

# PROJECT SALVADOR

## UPDATE

The Mission of Project Salvador is to support the people of El Salvador in implementing their own vision of justice. We express our solidarity and deepen our relationship with El Salvador by creating awareness in the United States of the plight of the marginalized in Central America and by supporting grassroots community development through funding of projects in El Salvador and marketing of fair trade crafts in the United States.

*Visit our **NEWLY UPDATED** website at [www.projectsalvador.org](http://www.projectsalvador.org)!*

**April 2012**

### **People of Hope Crafts to Close**

by Mary Alice Bramming, Board President

After 25 years of business People of Hope Crafts will be closing within 6 months. The decision to close was a very difficult and emotional one for the Board of Directors of Project Salvador. Over the past few years People of Hope has had a hard time being sustainable. Because POH crafts was committed to buying at a just price from the artisans, we could not mark up the crafts enough to sell them in the market which has become very competitive.

Over 25 years we have sold over \$1.2 million in crafts from artisan organizations in El Salvador. All of the organizations were committed to fair trade principles and many were true cooperatives. The money the artisans earned on the sale of their goods enabled them to provide more for their families and to contribute to the needs of their communities.

People of Hope Crafts, beginning as Project Salvador Crafts, was an integral part of Project Salvador from the founding of the organization. As Fr. Jim Barnett began working in the barrio of 22 de Abril a young woman approached him with the idea of starting a crafts workshop which would train young people in the art of using the artistic style and colors of El Salvador. They began with making cards with bright colored scenes of the countryside. They then added a woodworking component making crosses and boxes again painted in the bright colors of the countryside.

As Project Salvador grew to include funding other projects in communities around the country, the crafts operation began adding crafts from groups in other communities. In the beginning, the crafts were brought up in the suitcases of delegation members visiting El Salvador and made their way to Denver by UPS, Greyhound Bus, and in person. But as we grew it became more expedient to have the crafts shipped; this added to our cost of operation over the years.

Many of the artisan groups were located in very small, isolated villages and many were women's groups. The larger groups, especially the woodworking groups, had both women and men working.

Project Salvador has been very fortunate to have had many wonderful crafts managers over the years. The job required many skills, everything from a strong back to bookkeeping to marketing. We thank them all for their contributions. The last few years we have been very fortunate to have had many interns working with the program.

We could not have continued for 25 years without our committed, loyal long term volunteers, many have been with us since our founding. They are the ones who asked their churches to have sales, picked up the crafts, and then staffed the sales. We thank you all. You, indeed, are the salt of the earth.

You can continue to help. We have a large stock of crafts on hand and would like to liquidate them all as soon as possible. Let us know if you would like to have a spring sale. We will continue our web page, [www.peopleofhopecrafts.org](http://www.peopleofhopecrafts.org), for a number of months. We will be featuring discounted items and great sales.



## Meet our newest Board Member!

My name is John Kukankos. I was raised in the western suburbs of Chicago where I graduated from Catholic grammar and high schools. I graduated from the University of Notre Dame with a BA in English and then received my law degree from Northwestern University School of Law in Chicago. I have three grown children and have been married to my wife Peggy for thirty-four years. We currently reside in Arlington Heights, Illinois, a suburb northwest of Chicago.

After I completed my first year of law school, I decided to apply to the Peace Corps and was accepted to a program in Turkey where I spent a year teaching English as a foreign language. The Peace Corps abruptly ended the Turkish Peace Corps program a year into my 2-year volunteer service. I managed to join another Peace Corps program in El Salvador where I spent two years working in community development. When my two years in El Salvador ended, I returned to the states to finish law school and have been practicing law in Chicago ever since. But, I never forgot El Salvador.

As we grow older, I think we have a greater urgency to find fulfillment and to become involved in something worthwhile. My good friend Jerry and I would often talk about finding just such an endeavor, and I think we both always knew that our journey would begin in El Salvador. So, eight years ago, we decided to go to El Salvador. In El Salvador, Jerry and I looked at a number of different projects, but the project that most appealed to us involved education – especially for young women. Since that first trip, Jerry and I have helped raise funds to assist the Project Salvador scholarship program. It is my hope that during my tenure on the Board, I can assist in fundraising efforts and continue to develop the scholarship program.



John (l) with his friend Jerry.

