Independence Day Celebrations
One more time tunnel: El Capitol
Author María del Carmen Escobar
A country of extremes, Guatemala is a land where breathtaking beauty is inseparable from its harsh reality—53 percent of the population makes less than $2 a day. Especially at risk are the indigenous citizens, who make up 60 percent of the population but account for less than 25 percent of the nation’s income and consumption; these are the people whom the Cooperative for Education (CoEd) especially works to serve.

Cooperative for Education is a nonprofit organization that provides self-sustaining textbook, computer, library and scholarship programs to schoolchildren in Guatemala. Its mission is to help Guatemalan schoolchildren break the cycle of poverty through education. CoEd sees building literacy, the cornerstone of economic development, as the key to bridging the great economic divide. They seek to accomplish this through textbook and computer projects in schools.

In 12 years of existence, CoEd has established 172 textbook programs, 30 computer centers, 39 mini-libraries and 284 scholarships. There are nearly 32,000 children using CoEd textbooks, 12,300 students being trained at CoEd computer centers and approximately 150,000 textbooks in circulation.

Impressive as those statistics are, the real impact is seen in the stories of individuals. Hilda Bucú, a 17-year-old CoEd scholarship recipient, was recently acknowledged as a “young leader” in a short documentary by filmmaker George Moffly.

One of her contemporaries, Rosemary Tun Coj, 15, is using her CoEd scholarship to study pedagogy. She is currently serving an internship as well as finishing her first year of education in primary school teaching in Pedro Molina, Chimaltenango. “I want to study, work and help my parents and siblings,” she says, “but above all, I want to improve my country. I can’t do it alone, but I can put in my grain of flour.”

Mario Yac, who serves as new projects manager in the Guatemala office, has a double view of the program: ...continued on following page
CoEd changes many lives, both the lives of students who receive educational materials and the lives of those who help to provide them. To learn more visit www.coeduc.org.