education classes to all students. We offer these same services to everyone in the Valley not enrolled in school for a very low fee. We have developed a three-year health education program targeted at the women and family caretakers of the ten communities, empowering women and encouraging them to become community leaders. Our newest program focuses on women specific health related issues, and provides women with safe access to gynecological and obstetric consults— for many, this is their first time receiving this type of care.

The Primeros Pasos Clinic, as the only service learning site of it’s kind in Quetzaltenango, provides a unique environment for our patients, staff and volunteers. We host both local and foreign 4th-Year Medical Students in the clinic as well as volunteer health professionals and community health educators. We rely heavily on volunteers to give their time, energy and hearts to Primeros Pasos each year and we couldn’t do it without them!

Primeros Pasos appreciates your support and interest in our work— together we can support the health and wellbeing of the under-served indigenous people living in the Palajunoj Valley.

*Gabriela Muñoz
Primeros Pasos Director*



*Ariana Dixon
Development Director/IAHA Liaison*





La Escalera A Una Buena Salud– The Stairway to Good Health

Thanks to a partnership with Threads Weaving Dreams and the hard work of our program staff, our Stairway To Good Health Program has completed it's full second year. With 96 women enrolled in six different community groups, 2009 was a huge success. Initially, participants were given the incentive to enroll in the program with the benefit of a health card- which entitles all members of their family to receive medical and dental services in the clinic, free of charge. As the second year of the program has come to an end, it is clear, the benefits reach far beyond healthcare for these women. Often for the first time in their lives, the women are engaging in educational workshops focusing on a myriad of health related topics, including basic hygiene and nutrition, gastritis, parasite infections, menopause, diabetes, self-esteem, natural medicine, first aid, family planning, women's rights, civic participation, leadership, domestic violence, and several others. The success of the program this year has been demonstrated through a variety of means– first and most poignantly, through the demand for the formation of three new groups at the start of the year. Success has been continuously shown through the high workshop attendance and participation rates, the change in attitudes and interactions between participants and the confidence they have demonstrated in themselves and in clinic services. The objective of the Stairway to Good Health Program is to empower women of the Palajunoj Valley through education and communication amongst themselves in order to make conscious, informed decision about their individual health and the health of their families. Through this education, we hope to alleviate some of the risks associated with rural living conditions by giving the women the power of knowledge and choice.

A moment to remember...

One day in a Menopause workshop Ms.

Magdalena, an older woman in the group that is normally pretty reserved and quiet, took the floor. After Miriam had explained the process of



Menopause, the symptoms they would experience, and tips for staying healthy, Ms. Magdalena began to tell about her experiences with Menopause. Once she began describing the symptoms, she became enthusiastic to share her experiences with her companions. She began talking about hot flashes, recounting funny stories of moments when, confused, she began shedding layers of clothing while her family members were bundled against the cold. She also spoke at length about the fatigue that it gave her. "I could fall asleep standing up on the bus, buying food in the market – anywhere, at any moment." The women were engrossed in her stories, laughing along with her the whole while. It was apparent that this was the first time she had shared these stories with anyone, and enjoyed having this "safe space" among fellow women to talk about something that would not be appropriate to discuss in other settings. While talking about her experiences and impressions of this time of life, she was the center of attention, a source of advice and wisdom, and furthermore she was able to make her companions laugh. Once she began telling the stories, she didn't want to stop. At the end of the workshop, she left the meeting beaming, her companions laughing and patting her on the back.



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Women's Health Clinic



September marked the beginning of the Women's Health Clinic at Primeros Pasos. Danielle Dittrich, a Vanderbilt School of Nursing graduate arrived at Primeros Pasos with a gynecological table and a few supplies she had managed to acquire before her trip. She began seeing patients immediately. According to UNICEF (2007) Guatemala has a maternal mortality rate of 130 per 100,000 childbearing women and infant mortality rate of 29 per 1,000 newborns. These numbers are grave compared to the United States rate of maternal mortality 12 per 100,000 childbearing women and infant mortality of 6.9 per 1,000 newborns.

