



For Children And Families  
in Guatemala

# ANNUAL REPORT 2018

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# *Dear Planting Seeds Supporters,*

Another year is in the books and we could not be more thankful for you. Your continued support allows us to strengthen and expand upon our work with children and families facing extreme obstacles of poverty in Guatemala.

2018 has been a year of growth for Planting Seeds. Our support has expanded from Ottawa and Pembroke, Ontario to Hamilton, Ontario, Northbrook and Chicago, Illinois, Minneapolis, New York, Washington D.C... and at home in Guatemala. It has also been a year of growth for our staff, our students, and their families. Students have grown academically, but more importantly as human beings, learning to respect one another, to share, and to encourage others. Many of our parents have also grown by taking the time to play and build a stronger bond with their children, reflecting on what type of parent they want to be, and motivating their children with love. Our staff has also been working hard all year on improving who we are and what we do through trainings, collaboration, and individual and team reflections.

At Planting Seeds, we have a few core beliefs: 1) every child, no matter where they are from, deserves a high-quality education; 2) children learn best when learning is fun and children are in charge of their own learning 3) in order for us to make the most positive impact, we need to work with children in their earliest years when most of their brain formation is taking place; 4) working with and engaging parents will help us to ensure that every moment of a child's early development be stimulating, in school and at home; 5) sustainable change is only possible when community members are actively involved in the development of their own communities.

In this update, we wanted to showcase how, with your help, we bring these core beliefs to life. On the following pages we have stories about our Play With My Kid program and a small rural town in Sacalá Las Lomas that has taken ownership of the Planting Seeds school in their community. We also provided some highlights of 2018, a look ahead to 2019, and ways to get further involved with our work!

Lastly, we want to thank the founders of Planting Seeds, Susan and Richard Schmaltz, along with our current Guatemalan Director, Madeli Quiñonez, for laying the foundation to make all of this possible. We are so excited to continue spreading your dream across Guatemala.

Thank you everyone for your support. We are so excited to have you as part of our Planting Seeds International family!

Peace, love, and solidarity,

*Mac, Shannon, Madeli and  
the Planting Seeds Team!*



# School Construction in Sacalá

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When Planting Seeds first entered the indigenous community of Sacalá Las Lomas in 2003, parents were very reluctant to send their children to the new Planting Seeds preschool. However, with a bit of persistence from Planting Seeds staff, introducing them to a new educational model and explaining the importance of early childhood education, we have successfully enrolled, on average, 15 students per year since the school opened.

At the end of 2018, the contract between Planting Seeds and the property owners of the current school will expire. In light of this, we hosted a meeting with the students' parents in June to discuss the future of the school. When we explained to them what the property owners wanted to charge for us to continue using their space they took it upon themselves to find another solution that would ensure the long-term sustainability of the school.



After exploring different options, the parents decided that it would be best to build a Planting Seeds preschool on a vacant, government-owned piece of land in their community. The parents then, on their own accord, arranged a meeting with the local municipality to ask for permission to use the land, which they were granted. What's more is that the parents also offered to build the school themselves for free! Planting Seeds has provided the materials, and the construction of the new school is currently underway! The parents' response in Sacalá is extremely motivating for us, as it not only demonstrates that the community now sees the value in their children's education, but it also shows that they are taking charge of their own community's development.





## Daniel Osorio: The Man Behind the Magic

If you follow us on social media, you may have noticed an uptick in our activity, higher quality photos, and captions with charisma... well that's all thanks to Daniel! Daniel has been working with Planting Seeds since July as our Social Media and Public Relations Intern, and we wanted to share with you a bit about the man behind the magic!

Daniel Osorio, a participant in our Youth Leadership program and a member of the Community Collaborative in Zone 3, has been interested in film since he was very young. When he was 17, he remembers a teacher asking his students about their dreams for the future, and most students answered doctor, lawyer, accountant, and he wondered to himself, what happened to dreaming of becoming a singer or a movie star? At that moment, Daniel knew that he wanted something different for his own future. In 2015, an opportunity presented itself for Daniel to create a short film for the donors of a scholarship he received to study English at Instituto Guatemalteco Americano. His teacher loved what he created, so they started working together on a variety of projects. Since then, Daniel enrolled himself in a three-year cinematography program at Casa Comal to further refine his craft. While working for Planting Seeds, Daniel has been able to improve his photographic skills as well as to learn how to portray his subjects in a realistic way. For him, this is really important because as a community member of Zone 3, Daniel has seen the detrimental impact that NGOs can have on the community, portraying community members in a negative light so as to create a dramatic image of poverty. His approach to his work with Planting Seeds is to break the stigma associated with Zone 3 and portray the community in a realistic and positive light. He believes that taking this approach will contribute to changing the perception of the community from the outside and in doing so, create more opportunities for community members to succeed.

