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Creating a Culture of Reading

Carolyn Johnson and Irma Natalia Con Cuc: two educators, two worlds apart. Yet as they each struggled to make a difference in the lives of the children around them, they encountered obstacles that would only be overcome by bridging the gap between the U.S. and Guatemala through the help of supporters like you.

For Carolyn, who lives in Maine, it was a matter of politics. The longer she worked as a principal, the more she became frustrated with the limitations of administrative culture. "It got to the point that I couldn't put my finger on a moment in each day where my work directly helped kids to read," Carolyn recalls.

Roughly 2,000 miles away, Irma was struggling to teach children to read in a nation where reading is simply not a part of the culture. Many of the children in Irma's classroom spoke indigenous languages at home and lacked basic Spanish language skills.

As a member of Rotary, Carolyn participated in a Cooperative for Education (CoEd)/Guatemala Literacy Project textbook delivery tour. The cultural encounter brought Carolyn back to her personal mission—to directly impact the lives of children through education—this time in Guatemala. Extensive research into Concentrated Language Encounter, a Rotary-endorsed teaching methodology for children in bilingual cultures, resulted in CoEd's Culture of Reading Program (CORP).

Donations from supporters like you made CORP possible. Thanks to you, teachers like Irma now have access to high-quality, engaging children's books, as well as instruction on how to encourage children to participate in the storytelling, and even write and illustrate their own books



"This program is wonderful and so important to our students," Irma muses. "It helps them learn so much more than before and they are more excited about their studies."

Carolyn is now able to witness the results of her efforts to improve literacy firsthand. "You go into these classrooms—the ones that are the most crowded and noisy—and you could hear a pin drop the moment the teacher says they are going to read a story."

Thanks to the CORP program, made possible by sponsors like you, both Carolyn and Irma were able to come full circle from a place of frustration to one of fulfillment—both for themselves and for the kids who are now excited about staying in school.

Carolyn was recently awarded the prestigious Service Above Self Award. This award is Rotary's highest honor for individual Rotarians, recognizing those who have displayed exemplary humanitarian service with a focus on active involvement in helping others.

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Mastering International Development

You already know that Cooperative for Education (CoEd) provides needed educational opportunities for Guatemalan children. But you probably never would have guessed that CoEd is giving a group of MBA students from Xavier University a lesson in nonprofit management. Later this month, five students and one professor from Xavier University will be joining CoEd's Snapshot Tour through Guatemala. Follow their journey by reading their blog: [Xavier University MBA Nonprofit Marketing Team Guatemala Trip](#).



The CoEd Snapshot Tour, open to anyone over the age of 21, offers a five-day glimpse into Guatemala's culture and CoEd's programs. Travelers explore the country—from small Mayan villages to beautiful natural wonders such as Lake Atitlán, called by many "the most beautiful place on earth." In addition, tour participants have the chance to see CoEd's programs in action and to meet the families who benefit from the educational materials provided by supporters like you.

Participating in a CoEd Snapshot Tour "was a perfect thing for us to do, and the students were into it," explains Chris Manolis, Marketing Department Chair at Xavier University's Williams College of Business and one of three facilitators of the Nonprofit Marketing Sequence. "It looked like the best way to apply things we're learning in the class." Chris elaborates that since CoEd was founded by two Xavier alumni, the organization provides an example of how students can take their Xavier education into the world and make a difference.

The XU group connected with CoEd through Jeremy Drury, CoEd Marketing Intern and a student in the Nonprofit Management class. What he's learned about Guatemala's educational system through his CoEd internship has sparked a passion about CoEd's work—a passion he's sharing with his classmates. "The average Guatemalan woman has less than two years of education. Statistics like that demonstrate that while there's great need locally, there's also a great need globally," Jeremy explains. "Can you even imagine having to drop out of school before you finish second grade?"

The class also plans to fund educational opportunities in Guatemala through one of CoEd's Sponsorship programs.

Many other CoEd supporters just like you are taking advantage of the opportunity to see their donations in action by participating in a Snapshot Tour. Both of this summer's tours are completely booked, and we're already taking reservations for the February 10-14, 2009 tour. (Be sure to sign up early if you are interested in going!)

You can learn more about this group on [Xavier's website](#).

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Coming to a Town Near You!

Are you looking for an exciting event in the next few months that will allow you to give back while you're having fun? There are many more events than just Fall Fiesta or Guatemala tours that allow you to support CoEd. And they're happening all over the country, so no matter where you're from, an event is coming to a town near you. Contact holly@coeduc.org for more information on any of the following events:

- Dayton, Ohio—September 18th
Join with other friends of CoEd at board member Patti Ballard's home for a cocktail party.
- Alpharetta, Georgia—October 8th, 7-10 p.m.
Join CoEd Supporter Michele MacMaster at the Metropolitan Club for Fall Fiesta Atlanta—the southern version of our annual fundraising party, complete with a silent auction, a live auction, and of course, refreshments. You can purchase Fall Fiesta Atlanta tickets on our website for \$50/person.
- Fall Fiesta Cincinnati—October 23, 2009

Our annual party at the 20th Century Theatre in Oakley, featuring a silent and live auction, open bar, live music, and a luxury raffle. Check out the [Fall Fiesta Cincinnati](#) page on the CoEd website.

These are just a few of the events that other supporters are hosting. Events are also being planned in Washington, D.C.; Sumter, South Carolina; Grand Cayman; and Portsmouth, Maine.



Can't make it to any of these locations? You can still help CoEd by joining the CoEd Dinner Club. From a formal dinner party to a casual game night, it's up to you! All you have to do is:

1. Set a date and choose a fundraising goal.
2. Contact emily@coeduc.org for party-planning resources and invitation wording.
3. Have fun for a great cause!

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