The women centered health program provides the indigenous population of the Valley with routine pap smears, cervical cancer screenings, consults for menstrual irregularities and other obstetric problems as well as pre and post natal care. For most women, this vital service provides a type of care they have not received before.

Danielle saw 50 patients during her short stay here, half of those being women enrolled in the Stairway to Good Health Program, and many of them more than once. Services ranged from pap smears, pregnancy tests and STD treatment, to family planning, cancer screenings and post-operative infection treatment. The sheer number of women accessing these services immediately after Danielle's arrival signifies not only the huge demand for this care, but also the confidence the clinic has earned from the women in the community. In a culture where reproductive health is often a taboo subject and few women are encouraged to talk to doctors about women's health related problems, we are proud to offer safe, culturally sensitive women specific healthcare.



As we continue to develop this program, our hope is to partner with Vanderbilt School of Nursing to ensure the constant presence of a certified OBGYN in the clinic throughout the year. As of now, we have a volunteer who has taken Danielle's place and who provides the women's health clinic services two days a week.

"Doña Celia's baby is almost a month old now. I am sure that she is already so much bigger than the last time that I saw her. Pretty soon she should be given her name. In Guatemala, the newborns are usually given their name in a ceremony at about 1 month. Last time that I saw her, she was wearing the one-sie that the clinic had given her. Her eyes had turned from jaundice yellow, back to white after a week of sunshine therapy. Their family was the very last that I saw on my way home from clinic, and after over a week of home visits and check-ins, certainly the most difficult and teary good-bye."

-Reflections of Danielle Dittrich, after returning to the US



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Healthy Schools

Through the collaboration of clinic staff, volunteers, school teachers and administrators, this year brought 2,636 students from eleven schools to the clinic for health check-ups, dental check-ups and interactive health education classes. Ten of the schools are located in the Palajunoj Valley, and EDELAC, the eleventh school is located in Las Rosas, one of the poorest areas of Quetzaltenango. The clinic staff also visited and attended to 219 young children from twelve daycare centers in the Palajunoj Valley.



The Healthy Schools Program has been the heart of Primeros Pasos since the opening of its doors, fighting the high levels of malnutrition and preventable sicknesses through free annual check-ups, dental check-ups, lab testing, disbursement of appropriate medicines and health education. Prior to visiting the clinic, each student is given a sample cup and asked to bring in a fecal sample for analysis in the laboratory. During each visit, students are taken one by one to be examined by our physician, local 4th-year medical students or by foreign medical staff. In addition, the students participate in interactive health education classes in the clinic, focusing on basic hygiene and nutrition.

According to two recently published studies done in the Palajunoj Valley “a reduction in all three levels of malnutrition was seen from the time when the clinic started treating school children in 2004 ... the results demonstrate that clinics such as Primeros Pasos can have a beneficial effect on schoolchildren, particularly those who are severely malnourished”(Seccombe 2009). The other study (Cook 2009) revealed a significant decrease in three common parasitic infections in school children over the four year period of the study; *A. lumbricoides* (from 33.1% to 10.2%), *B. hominis* (from 4.2% to 0.9%) and *H. nana* (from 6.9% to 4.4%). These findings are an exciting and important step forward for Primeros Pasos, lending credibility and demonstrating success of the Healthy Schools Program.

Children’s Health Education-Community Outreach

Since 2005, the community outreach program has been providing in-school health education classes to students (K-6) to encourage life-long healthy living and healthy habits. These classes complement the in-clinic education provided through the Healthy Schools Program. Throughout the school year, health educators visit the ten local schools to provide one-hour workshops on various topics related to health and wellbeing. While students learn about basic nutrition and hygiene during clinic visits, in-school workshops present more age appropriate themes such as sexual education, self-esteem, delinquency, domestic violence, drug and alcohol addiction, natural environment, children’s rights, and identity.

Annually, Primeros Pasos provides over 100 workshops throughout the Palajunoj Valley. Workshop topics and content are determined by the classroom teachers through detailed questionnaires. This is one of the many ways in which Primeros Pasos effectively collaborates with community leaders in the Valley. In 2009, the Children’s Health Education Program restructured classes into an improved age-specific sequence and expanded to offer new workshop topics including gang violence, values and “what I want to be.”



