

# On Lake Atitlán with Sharing the Dream

By Norma C. Wilson

Part three of a five-part series

In January I traveled with Sharing the Dream in Guatemala's "Fair Trade and Indigenous Cultures" tour with my husband and STDG Board member Jerry Wilson, filmmaker Charles Nauman, weaver Grete Bodogaard, environmentalist Dana Loseke and information technologist Ronda Harity.

Lake Atitlán is a magical place, a 1,000-foot deep ancient volcanic crater of clear blue water surrounded by Mayan villages nestled between volcanic peaks.

We skimmed across the water in a motorboat to the village of Santiago Atitlán, which lies in the shadow of Volcans San Pedro, Atitlán and Tolimán. Near the shore fishermen rowed homemade wooden boats, cayucos, amongst blossoming bushes and trees.

From the dock we climbed the hill to Casa de Sueños (house of dreams), the Sharing the Dream hostel. We met night watchman and scholar assistant Estéban, then walked around the corner to El Centro de los Ancianos, the Elder Center.

Six young women, ages 14-20, worked at a balcony table, beading bracelets and necklaces. Several were from the village of Panabaj, destroyed by a mudslide in 2005. One lost her parents, and now provides for her family, paying for her brother's schooling.

Bernavela, who has worked for the Elder Center for 30 years, also directs the bead group.

Downstairs we met several dozen elders seated on benches. We introduced ourselves, and Diana translated to their Tzutuhil language.

When Charles, who was filming the gathering, introduced himself saying he did not want to take their picture,



Elders gather for lunch at Sharing the Dream's Elder Center.

but to give them pictures, Bernavela asked them to guess the age of "Carlos." No one imagined he was 88, the eldest of the elders.

But one woman said, "We're glad you're here because you are like us, and you are doing so well."

Bernavela ladled meat and soup into each bowl an elder had brought, Lidia, her assistant, piled a stack of tortillas atop the lid, and our group served each elder. Julia, another assistant, helped our group serve coffee and multivitamins. Each elder hugged and thanked us as they left.

"I've never been kissed by so many women in one day," said group leader Jerry.

While we recognized some of the elders from my daughter Laura Wilson's 2009 book, "Stories of Survival," Bernavela said that several have since passed away.

Lidia led the way as we delivered a "meal on sandals" to one elder in the book, Maria Chiquival. We ducked through a door in a stonewall beside a woman sitting on the sidewalk selling tortillas and walked a narrow passageway past a series of small,

cement rooms to find Maria, age 69. She was glad to have visitors; her life is difficult because one of her arms was chopped off by a machete during Guatemala's Civil War.

That afternoon we visited three more elders. We found Conception sitting on cardboard beside her dirt-floored bamboo, tin and stone shelter. She was glad to have visitors because she lives alone and worries that her neighbors want to take the tiny parcel of land she inherited from her parents.

Conception has a stomach ailment that requires medical attention, and

Bernavela promised to take her to the hospital for treatment. She expressed thanks for the corté (skirt) Sharing the Dream gave her for Christmas.

Next we visited Rosa, who lives in a cement block house inherited from her parents. In her front yard, a banana tree was heavy with fruit and a pink rose bloomed. Rosa married at 18, but two years later her husband left her with three children. Only one survived, her now 40-year-old son, who lives with her and supports himself by manual labor.

Rosa is unable to work because she broke her back in a fall. But she has retained her sense of humor. Her parting words: "You should take the bananas - only \$10!"

Our third visit was to a disabled 65-year-old man named Gregorio. He lay on planks stretched across sawhorses.

When he was young, his parents gave him a piece of land, and he married Maria. But in his 30s, he began to have difficulty moving his legs and could no longer work. He sold his land, and Maria had to support them and their five children by doing laundry. They lost two children because she was not able to feed and take care of them.

Gregorio wept as he spoke with us, miserable that they must rely on charity, but grateful to organizations like Sharing the Dream for the food and other assistance they receive.

At the Elder Center we met with two women from Mujeres Artisan, women artisans who make small woven purses.

The president, Maria Victoria, said they started with 12 women in 2000, but lost everything in the 2005 mudslide, but regrouped and now have 18 members. Isabel, STDG's artisan director, is teaching them new techniques to make their products more marketable.

For further information, visit [sharingthedream.org](http://sharingthedream.org).

(Courtesy photo)

## CLAY COUNTY SHERIFF PRESS BRIEFING

### Clay County Sheriff's Press Briefing

02/17/13 16:29 - A deputy responded to a report of a 911 call from a rural residence. Upon arrival it was found to be a child playing with a cell phone.

02/17/13 23:09 - A deputy responded to a report of horses on the road north of Vermillion. No horses were found in the area.

02/18/13 01:53 - A 911 call was received from a rural business. A deputy investigated and found an open door and no one present. The owner later confirmed no problems.

02/18/13 12:35 - A deputy investigated a non-injury rollover accident east of Vermillion.

02/19/13 06:15 - A deputy traveled to the State Penitentiary in Springfield to pick up an inmate to be brought to Clay County for court.

02/19/13 08:45 - The School Resource Officer responded to a Vermillion residence to bring a truant child to school.

02/19/13 13:13 - A report was received of a stranded motorist north of Vermillion. A deputy responded to the area but the vehicle was gone.

02/19/13 13:56 - A deputy transported an inmate to the State Penitentiary in Springfield after a court appearance in Clay County.

02/19/13 16:01 - A deputy served a protection order to a Vermillion man.

02/19/13 17:25 - Officers responded to the jail to a report that an inmate had attempted suicide by stabbing himself with a pencil. The inmate was treated for superficial wounds and a mental health evaluation was requested.

