



December 11, 2017

Dear Friend,

I hope this holiday season finds you and yours well! It is a busy time at Friendship Bridge as we wrap up an exciting year filled with lots of activities implementing our 2017-2019 Strategic Plan, *A Path for Every Client*. I recently returned from our annual Board of Directors retreat in Guatemala, where the Board was excited to review the results of our newest *Plus* programs and to see our new Country Director, Heidy Garrido, in action. Below are some highlights. Please find more details in the pages that follow.

Introducing our new Country Director, Heidy Garrido

Heidy's passion for the work of Friendship Bridge is evident in all she does, and it is contagious to all around her! She continues to motivate our staff, while meeting the strategic goals of financial growth and social impact.

Women's Agriculture Credit & Training Program is expanding

In 2017, we planned to add 500 agriculture clients to the pilot program that that started in 2016. This program is now expanding to our Sololá branch, and we surpassed our goal with 685 active clients. Impact results from just one harvest show client income increasing by 45%.

The Health for Life Program continues strong

Since our pilot launched in 2015 we have expanded to serve three departments, and plan to expand to another in 2018. More than 5,000 clients have received health services since the program's inception.

Success of the Artisan Market Access Program

More than 40 leader Artisan clients have participated in advanced trainings or our new *Mentor* program this year. Most are now exporting their products and one of our artisan clients, Doña Santos, won two nationally prestigious awards from Citi Foundation!

As 2017 draws to a close, all of us at Friendship Bridge are reminded anew that it is partnerships like yours that make our work possible. We are so grateful for your support. We hope that you have a happy and healthy holiday season, and that you take pride in the amazing impact you are having on the women in Guatemala.

Happy Holidays,

Karen Larson
President and CEO



Introducing Our New Country Director, Heidi Garrido

Although Heidi has worked as a consultant with Friendship Bridge since 2010, she joined our team full time as Director of People Services in January 2017, and then as Country Director in October.

Heidi came to Friendship Bridge with significant experience in human resource management, employee and client training, as well as the development and mentoring of micro, small, and medium businesses. She has spent much of her career with the *Asociación de Gerentes de Guatemala* (Management Association of Guatemala), specializing in mentoring managers both in the private and public sector. Most recently, she was head of corporate social responsibility for Energuate, Guatemala's largest power distribution company. Heidi has worked throughout Guatemala; has a keen understanding of our clients' needs; and recognizes that strong internal systems, along with well-trained and motivated employees, are keys to success.

Women's Agriculture Credit & Training Program Is Expanding

Friendship Bridge serves over 3,500 clients whose families work in agriculture. In 2016 we designed a program to meet the unique needs of this sector with the goal of encouraging women to play a greater role in the decision making process and to increase yields from their agriculture activities. The project includes specially designed credit products, technical training, risk mitigation services, business assistance, access to value chain participants and new markets. Using demonstration plots as a training technique, clients can see first-hand the differences between their traditional farming practices and more modern methods, helping to improve farming practices while breaking down cultural barriers in a predominantly machista culture.

There are currently 685 clients involved in this pilot. Training topics include crop selection, plant nutrition, traditional versus improved farming techniques, vegetable nutrition, fertilizer use, and optimal water and soil pH. Our in-house agronomists visit our clients and their plots to provide practical training and answer any questions that the clients have on farming techniques both prior to and during their loan and harvest cycles. Some of the early impact results have shown clients steadily increasing their income by a minimum of 45%. Some clients have even increased their income by over 550% in one harvest!

By the end of 2018, Friendship Bridge aims to reach 1,000 clients to multiply these positive effects.



Agriculture Training in Tzununul, Sacapulas.

More than 55 clients participated from eight Trust Banks along with neighbors.

Success of the Artisan Market Access Program

In November, we celebrated the completion of another Artisan Training with a graduation ceremony. This year, more than 40 artisans have participated in advanced or mentor trainings. The ceremony celebrated nine intermediate artisans moving onto the next level of the program, and nine advanced clients graduating out of the training program. These artisans have seen incredible growth in their businesses. On average, artisan clients in the *Artisan Market Access* program double their number of employees and monthly income and many are exporting product to the US.



We are very proud to announce that one of our advanced Artisan clients, Doña Santos, recently won the prestigious Citi Micro Entrepreneurship Award for Entrepreneurial Woman and placed 2nd as Micro Entrepreneur of the year in Guatemala. This awards program is a signature initiative of the Citi Foundation aimed at raising awareness about the importance of micro entrepreneurs and microfinance in supporting the financial inclusion and economic empowerment of low-income individuals.



As part of our *Artisan Market Access* program, Doña Santos has begun to expand her product sales to the US. To see or purchase her products, please visit www.friendshipbridge.org/shop. This is a great place to shop for the holiday season while supporting Friendship Bridge clients and the *Artisan Market Access* program.

Health for Life Program Continues Strong

Since starting our women's *Health for Life* program in 2015, we have provided services to over 5,000 clients through more than 1,500 mobile clinics that visit our clients' communities with female nurses who speak our clients' indigenous languages. We have found 23 complex care cases that have been absorbed into our health partner's network (Maya Health Alliance) for follow up care. Since our pilot launched, we have expanded to serve three departments (Sololá, Chimaltenango, Quiché), and plan to expand to one more department in 2018.

End of Year Giving

Did you support Friendship Bridge in 2016 with a gift? The PB and K Foundation wants to thank you for your dedication to women's empowerment and will be matching renewed gifts for the rest of the year, up to \$10,000! Renew your gift today and know you will have DOUBLE the impact!