



## OCIMA

### Overseas and Continental Independent Mercy Association

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November 2013

Dear Friends of O.C.I.M.A.,

Another year has come and gone, and 2013 has been a year of challenges. But challenge is how we learn and grow.

I only have to look as far as the students at our school in Santa Rosa for inspiration. These are young women who must fight for the chance to get more than a sixth grade education. The school is located in a farming community and this year's challenge has been a fungus called "roya", or coffee-leaf rust. The fungus is hurting production across all of Central America and the incomes of families in Santa Rosa have dropped significantly. But despite this economic adversity, 45 deserving students finished another school year because of your support. Of these, 12 students graduated with teaching certificates and 8 with a degree in computers.

I am humbled by these young women and have to remind myself that my challenges are small in comparison to what they face each and every day. We recently received several hand-written notes from this year's graduates. The following excerpt reflects the overall sentiment:

*...I am writing to thank you for your help over the last 3 years to realize my dream of becoming a teacher. It is thanks to your efforts that I am blessed. If God permits, I will continue to help other young people, like myself, who have little to no means. Today, thanks to you, my life is changed...*

– Mayra Elizabeth Pivoral Escobar, 11/20/2013

***Thanks to you, lives are changed! Thanks to you, those lives will influence and improve the lives of others in their community.***

At the Nutritional Center in Morales, we continue to fight the fight against severe malnutrition. If that weren't challenge enough, the Center is in need of a new truck. The current truck is about 12 years old and has had to undergo a number of repairs – not surprisingly, given the terrain. Without a reliable vehicle, the Nutritional Center is operating at a disadvantage. Nonetheless, the Center perseveres and continues to help families in 9 different communities focusing its efforts on children 3 years of age and younger – arguably, the most critical stage in a child's physical and intellectual development.

The girls at the orphanage are thriving in a safe and loving environment – just a hop, skip and a jump away from the Clinic and Nursing School. The Clinic and Nursing School are shining beacons within the community, but by their very nature, they are inherently challenging. Because the Nursing School is so new, enrollment is low and doesn't cover the full cost of running the school. With respect to the Clinic, we just received a business plan to see if OCIMA could help with the addition of a surgical facility on the second floor of the clinic. This will require more funds and only you can help us answer this question.

Malnutrition is still one of the most critical problems in Guatemala. Sadly, we have run into significant challenges with Guatemalan customs. As a result, we are deferring all future food packaging events until we can resolve the current shipment and determine how to avoid the same issues in the future. Instead, any funding ordinarily directed toward the food packaging will be sent to Morales and Santa Elena to purchase the foods directly. We will keep you informed of our progress and I look forward to when we can meet again for another food packaging event.

We entered into an exciting project in Ecuador this past year. \$12,000 of the funds sent to G.S.F.E.P.P. is being used to install solar panels and showers in 4 different schools and kindergartens in mountain communities in the Andes. The weather is harsh at 3,500 meters – always cold and often below freezing at night. The Kichwa, who live in this region, must use fire in order to prepare food or heat water. As a result, not too many baths/showers and a general lack of hygiene in food preparation and personal cleanliness. This leads to all sorts of health issues. In addition, the natural vegetation (used for fire) is being destroyed and causing serious environmental problems. This project has a simple first step – to provide warm water so that the children and teachers can bathe regularly with the goal of improving the health and self-esteem of the children. But ultimately, the long-term goals are improved health and hygiene for all members of the communities, land conservation, and future employment opportunities through a coop that would make the solar panels.

Finally, I want to thank Sue Hug and Mike Curreri, vice-president and secretary/treasurer, respectively. They have been dedicated to OCIMA and a great support to me for the last 6 years. We welcome Grayson Smith as president, Larry Gatt as vice-president and Carolyn Schenden as secretary. Each knew Father Nick personally, each is accomplished in their own careers/lives, and each has remained very much involved with OCIMA. Sue and I look forward to working with them on the Board and as I take on the role of Treasurer.

So as 2013 draws to a close, we thank you on behalf of the children of Guatemala and Ecuador. If you are able, please challenge yourself to give a little more this year. There is so much more we can do. ***And you are changing lives with your generous gifts!***

Peace to all of you and warmest wishes for health and happiness in the coming year.

Maria Curreri  
OCIMA President

### FINANCIAL REPORT — 2012

FUNDS AVAILABLE:

Donations in 2012:	\$ 140,955
Distribution from Endowment Fund:	5,528
Carryover from 2011 <sup>1</sup> :	1,313
	147,796
TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE:	\$ 147,796

PROJECT DISBURSEMENTS:

1. GSFPEPP (Ecuador) – Solar panels in Andes, hospital for the poor	\$ 17,000
2. School in Chapas, Santa Rosa	35,000
3. Nutritional Center in Morales	22,500
4. Clinic, Orphanage and Day Care Center in Santa Elena	44,500
5. Purchase and packing of specially formulated food for the malnourished	27,000
	146,000

TOTAL PROJECT DISBURSEMENTS: \$ 146,000

EXPENSES:<sup>2</sup>

1. Postage, envelopes, P.O. Box, bank fees	\$ 1,642
	1,642
TOTAL ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES:	\$ 1,642
TOTAL EXPENSES & DISBURSEMENTS:	\$ 147,642

CARRYFORWARD TO 2013: \$ 154

<sup>1</sup> Note: One-time adjustment of \$1,926 to transition to modified cash accounting; previous year showed carryover of (\$613).  
<sup>2</sup> Total expenses were 1.11% of total funds available for 2012.