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Walk-In Consults

The Walk-In Consult Program is open to all people not enrolled in school from the 10 communities in the Palajunoj Valley. These communities include Bella Vista, Candelaria, Chuicaracoj, Chuicavioc, Las Majadas, Llano del Pinal, Tierra Colorada Alta, Tierra Colorado Baja, Xecaracoj, and Xepache. In 2009, the clinic saw 4,684 walk-in patients. The most common reasons for visiting the clinic included respiratory illnesses, intestinal infections, internal parasitic infections, bacterial infections, pneumonia, bacterial tonsillitis, grade II malnutrition, dermatological parasites, Acute Otitis Media, Cutaneous Mycoses, Peptic Disease and Hypertension. Walk-In consult fees are Q30 (\$3.60) for adults and Q5 (60 cents) for children not enrolled in school. Consult fees offer a financial resource for the clinic as well as one of the steps taken to ensure the future financial sustainability of Primeros Pasos. Exams and medicines are provided for free.

“When I go to the clinic with my kids they always give me good service. The program is a great benefit for me and my family and the educators teach us a lot of things that we didn’t know. Ms. Elizabeth is really nice and Ms. Miriam too, they teach us to have self-esteem. God bless the good-hearted people that support the clinic and this benefit for me and my family.” -Doña Marta de Chuicaracoj

Volunteerism & Service Learning

Primeros Pasos is committed to creating valuable service-learning opportunities for volunteers. Since 2004, Primeros Pasos has hosted over 450 volunteers from sixteen different countries including Guatemala, the United States, Canada, England, Spain, Germany, Israel, India, and Australia. In 2009, we hosted over 70 foreign volunteers from ten different countries.

At any given time throughout the year there are between 5-10 volunteers of varying



backgrounds working at the clinic. Health education volunteers work at the clinic and in community schools to teach health education classes and improve school facilities. Foreign health professionals work at the clinic under the supervision of a Guatemalan physician. They are provided the opportunity to work side-by-side with Guatemalan professionals and community members and get a full immersion experience.

The Primeros Pasos Medical program is an example of the clinic’s continued commitment to sustainable service learning. Since 2004 Primeros Pasos has been a site for clinical rotations in primary care for medical students from the University of San Carlos in their 4th year of medical school. Between 40-50 Guatemalan medical students work at the clinic each year. In addition, Primeros Pasos functions as a teaching clinic for these students as the supervising physician gives weekly workshops to the medical students. In 2008 Primeros Pasos was elected as the #1 primary care rotation for medical students at the University of San Carlos, judged on the basis of the quality of their educational experience.



Primeros Pasos would like to thank our generous supporters and partners:

Inter-American Health Alliance (IAHA)

The Inter-American Health Alliance (IAHA) provides financial, technical, and organizational support for community health groups in Guatemala; its primary partner is Primeros Pasos. Since 2004, IAHA has provided Primeros Pasos with over 80 percent of its annual budget. IAHA works closely with several universities in the United States and Guatemala to create a sustainable network of support for the organization and to develop innovative, equity-promoting service-learning initiatives.

Pedal4Pasos & Change For Children

Created by Anne-Marie Jamin, a former clinic volunteer, Pedal4Pasos took four adventurous cyclists on a 5,000 km trip from Edmonton, Alberta to Quetzaltenango, Guatemala this past year. Four Canadian cyclists, Matthew "Gus" Gusul, Cody McNalley, Genevieve Perreault-Murphy, and Anne-Marie Jamin covered over 5,000 km during June - August 2009 arriving at the clinic in September. Pedal 4 Pasos worked with Change for Children, an Edmonton based organization, who partners with communities in developing countries that are struggling against poverty and hardships to improve access to basic human needs, healthcare and education. The courageous cuatro raised over \$12,000 for Primeros Pasos.

