

# PROJECT SOMOS



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ANNUAL REPORT  
FOR 2020



# LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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Hello from Guatemala. 2020 has been the most challenging year for Project Somos since we arrived ten years ago. A forest fire, pandemic, lockdown, and school suspension. No one could have imagined we would have to be so nimble to pivot multiple times. Thanks to our generous donors, we were able to create a Food Bank to support the local villages for 10 months. This was never in our mission statement, but it became apparent we could not sit idle while local families went hungry.

We are grateful that our educational and nutritional programs have begun again, and hope the COVID rates will continue to decline. We are being very, very careful in using all the precautions around the government mandated precautions. Fortunately there has not been an outbreak in the local village. Students are so happy to be back, as are the staff. The harvest of quinoa, chia, beans and kamut are in and the veggie garden is thriving. We are in the dry season and remember how fortunate we are to have sufficient water for irrigation. It is wonderful to see the children in the garden harvesting the vegetables they will use to prepare their lunch. None of this would be possible without your assistance. Mil Gracias...



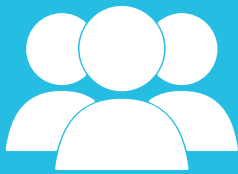
**GREG KEMP**

Executive Director

# 2020 STATS

Here is a snapshot of how 2020 looked for us at Project Somos, from serving the community through our Food Bank to our 'Live From Project Somos' virtual celebration!

**21,595**



NUMBER OF PEOPLE SERVED  
BY THE FOOD BANK IN 2020

**97,000**



TOTAL POUNDS OF FOOD  
DISTRIBUTED TO FAMILIES

**1500**



BANANAS DISTRIBUTED  
TO FAMILIES EACH WEEK

**300 LBS**



POUNDS OF BEANS  
DISTRIBUTED EACH WEEK

**98 KIDS**



PRE-REGISTERED FOR  
2021 SOMOS PROGRAMS

**80%**



OF STAFF WHO ARE  
KAQCHIKEL

**111  
SUPPORTERS**



ATTENDED OUR  
VIRTUAL "LIVE FROM  
PROJECT SOMOS"  
VIRTUAL EVENT ON  
NOVEMBER 28, 2020  
(PICTURED RIGHT)





# 3 STORIES FROM 2020 THAT DEFINED OUR YEAR

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## MARCH 2020: WHEN EVERYTHING CHANGED

Our classroom calendar was unchanged and frozen in time with the date of March 11th 2020 for the entire year. That was the day that a serious forest fire required an urgent evacuation and caused significant damage. Following that, the pandemic lockdown began. The Learning Village where the kids came daily became eerily empty.

Shortly after, thanks to your generosity, programming was pivoted and a food bank was started so that families would not go hungry in this community. Like many of you, we thought the pandemic probably wouldn't go on for very long and saw it as a temporary program.

Of course, throughout 2020 the classrooms remained closed and our Food Bank grew each week as new families and individuals came to us for food and basic necessities. With travel and markets either shut down completely or limited, many who were already living in extreme poverty were without work and became desperate for food to feed their families.



# 3 STORIES FROM 2020 CONTINUED

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## **JUNE 2020: WAVING A WHITE FLAG**

During the hour and a half drive back from doing a big shop for food and supplies in Guatemala City, we saw dozens of people waving white flags at the side of the road – the symbol in Guatemala for being in need of food. We stopped as much as we could to offer some of the food and supplies. Along the way we gave food to Lidia, a young, single mother and her baby, who had walked quite a distance from their home to stand on the highway and wait for someone passing by to offer some help.

During this drive home, we quickly realized the number of people waving white flags and asking for food far outweighed the amount of food in our truck – food that had already been allocated for families who are hungry in the local community surrounding Project Somos.

With your help, we were able to continue to provide food and basic necessities for local families throughout 2020. On behalf of Lidia and families like hers, THANK YOU!!!!



# 3 STORIES FROM 2020 CONTINUED

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## DECEMBER 2020: KEEPING KIDS EDUCATED DURING THE PANDEMIC

Our teacher, Rosario, told us that families are making the decision NOT to send their children back to school because during the pandemic they were unable to keep up with the homework that was sent home. Many parents are unable to read or write, and often do not have the ability or education to work on the homework with their children. This lead to frustration, shame, anger, and an all-around unpleasant feeling tied to kids being in school. Because of this, some parents made the decision to send their kids to work. The reality is that once these kids leave the education system and go to work, they may never return.

We are determined to keep as many kids as possible in school and with your help, and very dedicated teachers like Rosario, we are trying to reverse this worrying trend in our community.





# WE LOVE YOU!

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It is no exaggeration that this Project simply would not exist without the love, generosity, compassion, and encouragement from every single person in the Project Somos family. As we reflect on the first 10 years of Project Somos and envision what our next 10 years will be, we recognize all of the people that made this dream a reality.

Whether you've volunteered your time, sent a kind message of support, made a donation, shared your talents or have come to the Project, YOU are keeping our community and their families educated, fed and looking positively towards the future.

One day, we will welcome you back to the Project with open arms – we really can't wait to see you!

In the meantime, take care of yourselves and your loved ones.  
From all of us at Project Somos,

**Thank you! Gracias! Matiox!**

