

# Grupo Cajolá

## Monthly Update: February 2010



*"Let's walk together so  
that no one is left behind."*

### GRUPO CAJOLÁ

The **struggle for education** — amazingly enough, as we looked for space to accommodate our 360 students in our public middle school, there was (expected) resistance from the current private middle school and (unexpected) resistance from the primary school teachers. Rumors were sent flying that the school wasn't accredited, that the quality of education was bad, that the students from each middle school would fight with the students from the other and we would need a police force to separate them. Of course, this is the sad result of too many years of repression and poverty. Fortunately all was resolved and classes began (in the borrowed primary school classrooms) at the end of January. Our scholarship students spent a weekend breaking down the wall separating the primary from the private middle school so that there are separate entrances for the different sets of students.

**Scholarships** — we have 10 high school students and 2 university students this year. We began our weekly sessions with tearing down the wall separating INEB from the primary school (see above) and two sessions on personal and sexual health. We are still seeking \$3010 in funding for this year's scholarships.

**Building a Better Cajolá** — using the law regarding access to information the COMUDE (municipal development committee, the key to getting the people's voice into the decision making) is analyzing the costs of a current project to add three new schoolrooms to one of the primary schools — at an exorbitant cost. A neighborhood conflict over sewer rights was referred to the COMUDE for solution. Step by step we are "helping" the mayor consider the needs, opinions, and desires of the community in his decisions (not necessarily to his delight).

**RENAP** — this is the agency created by the national government to take over the responsibility of the municipalities for issuing birth certificates, identity cards, etc. Although the stated motive was to reduce corruption, the agency branch in Cajolá has been inappropriately charging for the documents that they have been issuing. We were able to organize a community protest which resulted in immediate elimination of the inappropriate fees, and we are initiating a formal complaint with the national government to take action against the employees.

**Radio Program** — we began a weekly radio broadcast early Sunday mornings to focus on culture, history, and citizen involvement. (It was used immediately in organizing the community to protest the fees RENAP was charging).

**Egg Farm** — to complement setting our annual goals, the group worked on envisioning where they would like to be long term. They defined long term as 15 years, and their vision included daily work for each member, with more hens

### PLEASE HELP!

**Scholarships** — we are supporting 10 high school students and two university students in 2010. A high school scholarship costs \$774 per year and university costs \$1340. **We still need \$3010.**

**"Our School" INEB** still needs a filing cabinet (\$190) and a table with 4 chairs (\$130)

**Children's Clothing & Toys** — we are glad to accept good used baby, children, and boy's clothing...and used non-electronic non-battery-driven toys. \*\*\*We especially need **girls sneakers** so that our girls don't have to jump rope barefoot!\*\*\*

**Used gym bags** or day bags to send deportee clothes home.

**Spanish language books** for our library — including children's books

**Egg Farm** — we need \$4000 for an automatic egg classifying system (that can process 1600 eggs in an hour). Please contact Caryn for details (201.572.7974)

**Volunteers in Morristown** — we have great opportunities for anyone who lives locally who speaks Spanish and has an interest in tutoring in **English, mathematics, or computers.**

#### For tax-deductible financial contributions:

*For scholarships: please make checks payable to **Maya Educational Foundation***

*For all other donations: please make checks payable to **PeaceWorks/Grupo Cajolá**. PeaceWorks website can accept electronic donations to **Grupo Cajolá** as well. Go to [www.grupocajola.org](http://www.grupocajola.org) Donate and click on the link to PeaceWorks website. Thank you Jim Burchell.*

*Please mail your contributions to Grupo Cajolá, 50 Cutler St, Morristown, NJ 07960*

**Gracias!**

(meaning more land and more chicken houses), perhaps making their own feed, and having their own vehicles to expand their sales territories. This vision-setting was very exciting, the first time the women have been able to articulate a future for their project. We hosted a group of women who are raising chickens for meat in Chajabal, San Andres Xecul, to share experiences.

Website: [www.grupocajola.org](http://www.grupocajola.org)  
50 Cutler Street Morristown, New Jersey 07960  
Email: [GrupoCajola2000@yahoo.com](mailto:GrupoCajola2000@yahoo.com) T/F 973.984.5383

**MayaMam Weavers** — as part of their monthly training with Oxlajuj B'atz the women elected their committee of directors. The philosophy is that the committee works to implement the group's decisions and the goal is that step by step the women will be responsible for all the decisions in the business. We reviewed the results of the year and began setting goals for the coming year as well as long-term goals.

The new carpentry business venture which will focus on ergonomic weaver benches chose a name — **Arbol de Talento, Carpenteria de Cajolá/Talent Tree, Cajolá Carpentry**. They are breaking ground to build a workshop and are working on their business plan.

We traveled to the nearby town of **Palestina** to share our own video "Cajolá Mam Town in Resistance" along with the video "Documigrante" and a video made in last year's video training centering around the life of a young woman whose father arranged her marriage when she was 13 years old and the woman's subsequent struggle to find her own life "Juanita".

**Santa Anita** — in Morristown we hosted a delegation from the Santa Anita Coffee Cooperative. We spent one day on campus at Ramapo College, participating in classes on Latin American Literature, Food and Population, International Politics, the model UN club, and Human Rights in Latin America. Our visitors gave personal testimonies about their participation as guerrillas in Guatemala's brutal 36 years of civil war and genocide, as well as the struggle to create new civilian lives in the twelve years since the signing of the Peace Accords. They then spoke about the progress in achieving their dreams of a better future for their children. There were many questions from the students, so our visitors felt that their stories had been heard. Thank you to Professor Carreras for hosting us in a get-together afterward at his house.

Also at **Ramapo College**, we participated in a Community Service Fair, offering students and student groups opportunities to volunteer in our work.

**Association of Maya Spiritual Guides** — we are helping organize a group of spiritual guides in Cajolá who want to work to rescue and renovate the community's sacred sites. Many of the sites are overgrown and littered with garbage. Some are still on community land, but many have been taken over by private individuals. The group will be analyzing the sites to decide the priorities.

**Immigrant Art Exposition** — we went to Long Branch for the NJ opening of this year-long art exposition whose theme is the immigrant experience. You may remember that we have three entries, a painting by Alexander Huinil of a Chicano wearing a zoot suit (please see the photo to the left), a backstrap-loom weaving by Guillerma Escobar, and a painting on a handkerchief by Aurelio Vail, painted from his jail cell.

## GRUPO CAJOLA FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2009 REVENUES

Scholarship Donations	\$ 7,895
Gifts for Kids	\$ 2,500
Gifts from Individuals	\$ 1,360
Gifts from Churches & Org.	\$ 1,150
Sales & Honorariums	<u>\$ 3,097</u>
Total	\$16,002

## EXPENSES

Scholarships & education	\$10,976
Gifts for Kids	\$ 2,487
Cash loss on egg farm	\$ 2,797
Cash loss on weavers	\$ 124
Internet Center Loss	\$ 6,335
Cost of Sales & honorariums	\$ 2,411
Administration	<b>\$ 8,347</b>
Total	\$33,476

## PURCHASE OF ASSETS

Internet Center	\$ 178
Headquarters & AV equipment	\$ 1,745
MayaMam looms & equipment	<u>\$ 868</u>
Total	\$ 2,789



"El Pachuco/Zoot Suit" by Alexander Huinil