Spanish Schools

Local Spanish Schools La Paz, ICA, Utatlan, Celas Maya, Proyecto Lingüístico Quetzaltenango (PLQ), CBA and Miguel Angel Asturias donate regularly to the clinic. Links to their websites can be found on the Primeros Pasos Supporters webpage.

Five Times Five Hundred (5X500) Campaign

The sustaining members of our 5x500 campaign give generously every month to Primeros Pasos. These donors ensure the financial sustainability of the clinic and serve as a vital resource during low giving times throughout the year.

Bee Hive School:

Local bi-lingual primary and secondary school, visited the clinic this year to learn about our programs and services offered. They donated cash and much needed toothbrushes to the clinic.

Wianko Family Foundation

The Wianko Family Foundation went out of their general mission guidelines this year and generously donated a one time gift of \$5000.

Julie Savoie, Megan Dunning & Mio Restaurant

Ms. Savoie along with the support of Washington DC based Mio Restaurant hosted a benefit party for Primeros Pasos this year, raising over \$2000 for the clinic.

Individual Donors

Primeros Pasos relies on the generosity of our individual donors each year. Whether donations are made by check, online or during benefit events, we are grateful for the kindness and support of each person.



Ministry of Health

The Guatemalan Ministry of Health provides vaccines to community members of the Palajunoj Valley, and Primeros Pasos provides the vaccination services. Primeros Pasos also participates in statewide meetings and initiatives organized by Consejo Salud Quetzaltenango (Health Advice Quetzaltenango) and Red de Maternidad y Paternidad Responsable (Responsible Parenting) and monthly “health roundtable” meetings with Ixcanel N’oj.

Threads Weaving Dreams

“Threads” was formally established in 2006 to empower and provide economic and educational opportunities for the indigenous women of Guatemala. In 2008, Threads partnered with Primeros Pasos to conduct a health care needs assessment in several rural Guatemalan communities. Threads currently funds Primeros Pasos’ Stairway to Good Health Program, as well as a Women’s Education Scholarship Program, coordinated by Primeros Pasos staff.

University of San Carlos

The University of San Carlos is a public university with campuses in all major cities of Guatemala. Primeros Pasos has had an existing partnership with medical students at the University of San Carlos in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala since January 2005 and dental students at the University of San Carlos in Guatemala City, since January 2008. Each year, six consecutive groups of fourth-year medical students complete two-month rotations at Primeros Pasos; dental students complete eight-month rotations. Medical students are taught classes each week by the on-site supervising doctor as well as participate in the health education classes given to visiting students.

Quetzaltrekkers

Quetzaltrekkers, a locally based trekking and guide non-profit organization, hosts a benefit party for Primeros Pasos each month. In 2009, they donated 100% of the profits to the clinic. In return, the trek guides receive First Aid Training at the clinic. The Quetzaltrekkers’ other beneficiary is EDELAC & Hogar Abierto— a school and home for street children. Primeros Pasos includes EDELAC in their Healthy Schools Program each year.

SOSEP– (Secretaria de Obras de la Esposa del Presidente)

Sosep collaborates with Primeros Pasos to provide medical care and workshops to women and children in the 12 daycares of the Palajunoj Valley.

Stove Project

Funded by the Pfizer Initiative for Global Health through the Center for Global Health at the University of Virginia, The Stove Project collaborates with Ixchel, an organization that builds clean air stoves with women’s groups mainly in the Cantel area. In 2009, they collaborated with Primeros Pasos and constructed 39 stoves in the Palajunoj Valley with two separate women’s groups. Each group received 6 weeks of required training workshops before receiving their stoves.



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Donations, Funding & Partnerships

IAHA University Student Chapters

Vanderbilt University

Vanderbilt University has organized a central office for the Inter-American Health Alliance (IAHA). This office coordinates activities between the Inter-American Health Alliance National Organization, Inter-American Health Alliance Student Chapters, and Primeros Pasos; activities include fundraising, submission of US-based grant and research applications, supplies collection, accounting, web and media development, and “best practices” research. The IAHA central office has received tremendous support from Vanderbilt University, its Department of Latin American Studies, and a variety of faculty members and students.

