



THE Garden's EDGE

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THE
Garden's
EDGE

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A message from Sarah



"I am so thankful for everyone who has crossed our path and supported us over the years."

*Sarah Montgomery,
Director*

Dear Garden's Edge Supporters,

One of the many things I love about The Garden's Edge is all the amazing people who come together, sometimes unexpectedly, to make our projects successful. I am so thankful for everyone who has crossed our path and supported us over the years. In this newsletter, you will find articles that describe some of these people and our projects in greater detail and learn about how they are helping bring our mission to life.

One of these people is José Miguel, a Guatemalan volunteer who came to Qachuu Aloom two years ago with vision, passion, and an amazing ability to motivate Qachuu Aloom staff and member families. He has helped us implement a successful maternal health and nutrition project, Nutri-accion. We saw a need for it and believed in his idea, which has helped bring all the pieces together – economics, environment, food, seeds, and nutrition. We have started down a new and somewhat daunting path, but I am excited to take on this complex issue.

A few years ago, my dear childhood friend, Liz Goetz, came to Guatemala on a grant from her graduate program at UCIRA, to film the women of Qachuu Aloom planting, growing, and cultivating Amaranth. Her film traces how Amaranth has benefited families of Qachuu Aloom both financially and nutritionally, as well as how it helps build community through sharing and cultivating the seed. Through her film and our farmer exchanges in the U.S., the Amaranth seed helped introduce us to two amazing projects that we have started partnerships with: Owl Peak Farm in New Mexico and Metabolic Studios in Los Angeles.

Collaboration with two New York churches, Gates and Batavia, helped us secure 3 years of partial funding for our nutrition project, which began (and continues) with help from the Emily Sandall Foundation. We are so thankful for these wonderful supporters.

We are always particularly grateful to those of you who help us year after year. You have watched us grow from working with 12 farmers to now over 500 and seen our programs improve and grow. **We couldn't do it without you. Thank you for your support.**

--Sarah Montgomery



José Miguel (left) with youth participants in the new Qachuu Aloom nutrition project.

Donors like you make it possible to provide micro-loans to women like Marcelina Tum Gonzales. She sells the piglets from this pig at market to earn income for her family.



We would like to thank the **Emily Sandall Foundation** for its ongoing support. In memory of Emily Sandall, young girls at Qachuu Aloom are trained as future leaders in their villages.



Maternal Health & Nutrition

Last spring, José Miguel initiated a project to study and address malnutrition in Guatemala. He also wanted to train local youth to conduct assessments and distribute treatments, giving them skills to help them excel in adulthood. José Miguel recruited 11 youth, including several Garden’s Edge scholarship recipients.

From April to August, José Miguel and his students conducted monthly assessments in four villages. Despite increasing available healthy food, children aged 0-5 in these communities fit the **national average of almost 50% chronically malnourished**.

In response, José Miguel and his students held nutrition workshops for mothers of young children to teach them how to integrate healthy, locally produced options like amaranth, pigeon pea, and fresh vegetables into their families’ diets.



Presbytery of Genessee County supporters helped conduct health assessments during a July visit.

Over the first 18 months of the pilot Maternal Health and Nutrition Program, we saw a 15% average increase in scores for participating children. This is much higher than the results of Guatemalan government programs.



Tulema Chen is 5 years old with developmental disabilities. After participating in 18 months of our nutrition program, she gained enough strength to stand up for the first time ever! And now she can walk a few steps. Her mother says the frequency of her seizures has greatly declined over this time.

Contemplating the decline of the LA River during a visit organized by Metabolic Studio.



Visit Metabolic Studio Online: www.metabolicstudio.org/



Maria Elena and Rosalia at the Heirloom Expo with Dr. Vandana Shiva, who spoke highly of our programs.



Owl Peak staff learning seed harvesting and saving techniques from visiting Qachuu Aloom farmers.

New Partner: Metabolic Studio

This summer, we collaborated with **Metabolic Studio** in Los Angeles, California, to teach gardening and seed saving techniques in gardens throughout Los Angeles and Owens Valley. We met dozens of school children and community members from the LA Neighborhood Land Trust, the Seed Library of LA, Milagro Allegre Community garden, and Owens Valley Pauite tribes.