## Juego con mi hijo



In the beginning of the year, we had a meeting with all of the parents in our model school in San Lucas. During the meeting, we asked them, "How many of your parents played with you when you were a child?" Out of forty families, one mother raised her hand.

Taking this into account, our leadership team developed a Play with my Kid program (*Juego con mi hijo*). We opened up an additional classroom in our San Lucas preschool specifically designed for parents to come play and learn with their children. We also provided training to the parents on the different areas of the classroom and how to most positively engage with their children.

Mothers Sandra Cutzal and Cecilia Ramirez (pictured) were gracious enough to share their experience with the program.

"I originally came to *Juego con mi hijo* to dedicate some more time to my kids because in the house parents usually don't spend a



sufficient amount of time with their kids, but as it went on, I came to learn. I learned a little about the system that Planting Seeds uses. The way that we were taught is a lot different! And working with [your kids] they end up teaching you! They know the activities and they go on explaining the activities to you and why they do each activity. For me, it was

a really great experience." Cecilia Ramirez

Sandra and Cecilia are just two of the 31 parents who participated in *Juego con mi hijo* this year. In January, we started with only 26 visits, but the program ended up growing every month. By July we had 75 visits, and over 90 visits in the month of September! Cecilia Ramirez herself visited *Juego con mi hijo* over 75 times in 2018!

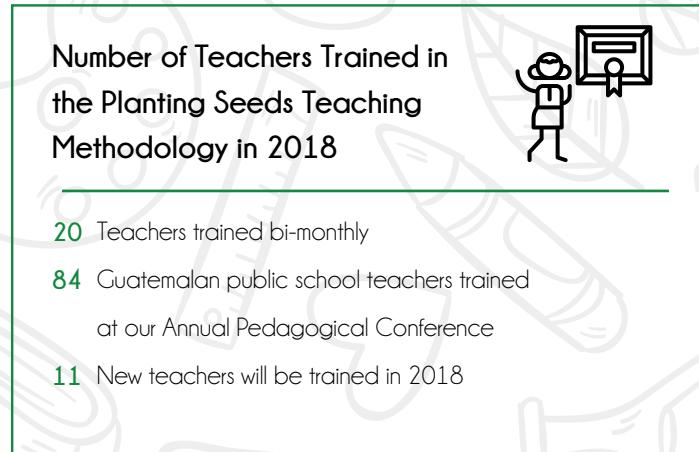
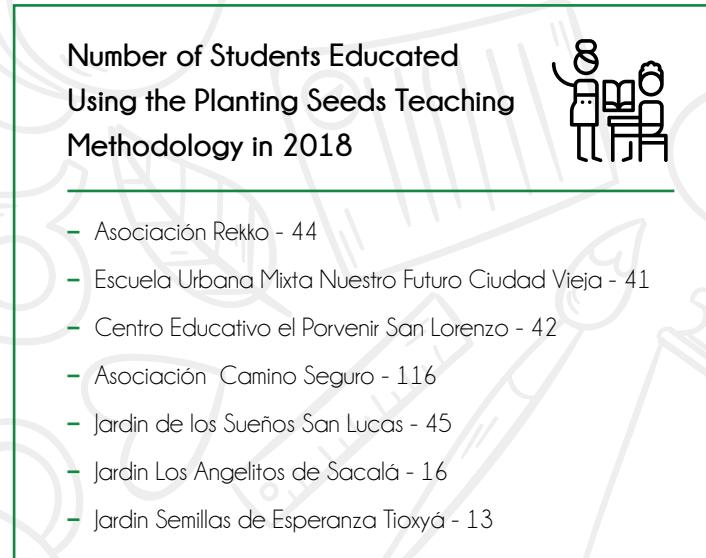
"One of the other benefits I saw was how I was able to connect better with my children and how they had more confidence talking to me," said Cecilia. "As parents, we have different interests than our children, and we often don't pay attention to what is important to them. We choose to focus on our adult problems rather than put ourselves on their level and talk about what they find interesting. *Juego con mi hijo* helped me do that, which improved my relationship with my children."

Sandra and Cecilia also agreed that not only was *Juego con mi hijo* helpful to them as parents, but it was also fun! "Most of us didn't have the opportunity to play as kids and coming here gives us the opportunity to be kids again" Cecilia Ramirez

The goal of *Juego con mi hijo* is to support parents as much as possible by providing them with an opportunity to play with their children and to be more involved in their education. We consider the program extremely successful, as we have seen positive academic and behavioral growth in the students of the parents who participated.

"I really liked it a lot. I think I liked it too much. To be honest I wanted to stay everyday. My son would say, 'Mommy, let's stay because I really like it!' From the times we participated I was able to see how he was improving with his letters and his numbers. I can't wait to participate next year!" Sandra Cutzal.

