

# PRIMEROS PASOS

*Annual Report 2015*

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Primeros  
Pasos

# MISSION

“Primeros Pasos aims to improve the quality of life of the rural communities of the Palajunoj Valley of Quetzaltenango, Guatemala, through integrated health education projects and access to medical services.”



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# Message from the President

Dear Friends of Primeros Pasos,

This year, Primeros Pasos has continued to increase its efforts to provide accessible health and education services to the communities of the Palajunoj Valley of Quetzaltenango. As we expand our services throughout the Valley, Primeros Pasos remains committed to its mission of improving the quality of life in rural communities through low-cost healthcare and preventative health education.

In 2015, I am pleased to announce that Primeros Pasos continued its success in the medical and dental programs at our main clinic which remains the primary source of quality, affordable healthcare. The Healthy Schools Program continues to make strides in educating the Valley residents, and improving healthcare through preventative education.

Our organization's involvement in improving the nutritional status of the Valley reflects our desire to improve health outcomes in a sustainable manner. The nutritional habits of the mothers will be passed on to future generations with hopes to help the children reach their full potential.

Lastly, on behalf of the communities that we serve, thank you to our donors and supporters for making these essential health care improvements achievable.

With gratitude,



Juan Pablo Echeverría

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# Our Programs

## Medical and Dental Program



This year, Primeros Pasos continued to provide high quality and low cost care to the residents of the Palanunoj Valley. In total, **2893** walk-in patients received consultations and treatment at the clinic. During this time, the most common illnesses recorded were pharyngitis and the common cold. In addition to providing clinic services, the medical and dental program continues to successfully run at the core of the Healthy Schools and Nutrition Recuperation Programs.

For the third consecutive year, the American organization, Flying Doctors, returned to Primeros Pasos to carry out a health fair for 5 days, consisting of doctors, dentists, psychologists, and massage therapists, from both the United States and El Salvador. This was organized in conjunction with the Primeros

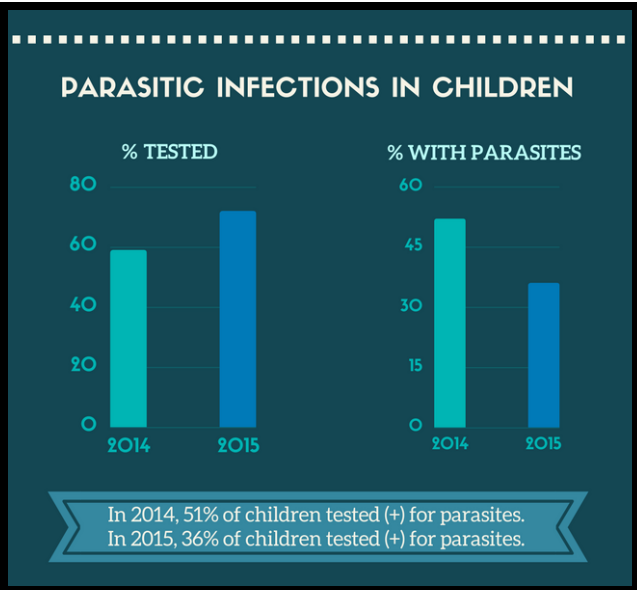
Pasos staff, as well as with local Guatemalan doctors and medical students from the Guatemalan national University San Carlos. The Flying Doctors Health Fair served approximately 1,200 patients and provided free lab tests, medications, and reading glasses. Thank you Flying Doctors for another successful year!

# Healthy Schools Program

Our Healthy Schools Program lies at the heart of Primeros Pasos’s mission to increase health literacy and access in the Palajunoj Valley. Every year, we conduct Mobile Clinics and provide age-appropriate health education workshops in all 10 schools in the Valley, as well as in 6 community nurseries. We educate about topics such as hygiene, parasites, self-esteem, identity, values, bullying and sex education. This year we also included the Dental Program to educate children and parents regarding oral health issues in our education workshops.

