

## Scholarship Program

In 2010, at the request of the Comité Desarrollo para Comunal (CDC, the non-profit organization in Santo Tomás that is our main counterpart there), the Thurston Santo Tomás Sister County Association (TSTSCA) committed to funding scholarships in our sister community. A subcommittee of the CDC created a selection process and advertised the availability of scholarships. The following is an excerpt of a translated report from the committee chair Yuri Alfara.

*Hello friends. Greetings to all on the committee... 2010*

*The news about the scholarship program is good, and we have made selections of the recipients of the scholarships. The panel met in the Ministry of Education (because the delegate is always busy). Only one of the panelists was not able to attend the meeting (the representative of the Institute of Secondary School. The attendance included four panelists: the delegate of the ministry of education, the deputy mayor, the president of the CDC and the representative of the group of young people.*

*...[W]e decided to hang posters in the streets and take advantage of the opportunity to speak on Radio Amistad. ... We delivered 15 forms to apply for scholarships and we received ten completed applications. Of these, four did not complete some requisite, such as: average below 80 percent, or had scholarships in other places. We submitted six applications to the selection panel to approve three. The committee sent back four persons approved for scholarships. The names of the scholarship winners for this year are:*

- 1. Danelia del Socorro Tercero Lumbí, BA in public accounting, \$30*
- 2. Jasmina Aracelly Días Galeano, BA in English, \$30*
- 3. María Laura González Sequeira, BA in nursing, \$15*
- 4. Gheyling Lisbeth Murillo Miranda, BA in law, \$15*

*Monthly Total, \$90*

*As you know, we only have funds approved for three scholarships this year (in the monthly amount of \$30 each). But in the selection panel a decision arose to give the first two scholarship winners \$30 monthly and the last two (written in red) \$15 each. Because the Deputy mayor undertook to get two half scholarships through town hall for the equivalent of \$10 additional per month for the University of Martin Luther which is located in Santo Tomás. We are now taking steps to get from the town hall the financial support of \$10 per month for the two young women with half scholarships.*

*This year all the scholarship recipients are students at the same university (Martin Luther in Santo Tomás). In this university, one pays \$25 per month, leaving \$5 per month for paper supplies. (The advantage is that they don't pay for transportation to Juigalpa, nor food because they can go home. The disadvantage is that on completion of studies, the titles are very expensive and it is not prestigious). For the two women awarded the half scholarships (plus the \$10 from town hall), the scholarships will pay only the monthly charge.*

*In general as a commission we are satisfied with the selection because the winners, in addition to being women, are very poor and lack the ability to take on the expense of the university. And as you will be able to observe, the winners are not members of the CDC, they are from the community. Although we did receive applications from CDC members these were not approved by the panel though the requirements were met, because as you have said, the project is for the community.*

*We have a lot of information about the project and are sending you now the biographies of the scholarship recipients.....*

**The Scholarship Program grew in the following years.** Gradually we were able to increase our annual support for more students in the following years. Here is a list of the students assisted in 2013 and 2014 in the amount of \$30 per month for each because the local funding was no longer available.

According to a report from Yuri, *los jóvenes becados del 2013 and 2014 son los siguientes:*

1. *Greyling Murillo*
2. *Aminta Rocha*
3. *Yesenia Arguello*
4. *Marily Aguilar*
5. *Eleyi Guerrero*
6. *Ervin Martínez*
7. *Moises Aragón*
8. *Kenia López*
9. *Elvin Aguilar*
10. *Meyling González*
11. *Yefer Paz*
12. *Juanita Ruiz*

*Tenemos un grupo muy sólido y responsable con sus estudios dispuestos a finalizar su carrera.*

*Saludos cordiales y esperando que pronto nos visiten en Nuestro Santo Tomás*

*Muchos Abrazos*

*Yuri Alfaro*

**The Scholarship Program's future:** Because of limited resources, TSTSCA decided to carry forward with funding the current scholars until they complete their studies and not add additional scholarships. TSTSCA will decide later how much assistance we as a group can maintain on an ongoing basis. Of course, if many donors step forward to sponsor students, TSTSCA will be able to offer more scholarships.