We were so inspired by the many amazing projects that artist and architect Lauren Bon and her Metabolic Studio is working on. We are honored that Metabolic Studio will be providing The Garden’s Edge with support for our work with communities, gardening, and maternal health and nutrition in Guatemala.

New Partner: Owl Peak Farm

Owl Peak Farm is located in La Madera, a small town in northern New Mexico. It is a project of C.C. Culver and a very dedicated farm crew. They grow food for the local community in their Affordable Food Garden, selling at local farmer’s markets and food co-ops. We have been helping them bring a new field into production and training their field staff.

In September, members of Qachuu Aloom taught seed saving techniques, demonstrated amaranth toasting, and made alegrías with the Owl Peak Farm staff. We are excited for future collaboration with this beautiful farm in the years to come, and grateful for their support of The Garden’s Edge.

In 2015, we launched a new website!

Visit us at www.gardensedge.org to learn more about our programs, read our blog, sign up for our quarterly newsletter, and make a donation to support our work!

Our blog contains stories about our friends at Qachuu Aloom and treats like this recipe for *Tortitas de Amaranto* (serves 6):

Ingredients:

- 1 medium carrot
- 1 medium onion
- 1 medium yuca (cassava or manioc)
- 1 medium red bell pepper
- 2 eggs
- 4 ounces ground beef (vegetarian option: 1 medium round of queso fresco blanco)
- 4 ounces of amaranth flour (about 1 cup)
- Salt and Pepper to taste

For the sauce:

- 3 pounds of tomatoes (or any amount, depending on how much sauce you want)
- Salt and Pepper to taste

Directions:

1. Wash the vegetables
2. Peel the yuca and boil until soft, drain, and cool
3. Mash the yuca into a dough
4. Peel the carrot and dice very fine
5. Dice the onion and bell pepper very fine as well
6. In a large bowl, mix the yuca dough with the vegetables
7. Beat in the eggs
8. Add the meat or cheese, 2 tablespoons of amaranth flour, and salt and pepper to taste
9. Mix well
10. Spread the remaining amaranth flour on a large plate with a pinch of salt and pepper
11. Form the dough into pancakes about the size of your palm and ¼-½ inch thick
12. Coat each pancake in the amaranth flour (as if breading them)
13. Heat oil and cook the pancakes until golden brown on both sides
14. Place cooked pancakes on a tray (soak up any extra oil with paper towels)
15. Serve warm with tomato sauce

For the sauce:

1. Slice and stew the tomatoes
2. Blend well
3. Add salt and pepper to taste

Scholarship students like Olga and Damaris, shown here with their mothers, gain skills and confidence through participation in The Garden’s Edge and Qachuu Aloom. Your donation to The Garden’s Edge can help fund a scholarship for a young woman like them!



Qachuu Aloom has a new website too!

www.qachuualoom.org



Thank you to ¡Reviva! for sharing their musical talents in support of The Garden’s Edge and to Marble Brewery for hosting a fun event!



This year, Qachuu Aloom purchased equipment, like this mill, for processing amaranth.



You can now purchase heirloom seeds from Guatemala and New Mexico through our partner, Epic Seeds. Check out the selection at www.epicseeds.net

Our Mission

The Garden’s Edge supports sustainable agriculture, micro-enterprise, and education in rural communities in order to revitalize cultural knowledge and improve economic well-being.

How We Work

We focus our work in the following areas:

• Maternal Health & Nutrition

Our newest program provides nutrition screenings for babies, pregnant mothers, and children under five to detect and treat malnutrition with long-term solutions.

• Micro-Enterprise

Very small loans to our members help stimulate economic growth by providing the necessary resources to start a small business or improve the infrastructure of homes and gardens.

• Scholarships

Our scholarships allow young women to overcome widespread illiteracy and gain useful skills that they can share with their community and use to support their families.

• Seed Saving

Seed saving helps maintain biological diversity and traditional plant species, while also contributing to community economic well-being.

• Sustainable Farms & Gardens

Small-scale agriculture in rural communities promotes healthy eating, seed saving, traditional agricultural practices, and economic development.

• Farmer Exchanges

We love to share our experiences with interested organizations through farmer trainings and exchanges.

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