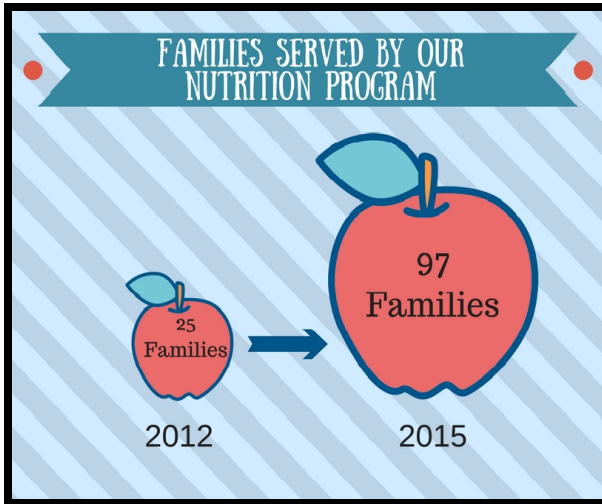


In 2015, the Primeros Pasos medical and dental staff saw 3038 school children and 142 young children in nurseries, through our Healthy Schools clinics. All students were tested for parasites in the Primeros Pasos medical lab, and received free medical consultations and dental care, including fluoride applications and tooth extractions. The students also returned home with required medications, soap, toothbrushes and toothpaste. We are proud to share that we have made significant gains in our program’s reach for testing children for parasites. The number of children testing positive for parasites this year has decreased to 37% from 50% in 2014.



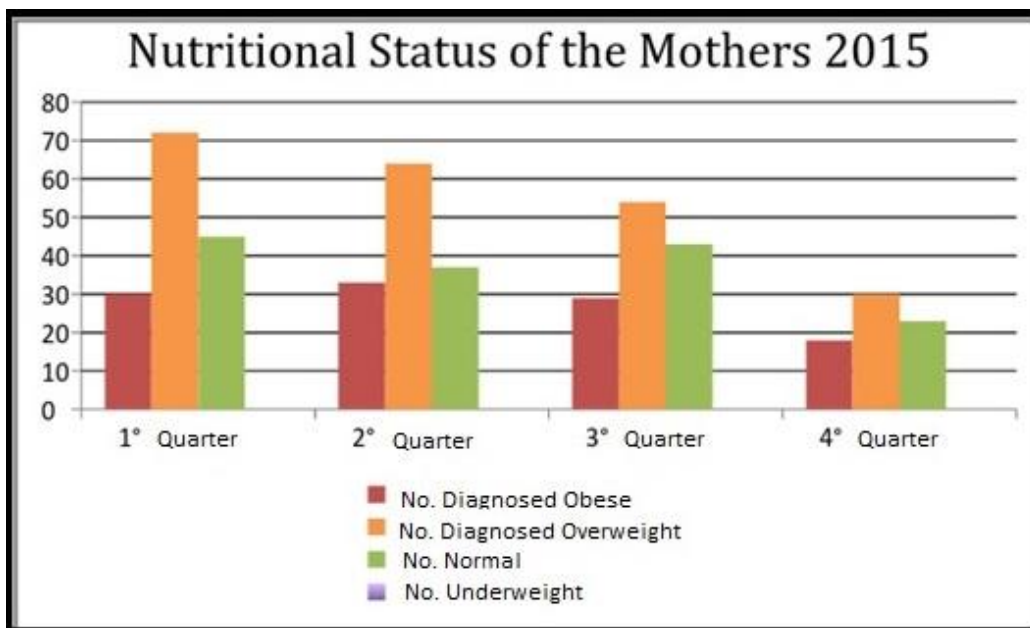
# Nutrition Recuperation Program

The project was launched in 2012, targeting 25 families with chronically malnourished children in the poorest communities of the Valley. Our initial strategy focused on the immediate treatment and nutritional recovery of the youngest children, many of whom – if left untreated – would have suffered irreversible medical consequences, such as stunted growth and reduced mental faculties. In addition to nutritional therapy, parents were given the practical knowledge and tools to maintain healthy, hygienic homes, thus cementing the remarkable gains we witnessed.



Over the course of that first year, all project participants grew to normal sizes and reduced their rate of parasitic infection. Due to this initial success and the glaring need in the Valley, the Nutrition Program has been steadily expanding. In 2015, we were able to serve 97 families across three communities – Chuicaivioc, Xepache and Las Majadas. This year, several new nutritional tools were introduced, and personal and home hygiene were improved. The women of the program were empowered, through increased understanding about nutrition, improved ability to feed their families, and access to

multiple family planning strategies. We are excited to be working with even more women in 2016!



