





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 3 ● OUR MISSION
- 4 ● LETTER FROM OUR LEADERSHIP
- 6 ● EDUCATION
- 9 ● LITERACY
- 11 ● LEADERSHIP
- 13 ● THE IMPACT OF YOUR INVESTMENT

# MISSION

Having begun our work in indigenous Guatemalan communities, Reading Village empowers youth to eradicate illiteracy and lead their communities out of poverty.



# A LETTER FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

## BUILDING A SOLID FOUNDATION FOR GROWTH

In this, our ninth year, we prioritized building infrastructure to create a sustainable future for Reading Village. We brought on a new and highly skilled In-Country Director who has the experience to take Reading Village to the next level. He hired three new Community Facilitators (those who mentor our youth leaders), and we brought on two new board members. As Jim Collins says in his classic business development book, *Good to Great*, we are “getting the right people on the bus.”

Having the right people on the bus allows Reading Village to expand into more communities, improve program execution and enhance evaluation to ensure we are doing the best work possible.

Having built a program that is demonstrating its effectiveness at developing local leaders with the capacity to improve their own communities, we are now exploring means of scaling our impact to reach more communities in Guatemala and beyond.

Our impact starts with developing youth leaders. Leadership at the highest levels of Guatemalan government failed the country this year as the president and vice president were ousted in a corruption scandal. Against this backdrop our teens are developing skills and values that benefit their communities. Not only are they ensuring the generation following them is literate, they are also leaders in their schools, churches and community groups.

The children and families that benefit from our youth leaders’ reading activities -- both formally and informally -- are impacted as well. Carmen reads to her mother while she weaves. Soila reads to her little sister every night before bed. Younger brothers and sisters of our teens are growing up with books in their homes for the first time ever.

But our impact doesn’t stop there. This year, 78% of our alumni were employed, many bringing in as much or more income than their entire families. 40% of our graduates studied at university, and still others are pursuing prestigious teaching fellowships with a vision of returning to their communities to open their own schools in the future.

All of this impact is made possible by a passionate and generous community of supporters from around the world. Thank you for being a part of our community. Here’s to even bigger and better things in 2016.



Linda Smith, Founder & Executive Director of Reading Village





# 2015

## OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

**4**

COMMUNITIES SERVED

**50**

YOUTH LEADERS IN OUR PROGRAM

**78%**

OF ALUMNI ARE EMPLOYED

+

**40%**

OF ALUMNI ARE AT UNIVERSITY

**220**

LEADERSHIP TRAINING HOURS

**2176**

CHILDREN REACHED

# PROGRAM AREAS

Community development is our primary purpose.  
We leverage leadership, literacy, and education to accompany our partner  
communities on their path from a cycle of intergenerational poverty toward self-sufficiency.

# EDUCATION



*I work in maintenance for the municipality during the week while I study nursing at the university on the weekends. I just joined Concepcion's newly formed Women's Commission. They send me to seminars to learn, ask questions, bring the information back and teach them what I've learned. I developed these skills while in the Reading Village program.*

**- FRANCISCA, PROGRAM GRADUATE**





### AN OVERVIEW OF OUR IMPACT IN EDUCATION

Education is the cornerstone of community development. The research shows that education benefits maternal health, household income, and child mortality. Educated girls will marry later, delay having children, and will space pregnancies to improve health outcomes. Furthermore, every year of education increases an individual's earning potential by 10%, making it an integral means to prosperity in low income communities.

When high school students enter our program their families, on average, subsist on about \$4 per day. This is due, in large part, to the fact that their parents had little, if any, formal education and are forced to eke out a living with the skills they have, all highly labor intensive and minimally paid. Participants in our program receive a full 4-year high school scholarship. And when they graduate they are capable of doubling their families' incomes. In 2015 78% of our alumni were employed and 40% studying at university.

# LITERACY

“

*“I am Elder Leja, and I want you to know that I like to read and it helps improve my Spanish vocabulary. I am always in touch with the Reading Village youth who promote literacy in my community because they they loan me magazines, storybooks, books about legends, history and social sciences that I read with members of my family. Clifford the Big Red Dog has been my favorite book since I was 6 years old. Clifford helps his family and I, too, want to help my family members because they don’t know how to read.”*

**- ELDER LEJA**



## AN OVERVIEW OF OUR IMPACT IN LITERACY

Reading Village considers literacy the most powerful tool for community development in marginalized populations in the world. Literacy not only builds self-esteem, it improves creative and critical thinking skills, informed decision making, personal empowerment, as well as civil and social participation. Because literacy empowers individuals to take action, it has been shown to increase political participation, which may lead to greater democratic opportunity. Without literacy skills, there are limited educational or economic opportunities available. Literacy and education have broad consequences, including affecting future earning potential, GDP growth, infant mortality rates, child survival rates, and can even reduce a country's risk of war.