University of Virginia

Primeros Pasos serves as an elective site for fourth-year medical students at the University of Virginia (UVA) interested in participating in the Service-Language-Culture (SLC) program. Developed by David Burt, the UVA Department of Emergency Medicine, and staff members at Primeros Pasos, the SLC program emphasizes health-related service, Spanish language acquisition, and cultural immersion and education. University of Virginia also commits to fundraising for Primeros Pasos each year through on-campus benefit events and Associated Student Body alternative spring break project visits.

NYU School of Dentistry

NYU College of Dentistry’s Student Chapter was founded in 2008 by Alexis Cohen, who was a volunteer at the clinic during the previous summer. They have organized a variety of fundraising events for Primeros Pasos as well as collected toothbrushes and health supplies for the clinic.



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Volunteers

We would like to send a huge thank you to all the foreign volunteers that donated their time, energy, ideas, money, supplies and hearts to Primeros Pasos during 2009. Without each volunteer, we would not have been able to provide and continue to expand our vital health services to the people of the Palajunoj Valley. Thank you!

Amy Carlson
Elizabeth Cespedes
Laura Baringer
Lisa Calabrese
Marissa Hall
Natalie Chadwick
Jillian Villars
Joanna Dienske
Emily Graham
Haigo Setrakian
Jacob Gregerson
Jason Franasiak
John Tumeh
Julie Potter
Shane Quinn
Jimmy Carlucci
Scott Otallah
Tracy Ivy
Jason Sonnenschein
David Tayloe
Melanie Gilbert
Rusha Pearson Lev
Zachary Wood
Emily Lemon
Emily Kase
Dana McCabe
Danielle Doughman
Meckaela Langhorn
Eunbee Kim
Fergus Fairmichael
Katie Stump
Janie Dumas
Danielle Dittrich
Emily Welton
Danielle Cobb
Beatriz Marin Plaza

Monica Gimenez Mesas
Jennifer Crane
Carlos Martínez Hinojosa
Trisha Schimek
Claire Jones
Lynsa Nguyen
Megan Dunning
Susan Hall
Mindy Feinberg
Pete Bryan
Li Quach
Douglas McAdams
Jan Massie
Kate Piermarani
Sonia Desikan
Kimm Burrows
Rebecca Gunter
Roseanne Rodrigues
Daniel Earnshaw

Vanderbilt University ASB
Alternative Spring Break
Volunteers:
Nehal Mehta
Andrew Tritter
Catherine Spaulding
Veronica Alvarado
Kellianne Kleeman
Ashley Cockrell
Matthew Paul Farina
Bradford Ralston
Joya Hampton
Claire Bateman

University of Virginia ASB
Alternative Spring Break
Volunteers:
Ravi Katari
Elisabeth Linka
Nikki Herrera
Chen Lin
Mariam Ahmad
Jiamej Wang
Danielle Moyer
Anna Lehmann
Drew Harmata
Aparna Baheti
John McKay
Shubani Sareen

If you volunteered at Primeros Pasos in 2009 and do not see your name on this list, please contact us at arianadixon@primerospasos.org and let us know! We apologize to any of our hardworking volunteers that didn't make it on this list.



Primeros
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Board & Staff

Board of Directors

Iris Tucux

President/ Legal Representative

Zoraida Violeta Zacarías Martínez

Vice-President

Juan Pablo Echeverría Pereira

Treasurer

Carlos Javier Antonio Valdez Pérez

General Member

Claudia Lili Guillen Barrios

General Member

2009 Staff

Antonette Shaw (Jan-Sept)