## Fr. Dean Brackley, S.J. Scholarship Fund

by Linda Gottschalk, Board Member

At Project Salvador's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration last November we were saddened to learn of the passing of Dean Brackley, S.J. Fr. Brackley went to El Salvador to live and work in place of the Jesuits who had been murdered in 1989. He wound up spending the rest of his life there. Those who participated in Project Salvador delegations to El Salvador over the years remember their visits with him at La Universidad Centroamericana during which he recounted the story of the murder of the Jesuits and their housekeeper and her daughter. He also spoke to us of the current political, economic, social and cultural conditions of El Salvador. More than that, Fr. Brackley bore testament to the healing power of the poor for our own lives. In his conversations with delegates and in his books, he invited us to let the poor "break our hearts". For many those trips offered an immeasurably rich, transformative experience.

Fr. Brackley taught at the university in San Salvador and worked in a parish about 50 miles outside of the city. He was dedicated to helping young people get an education that would not only prepare them to find work, but would transform them to work for justice in their own communities and the world. He was greatly concerned that his work securing scholarships for young people not end with his death.

To commemorate Dean Brackley's life and work, Project Salvador has established a scholarship fund in his name, with initial seed money of \$5000. We hope you will join in supporting young people in their education. Simply click on the "donate" button and indicate that you want your donation to benefit Fr. Dean Brackley, S.J., Commemorative Scholarships.

While Fr. Brackley's death is a great loss for so many, we trust that our shared experience working for peace, justice and improved lives in El Salvador continues to stir hope in our hearts that the world can indeed be transformed through good work, even in the face of great suffering and injustice.

## Sites of Interest

- ◆ "Like" Project Salvador on our new **Facebook** page. Type *ProjectSalvador* into the search bar or go to: <https://www.facebook.com/#!/ProjectSalvador>. Feel free to leave us some comments!
- ◆ Follow Project Salvador at our new blog at [www.projectsalsalvador1986.blogspot.com](http://www.projectsalsalvador1986.blogspot.com).
- ◆ Support Project Salvador while searching the web and shopping online via **Good Search** @ [www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com).
- ◆ Follow current events in El Salvador by checking-out *Tim's El Salvador Blog* at <http://luterano.blogspot.com>.

## Project Salvador Receives a one-time donation from the CINCO Foundation

by Tony Gasbarro, Board Member

A Denver-based family foundation called CINCO managed by 5 brothers and sisters recently awarded Project Salvador \$66,000. The organization operates from Denver, Colorado. The donors specified that \$44,000 be used to support the Project Salvador Scholarship Program and that the remaining \$22,000 on other projects.

Joanne Doyle our development coordinator and I met with one of the principals of the organization in Denver on March 10. He told us that CINCO has a particular interest in El Salvador because several members of the family spent 3 years of their childhood in San Salvador where their father worked for the U.S. Embassy. One of the brothers told Joanne and I that, "The reason that we chose to donate to Project Salvador is that its programs are effective in making life better for people in El Salvador".

# Karen Adams\* Microlending Project: The Building of a Legacy

by Patty Lawless, Project Coordinator



Candelaria and Josefina bought an industrial stove and set up their own “restaurant” in the community plaza. On Mondays and Fridays they sell pupusas—a Salvadoran tortilla stuffed with beans, cheese and/or chicharrones. On Wednesdays they sell Salvadoran enchiladas. The capital for their start-up loans came from *Project Salvador’s* Karen Adams Microlending Project. And their micro-enterprise means that Josefina, a widow with 3 children, has a steady source of income to meet her growing children’s basic needs. For Candelaria and her husband, it means that they struggle a little less to make ends meet.

Microlending has become one of *Project Salvador’s* cornerstone projects, with over \$65,000 in funding committed since 2005. Now celebrating year 7 of the project, there are currently 23 microlending committees in Suchitoto, Cuscatlán (in the north central part of the country). Over 750 women have taken out more than 1700 loans ranging from \$40-\$200 each, with a 98.5% payback rate!

For the *Project Salvador* Board, getting into microlending was an organic process, evolving with time. In 2003 *Project Coordinator*, Patty Lawless, had provided seed money of \$1000 for the Women’s Committee in the community of Papaturre, to be used on a project that would strengthen the organizing of women in the community. They brought it to a vote of the general assembly of women and decided that a microlending fund would be of greatest long-term benefit to the women there. The Papaturre innovators elected a “loan committee”, and developed the criteria for the selection of loan recipients as well as the structure for the administration of the loans, including an impressive accounting and tracking system.

After the first year, the Papaturre Committee was thriving, with thirty women having benefited from six-month loans of \$50 to start or strengthen income-generating projects in their community. The payback rate was 100% and Lawless was able to get another \$500 to expand the fund. Women were making cheese, raising pigs and chickens and turkeys, opening up little “restaurants”, selling clothing door-to-door, expanding local “stores”, making uniforms for school children—the creativity abounded as women were experiencing financial independence and the opportunity to meet the basic needs of themselves and their children.