# Our Impact

## 2015 Highlights





## 2015 Highlights

### Donation to Purchase New Dental Unit

An enormous thank you to Sara Spear Sands and Ben Sands for making a generous donation that allowed the Dental Program to purchase a much-needed second dental unit. Now our dentist Dra. Francia Ángel and her interns can attend to the 4,000 annual walk-in patients without any problem!

### Summit for Healthy Schools Program

María Fernanda Zuñiga, a social worker intern from the University of San Carlos, along with our Healthy Schools Director, Dulce Mazariegos, Healthy Schools Assistant, Marisol Menchu, and local Peace Corps Volunteer, Emma Cannon, planned a very successful summit for the principal and teacher health commissioners of the 10 local schools of Palajunoj Valley. The summit included motivational and technical workshops to equip them to effectively implement the health curriculum and activities in their respective schools. In 2015, the Primeros Pasos Healthy Schools Program, along with the Peace Corps and the Government Ministry of Education, collectively achieved major improvements in improving health knowledge and practices in the lives of school children.

### Water Filter for Escuela Llanos del Pinal

In the Palajunoj Valley, clean drinking water is very scarce and water filters have proven to be the most cost effective option to have purified water available. Thus, Primeros Pasos launched a project through its Healthy Schools Program, in conjunction with the local Peace Corps' volunteers, to bring water filters to schools by requesting the collaboration of the school faculty, as well as the parents. After giving a lesson on the benefits of water filters, Primeros Pasos asked each parent to donate at least Q1 during the mobile clinic to go towards the cost of purchasing a water filter. The first school to fundraise the necessary funds was Llanos del Pinal. Upon receiving the water filter, parents and school staff drafted a written commitment, assigning responsibility for the proper care and maintenance of the water filter. The commitment stated:

“...said filter is a representation of the interest and effort that demonstrates that the community of parents and supporting organizations such as Primeros Pasos and Peace Corps, are watching over the health and human rights of the students of this school.”

The 700 students and staff of the school at Llanos de Pinal now enjoy access to purified water.

## **Breastfeeding Awareness March**

Every year, the pregnant women, mothers and children of the Nutrition Recuperation Program, along with Primeros Pasos Directors and Volunteers, enthusiastically march through the communities of Palajunoy Valley to promote the benefits of breastfeeding, as well as the right to breastfeed while at work during World Breastfeeding Day. This joyous occasion was featured on the local news!

## **Computer and Tablet Donations**

Thanks to our incredibly generous volunteers and supporters, Primeros Pasos received donations of much needed laptops, as well as fundraised to purchase brand-new tablets. We are now able to implement our new electronic medical records system in the clinic, vastly improving both current clinic operations, as well as monitoring and evaluations systems.

## **Centrifuge Donation**

The clinical laboratory received a major donation of a brand new centrifuge thanks to UC Davis Doctoral Candidate Juliana Haber. Now the lab can more effectively and efficiently process blood and urine samples. Thank you, Juliana.

## **Rotary Club Medical Mission**

The Southbay San Diego, California chapter of Rotary Club carried out a 3 day medical mission in the Primeros Pasos clinic and in mobile clinics in the isolated community of Las Majadas. In collaboration with the Primeros Pasos staff, volunteers, local doctors and dentists, the Rotary Club provided medical and dental services, as well as much needed medicine, to over 500 patients.

## **WINGS Reproductive Health Fair**

Thanks to the local organization WINGS, which is an organization dedicated to reproductive health, Primeros Pasos hosted a fair in which women received cervical cancer exams, follow-up treatment in the clinic, and different contraception methods to help them and their families build bright futures.