Sofía Gabriela Muñoz Roche

General Director

Dr. Hugo Alvarado

Medical Director & Supervising Physician

Miriam Yaneth López

Adult Education Program Director

Elizabeth Murphy

*Adult Education Program Assistant and
Education Scholarship Coordinator*

Magda Yolanda Otzoy

Childrens Education Program Director

Ariana Dixon

Development Director/ IAHA Liaison

Anna Grewe

Grant Writer

Elba Fajardo

Dentist

Marta Istazuy

Dental Assistant

Lab Technician

Zach Wood

Flori Istazuy

Cleaning Personnel





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Financial Statement

\$1: Q8.3

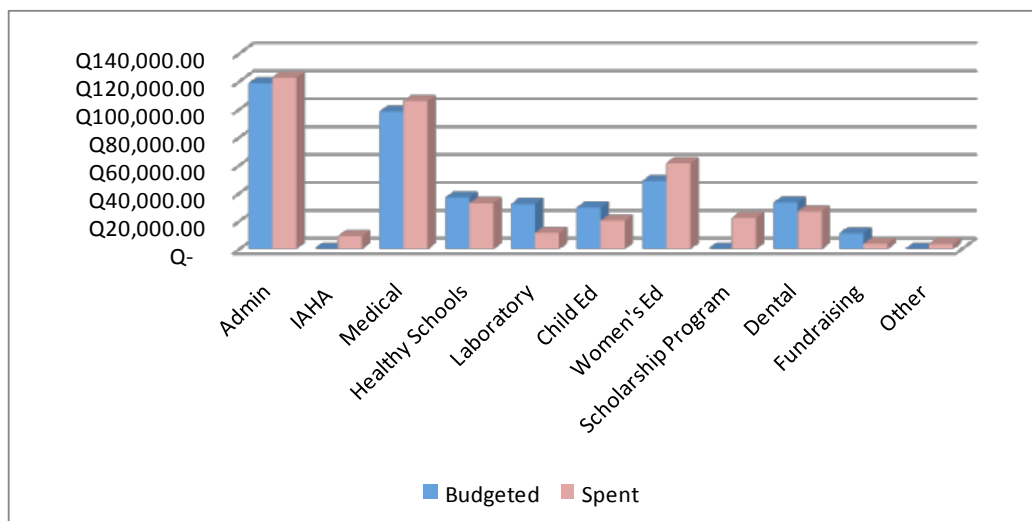
Summary	Quetzals	USD
2009 Starting Cash	Q 15,795.95	\$ 1,903.13
2009 Income	Q 422,270.95	\$ 50,876.02
2009 Expenses	Q 422,396.20	\$ 50,891.11
"Cash available"	Q 15,670.70	\$ 1,888.04

Income

	YTD Total	Q 422,270.95	\$50,876.02
IAHA deposits	Q 244,219.95		\$29,424.09
Threads Deposits	Q 47,783.75		\$5,757.07
Volunteer Donations	Q 10,631.00		\$1,280.84
Quetzaltrekkers Benefits	Q 14,820.55		\$1,785.60
Merchandise Sales	Q 1,095.00		\$131.93
Individual Donations	Q 36,104.67		\$4,349.96
Local Spanish Schools	Q 5,100.00		\$614.46
ASB Groups	Q 2,000.00		\$240.96
Consults & Lab Fees	Q 38,294.95		\$4,613.85
Other (specified):			
Individual benefit party	Q 1,300.00		\$156.63
Installments, Wil Van Rijn	Q 10,000.00		\$1,204.82
Luxembourg Donation	Q 8,691.08		\$1,047.12
Returned Scholarship Funds	Q 2,230.00		\$268.67

Expenses

	YTD Total	Q 422,396.20	\$50,891.11
Admin	Q 122,570.14		\$14,767.49
IAHA	Q 9,075.00		\$1,093.37
Medical	Q 105,839.21		\$12,751.71
Healthy Schools	Q 32,781.18		\$3,949.54
Laboratory	Q 11,397.75		\$1,373.22
Child Ed	Q 20,232.30		\$2,437.63
Women's Ed	Q 63,578.42		\$7,391.50
Scholarship Program	Q 23,062.00		\$2,682.17
Dental	Q 26,834.15		\$3,233.03
Fundraising	Q 3,563.15		\$429.30
Other	Q 3,462.90		\$417.22





Primeros Pasos

Providing comprehensive healthcare and health education to the rural, under-served communities of the Palajunoj Valley, Quetzaltenango.



www.primerospasos.org