



## Lake Atitlan Libraries (LAL) News

November, 2016

Reading the stories of the Reading Village **youth leaders** reminds me of my small Wisconsin town with its Carnegie Library. One of my favorite activities at age 5 was story time in the Children's room with Mrs. Plenty. We were fortunate to have a Library. We had lots of books in our home and my mother loved to read to us. I contrast that to our Guatemalan reading promoters who are the first in their family to receive a secondary education. Their families and schools have few books.

Although the libraries in their villages are small, if they exist at all, through your donations the number of books and the number of children having story time in these rural communities is growing! In 2016, 67 Reading Village youth leaders in rural Guatemala led literacy promotion activities for 3,350 children each week. Next year, there will be 95 teens using books purchased with your donations to read to 4,750 children. The reading activities help develop the critical and creative thinking skills as well as the Spanish language skills the children need to succeed in elementary school.

Here is a story of how the Reading Village program has changed the lives of youth leaders in remote villages of Guatemala:

When Rosmery became one of our first youth leaders in 2009, she probably didn't know the extent of the impact she would have on the children to whom she read. But, today, Alicia, one of our current youth leaders, remembers how she was inspired by Rosmery. *"She changed my life completely. I just*

*loved the way she read stories to us and dreamt of becoming a youth leader myself.” Today, Alicia’s dream is now her reality! She will be starting her fourth and final year as a Reading Village youth leader in January and it is now her turn to effect change in the lives of her young neighbors.*

When Edwin started the **Leaders and Readers Program** in 2014 he was shy and nervous, but he slowly came out of his shell and revealed his true strength and character with the Reading Village group. Today, he is one of the most confident and dedicated youth leaders in the program. He spends his early mornings developing, planning and organizing high quality reading activities for the children to whom he reads. And the children love him! They anxiously await his arrival each week, excited to expand their imaginations and grow their language skills through their time with Edwin.

Both Reading Village and LAL have chosen reading as our tool for change because literacy is not only an important end in and of itself, but it is also the means to other important ends, such as improved health, economic development, creative and critical thinking skills, informed decision making, personal empowerment, as well as civil and social participation.

**Your donations are tax deductible. All funds go directly to purchase books for the Reading Village program in Guatemala. Our financial records are available for review.**

**Thank you for your years of loyal support from the Lake Atitlan Board of Directors:**

**Rory Cameron, President;**

**Teresa Cameron, Treasurer;**

**Louise Eidsmoe, Secretary (Newsletter Editor)**

**Members: Howard Cameron, Charlotte Cameron, and Mary Hambidge.**

**Learn more about our work at: [www.lakeatitlanlibraries.org](http://www.lakeatitlanlibraries.org)**

**Mail your tax exempt donations to:**

**Lake Atitlán Libraries, 620 Grandview Drive, Hudson, WI 54016 (new address)**