As the Papaturre project flourished, women around the region were taking note and inquiring about the possibilities of starting microlending funds in their communities as well. When the *Project Salvador* board received the notice in 2005 that the Karen Adams’ estate was going to make a substantial donation to our work, the writing was on the wall—microlending, using the Papaturre model, was ready to replicate and interest was high!

The Board empowered Lawless to grow the project on the ground, working with regional women’s organizations to provide both the visioning and the administrative connection in El Salvador to develop the project. Working with three organizations (APDM, PROGRESO and CRC), a Microlending Team of five women organizers began identifying communities that were ready to establish a microlending fund through their women’s committees. Five communities were identified for the first roll out in 2005, which included 2 training sessions for the women elected to each community’s microlending committee and 3 additional trainings for the treasurers. The first year went very smoothly and the Karen Adams Microlending Project was up and running!

The Team in Suchitoto has continued to play a key leadership role in this work, providing follow-through with each of the 23 committees, troubleshooting when there are challenges to be addressed, training new committee members and treasurers when there is turnover. They will be identifying four more communities in 2012, bringing the total to 27.

The *Project Salvador* Board is committed to supporting this work, counting on the continued generous contributions of our donors. There are many communities still waiting for funding, and the results are indisputable. The dual goals of the project have been met beyond expectations: providing opportunities for women to generate income, and strengthening the organizing of women throughout the region—a worthy legacy in honor of Karen Adams.

\*Karen Adams was a woman from Hawaii who, while dying of breast cancer, decided to donate her estate to organizations that were serving the poor throughout the world. She found *Project Salvador* on the internet and gave us 1/7 of her estate! \$20,000 of this fund went to kick-off the Karen Adams Microlending Project!

**Project Salvador Board & Staff :**

**Board of Directors:** Mary Alice Bramming (Board President), Kathy Ramirez-Aguilar (Secretary), Patricia Lawless (Treasurer & Project Coordinator), Joanne Doyle (Development Coordinator), Tony Gasbarro (Scholarship Coordinator), Evaristo Ramirez-Aguilar, John Kukankos, Erin Kelly

**Newsletter Editors:** Erin Kelly and Tony Gasbarro

**Support People:** Jack & Susan Corrigan, Craft Volunteers; Shirley & Roger Gudenkauf, newsletter mailing

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**People of Hope Crafts Mailing Address:**

3995 Irving St., Denver CO 80211

**Email:** peopleofhopecrafts@projects salvador.org

**Website:** www.peopleofhopecrafts.org

~~~~~ **Mil Gracias!** ~~~~~

We would like to express our gratitude to those many volunteers who arranged for and staffed the craft sales this past Christmas season. We also owe thanks to Sarah Valdez, Andrea Mar and Jocelyn Bowyer, our volunteer interns, who kept the craft operation running smoothly through the hectic Christmas season.

We owe special thanks to board member Evaristo Ramirez-Aguilar who did a super job in making our web site much more attractive. This led to our receiving a major donation. Boardmember Kathy Ramirez-Aguilar also deserves special thanks for her tireless work in editing our newsletter for the past several years.

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**WAYS TO GET INVOLVED:**

**DONATE:**

- \* Make a one-time donation to cover mailing costs of this newsletter. (\$10 suggested)
- \* Make a one-time / monthly donation to Project Salvador
- \* Become a Proyecto Los Niños monthly donor @ \$25/month
- \* Make a one-time / monthly donation to a specific Project Salvador project:
  - *Micro lending, Scholarships, Center for Arts and Peace, PICO community organizing, or the Fr. Dean Brackley, S.J. Scholarship Fund*
- \* Donate new / used laptops for university scholarship recipients
- \* Donate your car
- \* Include Project Salvador in your will

**You can donate via PayPal at [www.projects salvador.org](http://www.projects salvador.org). Please indicate in the memo section which project you would like to support.**

**OR**

**Checks can be made payable to Project Salvador and mailed to Project Salvador, PO Box 300105, Denver, CO 80203-0105.**

**FEE-FREE DONATIONS COMING SOON—Project Salvador will be joining the Community First Foundation soon, allowing our donors to make on-line donations, with no credit card fees attached. Check out our new Donate Now button at: [www.projects salvador.org](http://www.projects salvador.org)!**

**HOST A SPEAKER:**

- \* Project Salvador is happy to speak to your group about our projects, life in El Salvador, and related topics.

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