# Projected Expenses through 2018 Year-End



# Defining Moments of 2018



## Community Center Land Purchase

Planting Seeds is now the official owner of a plot of land in Zone 3! We have been working with the Community Collaborative and architects at the firm TALLER ACA to design the future Planting Seeds Community Center.



## Luis Ixcoy Calel (far left)

Inspired by his participation in our Community Collaborative and Father's Group, Luis and his wife have been giving out food to the homeless every Wednesday in the community.



## Comparative Evaluations

We conducted comparative evaluations of Planting Seeds students in San Lucas and Yepocapa. For the third consecutive year, Planting Seeds students have tested significantly higher in first-grade readiness than their peers in local public and private schools.



## First Fundraising Event in Guatemala

To celebrate the final of the 2018 World Cup, our Guatemalan Friends Circle organized our first ever Guatemalan fundraising event with over 45 people in attendance!

# Plans for 2019

## Community Leadership Program - Phase 2

Graduates from our 2018 Community Leadership Programs will be co-facilitating and leading our leadership program and other community initiatives in 2019. Some of our graduates will be initiating community reading programs, while others will be leading after school and sports programs for youth.

## Continuous Facilitator Trainings

In 2018, we successfully handed over the leadership of about half of our community programs in Zone 3 to community members themselves. While they did an excellent job, we realized that we need to provide them with more support and training throughout the year. In 2019, we will implement bi-monthly facilitator trainings to be sure that they have all the tools they need to continue working for the benefit of their own communities.

## New Partnership with Esperanza Renovada

Esperanza Renovada is an educational organization in Zone 3 in Guatemala City whose Executive Director, Jeff Ware, was Mac's high school Spanish teacher! Through this pure coincidence, Planting Seeds has developed a partnership with Esperanza Renovada to implement the Planting Seeds Teaching Methodology in their preschool in 2019!

## First Educational Tour for Board Members and Donors

In January 2019, Planting Seeds will host its first ever Educational Tour for board members and donors. We thought this would be a great opportunity for donors to come to visit our programs while having the opportunity to get to know our Board of Directors. The tour is slated for January 22 - 27, 2019!

# Save the Date!

## Annual Ottawa FUNdraiser - April 13, 2019

Doors open at 6:30 PM with dinner at 7:30 PM.  
The event has sold out every year so get your tickets early!  
For information, tickets or to donate an item or services to the Silent Auction, call Aileen Moyle at 613-234-9012 or [aireen.moyle@gmail.com](mailto:aireen.moyle@gmail.com)

## Events Up and Down the Globe

Annual Fundraiser in Evanston, IL - December 1, 2018  
Chicago Friends Circle Bowling Event - December 2, 2018  
Flag Football Tournament in Guatemala City - February 2, 2019  
Washington, DC Fundraiser - April 6, 2019



## A special thank you to:

### Partner Organizations

- Asociación REKKO
- Camino Seguro
- Niños de Guatemala

### Board of Directors

- Wayne Moyle, President
- Gabriel Tobias, Vice President
- Joseph Knowles, Treasurer
- Leanne Van Bavel, Secretary

### Friends Circles

- Chicago
- Guatemala
- Minnesota
- Northbrook
- Ottawa
- Pembroke

And of course, thank you to all of our wonderful donors! Our support network spans Canada, Guatemala, and the United States... and we couldn't do it without you!





2860 Weller Lane Northbrook IL, 60062



[plantingseedsinternational.org](http://plantingseedsinternational.org)



Planting Seeds International

## I would like to support Planting Seeds International by:

- Making a Donation
- Becoming a Monthly Donor
- Hosting a Dinner/Small Event
- Starting or Joining a Friends Circle
- Coming to Visit our Programs!

### By making a donation today, you can have the following impact:

- \$25** provides graduation diplomas for Planting Seeds preschool students for one year
- \$50** provides materials for five teacher trainings annually
- \$150** provides a midday snack for one student for one year
- \$350** provides a preschool education for one student for one year
- \$1,500** supports one of our parent education programs for one year
- \$6,000** provides early childhood education for a classroom of 18-20 students for one year
- Other:** \_\_\_\_\_

To make a donation, please visit our website at [www.plantingseedsinternational.org/donate](http://www.plantingseedsinternational.org/donate). Checks can be made payable to: Planting Seeds International, 2860 Weller Lane Northbrook, IL 60062

**Thank you for supporting children and families in Guatemala.**



"Guatemalans, Americans & Canadians, developing healthy students, families and communities all across Guatemala."

*Planting Seeds International is a registered charitable organization in the United States. All contributions made to Planting Seeds International are tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.*