## **Benefit Gala**

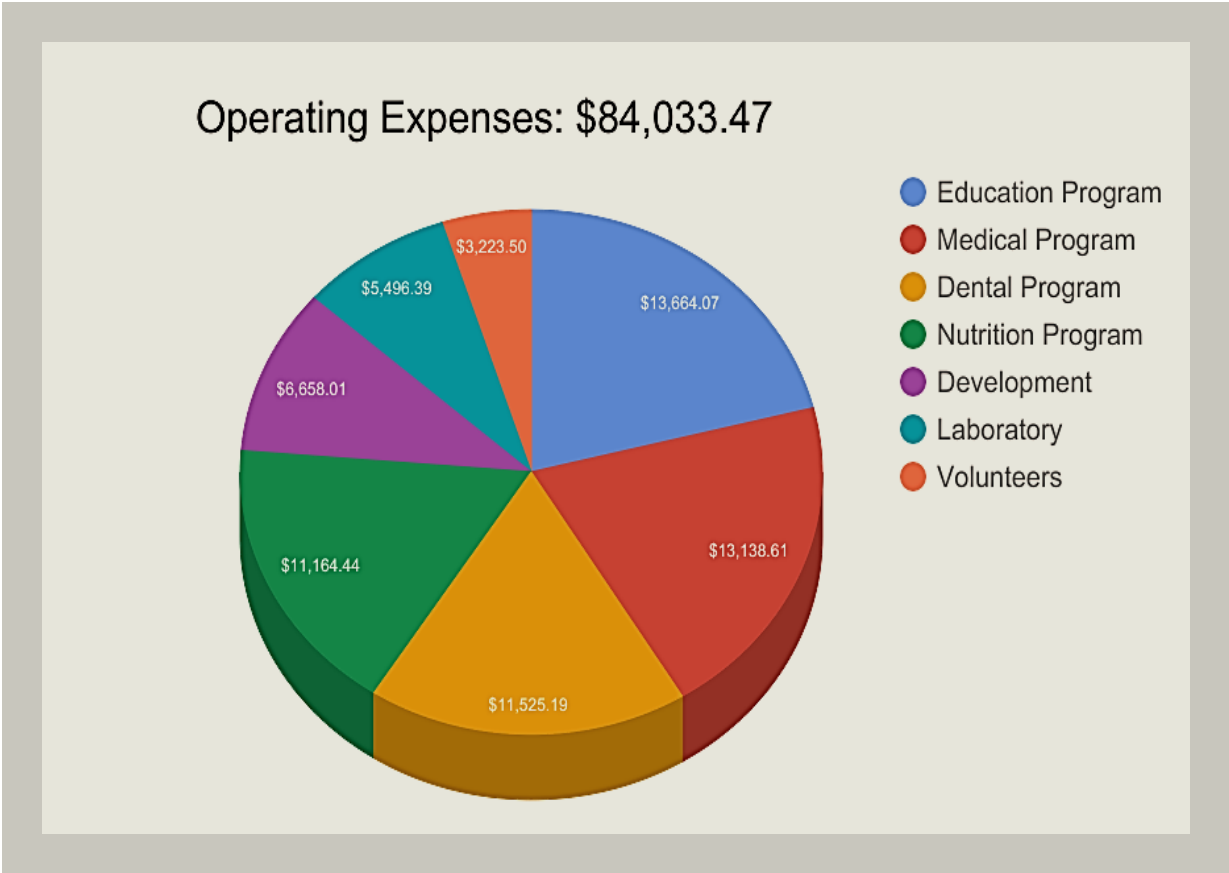
Primeros Pasos put on the first annual Benefit Gala in Quetzaltenango to fundraise and increase awareness of the needs of the Valley. Primeros Pasos shared its mission, programs, and the need to integrate healthcare and education in the Palajunoy Valley. The newly elected mayor, Luis Grijalva, attended the Gala and we are looking forward to increasing local participation. We hope to continue holding the Gala in subsequent years.

# Financial Summary

Primeros Pasos relies almost solely on small individual donations and grassroots fundraising initiatives, and works diligently to make these donations go as far as possible. Fundraising for Primeros Pasos is coordinated by the Inter-American Health Alliance (IAHA), a U.S.-based, 501(c)3 non-profit, founded in 2004 to support Primeros Pasos' operations.

Primeros Pasos is a program of Asociación PASOS, a Guatemalan-registered non-profit organization, founded in 2004. Its NIT (tax ID) is 8147040-1.

## Operating expenses:



## **Leadership Team**

We said goodbye to Jamie Pet, and welcomed a new Clinic Director, Arleth Mazariegos, at the end of the year. Thank you, Jamie, for your dedication, organization and fantastic work over the last two years!

## **Board of Directors**

**President** – Juan Pablo Echeverría

## **Executive Leadership**

**General Director** – Jamie Pet

**Development Director** – Jamie Pet/James Tuttle

**Volunteer Coordinator** – James Tuttle

**Finance Director** – Kristi Knudson

**Medical Program Director** – Mili Damian

**Laboratory Director** – Lisandra Orozco

**Dental Program Director** – Francia Angel

**Nutrition Program Director** –Scarlet Samayoa

**Healthy Schools Program Director** – Dulce Mazariegos

**Healthy Schools Program Assistant** – Marisol Menchú