Reading Village is creating new generations of literate children. In 2015 fifty teens served their communities as reading promoters, each reading 3 hours a week to approximately 50 children. We train our youth leaders in Paulo Freire's Popular Education, a powerful methodology for engaging and empowering learners rather than filling their assumed empty heads with knowledge. Story hours are a tool not only to improve Spanish vocabulary and comprehension in Mayan language-speaking children, but also to develop a love of reading and the ability to express themselves, develop their imaginations and their ability to understand their environment through critical and creative thinking skills.



# LEADERSHIP



*The program has given me opportunities to participate.  
Because of this I now attend meetings of my community's  
development committee where we work to resolve  
problems, and I offer my ideas along with the adults."*

**- CAMILO, YOUTH LEADER**



## AN OVERVIEW OF OUR IMPACT IN LEADERSHIP

The Guatemalan government is at best indifferent and at worst actively oppositional to the self-determination of its marginalized, impoverished populations. Reading Village believes that poverty is a human construct and can be eliminated through the development of grassroots local leadership. Our Leaders and Readers program provides teens with 4 years of mentoring and regular, multidisciplinary leadership development workshops along with the opportunity to put their leadership into practice through leading reading activities with children in their villages. Youth leaders, seeing the impact they have on the children in their community, are transformed. They find self-worth, confidence, a new vision for their community that sparks their initiative to become leaders in other areas of their lives.

To date, youth leaders in two of our partner communities have opened their first-ever public libraries. In 2015 the youth in one community took the initiative to obtain and install a RACHEL (Remote Access Education and Learning) in their library. Youth also report having influenced some teachers in the classrooms where they read to students. Teachers are adopting the techniques the teens are using in their reading activities. In Chuacruz, the adult leadership has joined youth leaders in the running and support of the library. Teens are class and school presidents, sports team leaders, church youth group leaders. And two alumni completed the second of a three year fellowship that will end with their opening a branch of the innovative Asturias Academy.

# IMPACT OF YOUR INVESTMENT

**EVEN WITH ALL OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE WE ADDED TO THE ORGANIZATION THIS YEAR WE WERE STILL ABLE TO INCREASE NET ASSETS BY OVER \$100,000.**

And the return on dollar invested remained steady. From paperclips to scholarships, our organizational budget totaled \$244,278 in 2015. The total budget divided by number of children reached means our impact costs \$11 per child for a month's worth of reading activities, and that \$11 a month includes all the other costs of the organization, including staff salaries and a year of high school, mentoring and leadership development training for all of our youth leaders.



# ADELANTE INVESTORS



Aaron Smith  
Al Osborne  
Alan Moses  
Andy Newman  
Barbara Meister  
Beatrice Briggs  
Bonnie & Jim Varley  
Carol Rubin Kahn  
Christy Holz  
Cindi and Jared Gellert  
Connie Newton  
Dan Spiegler  
David Green  
David Smith  
Debbie Robbins  
Diana Janda  
Diana Ho  
Diane Conoly

Dorothy Smith  
Eli Herscher  
Eri Kagamiyama  
Erica Peng  
Estela Andraus  
Freda Heald  
Gene Koelbel  
Gerard & Magda  
Barcelo  
Gerry Cristol  
Gerry Smith  
Gregory Sullivan  
Janet Martin  
Jay and Lynn Vernon  
Jen Clink  
Jennifer & Bob Weaver  
Jerra Ryan

Joan Young  
John & Jane Spencer  
Jon Glass  
Judy Sanderson  
Judy Kellogg  
Julia Young  
Kim Davis  
Kim Wallace  
Larry Dressler  
Laura Resau  
Leonard Moses  
Linda Hoyer  
Linda Smith  
Marlene Barach  
Martha Cabeen  
Martin Kruger  
Mary Zamore

Michael McCall  
Mickey Barach  
Monica Shipman  
Nancy Swett  
Nancy Kellogg  
Paul Lewin  
Ray Swartz  
Richard Dortch  
Sherri Cannon  
Sue Pickens  
Sue Stark  
Sue & Richard  
Anderson  
Tommy Perkins  
Vinny Green  
Debbie Stewart  
Kirk Sinclair

# CONTRIBUTORS



Follow Your Heart

Friends' School

GlobalGiving

Google

Hunter Douglas

IKAR

Lewisville Rotary

Microsoft

Motorola Solutions

Stephen S Wise Temple

StepWare

Temple Emanu-El

The Temple

Ventura County Jewish Council

Mesa Plumbing & Mechanical, Inc

Manhattan Middle School of Arts & Academics

Wilshire Boulevard Temple

Women's Rabbinic Network

AmazonSmile Foundation

Community First Foundation

eBay Foundation Employee Engagement Fund

Estelle Friedman Gervis Family Foundation

John and Susan Dewan Foundation

Kathryn Conway Preyer Charitable Lead Unitrust

Lake Atitlan Libraries

M.B. & Edna Zale Foundation

Marx-Stark Family Foundation

PEG Partners

Richard Lewis Family Foundation

SG Foundation

Sidney Stern Memorial Trust

T. Rowe Price Foundation, Inc.

TeleTech Community Foundation

The April Fund

The Good People Fund, Inc.



**READING**  
VILLAGE