02/19/13 22:02 - An inmate was transported by a deputy to the Human Services Center in Yankton for a mental health committal.

02/20/13 08:52 - A deputy transported an inmate to a doctor appointment and then back to the jail.

02/20/13 13:30 - A deputy transported an inmate to a dentist appointment and then returned him to the jail.

02/20/13 17:49 - A deputy responded to assist the Vermillion and Wakonda Fire Departments at a structure fire near Hub City.

02/21/13 10:28 - A deputy investigated a theft of vehicle parts from a residence near Wakonda.

02/21/13 10:48 - A deputy investigated a report of a burglary at an unoccupied rural residence. Antiques were stolen from a home near Beresford.

02/21/13 15:27 - A deputy responded to a report of a small child wandering outside in Vermillion. The caller was concerned for the child's welfare. The child was not located upon arrival and no reports of a missing child was received.

02/21/13 15:27 - The School Resource Officer assisted the Vermillion Police Department with investigating an assault between two boys at a bus stop.

02/22/13 15:05 - A deputy transported an inmate to a doctor appointment and then back to the Clay County Jail.

02/22/13 16:21 - A deputy transported two inmates to Yankton and one back to Clay County for a Clay County warrant.

02/22/13 19:57 - A deputy investigated a report of a water hydrant left running in Meckling.

02/22/13 21:00 - A deputy responded to a complaint of a child walking around upstairs and making noise in an apartment building in Wakonda. The neighbor was informed of the complaint.

02/23/13 06:53 - A deputy investigated a report of a vehicle in the ditch north of Vermillion. After investigation, the owner was cited for failure to report an accident and possession drug paraphernalia.

02/23/13 11:06 - A deputy transported a person to the Human Services Center in Yankton for an involuntary mental illness commitment.

Total Records: 24

## FOR THE RECORD

### Cases disposed 2/15-21/2013

Joseph H. Swantek, 663 W. County Road, Genoa, NE; Speeding other roadways, \$39.00 plus costs

Dimitri Aland Jones, 1328 Westgate, Vermillion; Use or possession of drug paraphernalia, \$204.00 plus costs

Audra R. Turner, 29728 400th Avenue, Wagner; Driving with suspended (not revoked) license, \$204.00 plus costs

Brett B. Davison, 11608 Frances Street, Omaha, NE; Speeding other roadways, \$19.00 plus costs

Brandon M. Reynolds, 702 Red Cedar Ct., Jefferson; Speeding other roadways, \$19.00 plus costs

Tyler L. Drapeau, 447 N. Plum St. Lot 11, Vermillion; No drivers license, \$54.00 plus costs

Zachary A. Deverman, 305 E. Main St., Vermillion; Making unreasonable noise, \$104.00 plus costs

Tori Michelle Kutz, 11610 Calhoun Road, Omaha, NE; Seat belt violation, \$25.00

Madeline E. Wagner, 922 Ridgecrest Dr., Vermillion; Failure to make proper stop at stop intersection, \$54.00 plus costs

## OBITUARIES

### Cynthia Henke

Cynthia Yvonne Henke, 66, of Vermillion, died Feb. 13, 2013 at her home.

Funeral services were 10 a.m., Monday, Feb. 18, at Concordia Lutheran Church in Vermillion. Burial followed in Bluffview Cemetery at Vermillion.

Visitation was from 5 to 7 p.m., Sunday, Feb. 17, with a prayer service beginning at 7 p.m. at Concordia Lutheran Church.

Cynthia Kahler was born March 8, 1946 in Hawarden, IA. She was active in the Civil Air Patrol while attending Vermillion High School, graduating in 1964. She then attended Stewarts School of Hair Styling in Sioux Falls, SD. She worked as a beautician for many years and later managed

in home day care for several years. She eventually retired from Food Services at the University of South Dakota.

Cynthia is survived by her husband Harlan, of Vermillion; sons, Charles of Sioux City, IA, David of Golden, CO; and daughter, Christine Henke of Sioux City, IA; also three brothers, Vernon (Helen) Kahler of Rocky Mount, NC, Raymond (Dona) Kahler of Mesa, AZ, Kenneth (Jacque) Kahler of Yankton; and one sister Shirley (Gil) Vasquez of San Diego, CA; six grandchildren, Patricia & Shannon Carlough, Casey (JoHanna), Kai, Layfe, and Trey Henke; and one great-granddaughter Lilleigh Henke.

She was preceded in death by her mother, Frieda Kahler, and one brother, Donald Kahler.

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*Thank You*

The family of Lester Johnson would like to express a heartfelt thank you and our deepest appreciation for the thoughts, prayers, visits, food, memorials and support that was given to us during our time of loss. Special thank you to Pastor Anna Peck for the beautiful service and burial, organist Paula Nelson, Wakonda American Legion Post 13 and to the Pleasant Valley Ladies Aide for serving lunch. We feel truly blessed to have everyone's support and love.

Beverly Johnson, Dennis & Donna Johnson, Doug & Lorie Johnson, Mick & Diane Ramey, Duane & Michelle Johnson, Grandchildren, Great Grandchildren

**Rehabilitation District Supervisor Brookings, SD**

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*Family Memorials*  
by Gibson

*Thank You*

We Would like to thank everyone who brought food or sent flowers and the prayers & visits at the time of Dave's death. A special thank you to Pastor Steve Miller for the memorial service and to all of the doctors, nurses and student doctors at Avera McKennan for taking such good care of Dave over the past few years. Also to Hansen Funeral for the Arrangements.

**The Family of David Macy**  
Janet Macy, Mike Macy, Dana, Paul, Adam & Macy Winslow, Marjorie Macy, Cleo & Loren Anderson, Carol & Mike Engh, Dale & Sue Macy

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