

2009: The View from Here  
by  
Bud Frutkin, President

It may seem a little odd to begin this annual survey of Foundation activities with one that hasn't happened yet, but I am going to start with a discussion of our long-hoped-for strategic retreat and end with some details about last fall's fundraiser, our greatest accomplishment of the past year.

- **Strategic retreat**—We are hoping to do this in August, if John Giuliano can come from El Salvador then to join the rest of our board in Indianapolis. The retreat will be only one day, but that's a start. I hope to do this in the spirit of Phil Jackson, the coach of the Chicago Bulls several decades ago, whose major accomplishment was blending an enormously successful basketball team from the originally unruly ingredients of Michael Jordan on the one hand and everyone else on the other. Jackson wrote a book about the process called Sacred Hoops. It is a spiritual book, drawing on the Navajo wisdom of one of his ancestors. In it he says, "If you have clear mind and an open heart, you won't have to search for direction. Direction will come to you." I am hoping that if we quietly assemble in one place at one time and listen to one another's wisdom, we will be there when that sense of direction arrives and that it will come to us collectively.
- **Lisa Kelly visit last summer**—Lisa is married to Tom Kelly, associate professor of theology at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska. Tom has led many student delegations to Guarjila and teaches a course in liberation theology on those trips. Lisa works in the non-profit sector in Omaha and has visited the Tamarindo Community in Guarjila. She happened to be in Indianapolis attending a seminar last July, so we invited her to spend an evening with the board, exchanging ideas and hopes. It was a good evening, long and detailed, as we all told our stories and spoke our concerns. (Lisa, Tom and their two boys will be living in El Salvador for six months beginning this summer where Tom will be spending his sabbatical working on an English translation of the memoirs of Rutilio Grande, S.J., one of the early martyrs of the civil war. He was a close friend of Oscar Romero, and his death was a key event in Romero's conversion to the idea of a church of the people.) This paragraph was supposed to be more about Lisa, but I see I diverted. Suffice it to say, Lisa's visit came at a critical time for the leadership of the Foundation and her wisdom has been much appreciated.
- **Radio Sumpul project**—With the help of John's wife, Maria, who has a background in radio, the Foundation helped to fund the replacement of a transformer damaged by lightning. Lightning protection equipment was also

installed. The radio station has been active in the Guarjila area since the war and broadcasts community service programs.

- **Mike Qualters trip to Guarjila**—Mike is our vice-president and the guy responsible for turning the long and large Tamarindo chicken coops into fully usable structures for indoor soccer and in-line hockey. He visited Guarjila for a week in early August last year, and spent a great deal of time talking with the people who lead the major institutions in the village. John arranged meetings and did the translating for discussions with the Directiva (town council), the clinic and the school. Mike was able to see first hand the work on the new toilet facilities at the school. This and the Radio Sumpul project represent milestones for us as a board, since we became a lot more active in questioning the scope and cost of these projects at the planning stage and making sure there was local input of labor as well as local cost sharing.
- **Portillo school**—Portillo is a very small village north of Guarjila which members of the Foundation have supported since the sister-parish movement of the late 1990s. From the start, Alice Mattingly, a board member and assistant principal at St. Pius X parish school in Indianapolis, organized support for the school in Portillo and continues that project. Today there are 20 students, up from 10 a short while ago. Fifteen of them are in high school and five in college.
- **Expanded Board of Directors**—Membership on the board grew from 16 in 2008 to 19 in 2009. At our January annual meeting, four new members joined us and three old members renewed their three-year terms. We had one resignation.
- **Fundraising efforts**—Our annual Christmas appeal produced very modest results, probably both because of the recession and the fact that we keep going back to the same people for help. My hat is off to those of you who, though probably numb by now, have responded generously. Our monthly giving program has dropped a bit, but not as much as I feared, so I am grateful for that too.
- **John's helpers**—Somehow John was able to find a few local people in Guarjila to assist him with necessary bookkeeping jobs. This is not a glorious task but a necessary one, if we want to keep our non-profit status in the face of an IRS audit. John sends us a copy of every receipt for every dollar spent. Sometimes these monthly reports are 60 pages long or more.
- **School delegations on the increase**—I thought the recession would put a dent in this project, but we are actually adding schools. For the first time, Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis sent a delegation. Creighton University added a second delegation this year for Professor Tom Kelly's course in liberation theology. Creighton Prep, a high school in Omaha, is considering sending a delegation next year. This is in addition to those schools that have sent

delegations for years and years: St. Mary's (Berkeley), the Newman Center at Arizona State University, Archbishop Mitty High School (San Jose, CA ) and St. Francis High School (Mountain View, CA).

- **2009 & 2009 Budgets**—We did these back-to-back, and the 2009 budget represents the first time we were able to have a budget in hand before the end of the first calendar quarter. John sent all his figures to us well before the end of 2008, so we were thankful for his good and timely efforts. There are really two budgets, one for the Tamarindo Community in Guarjila, and the other for the Foundation in Indianapolis.
- **Budget Oversight Committee**—From the time of our first budget discussions in the early summer of 2005, we have relied on John to tell us what he needs for the Tamarindo Community, and then we have tried to come up with the money. (Along with John's own fundraising, since in the early days, one of biggest source of funds was from the school delegations, which he organizes and markets.) With the success of our Coffeehouse fundraiser last spring and our fall fundraiser, we added considerably to our bank account. That, along with perhaps a sense of opportunity to undertake some postponed projects, led John to submit a budget proposal for 2009 for the Tamarindo Community that was 40% higher than in 2008. With the arrival of the recession, we could foresee and wanted to prevent a financial train wreck. If the old budget philosophy was open-ended and limited only to John's ingenuity (which is robust), it is clear that we can't continue that way. A committee of the board was formed to look into alternatives, mainly a closed-end budget philosophy, where we tell John what we have available for him for the upcoming year and then let him organize a budget around that, subject to Board approval.
- **Video**—One of the more exciting results of the Fall Fundraiser was the creation of an eight-minute video that Mike Qualters and Debbie Sahn shepherded into existence with the help of a local media consultant. The raw material for the video came from Mike's August trip to Guarjila. We showed the video on the evening of the Fall Fundraiser, and it can be seen now on our website at [www.tamarindofoundation.org](http://www.tamarindofoundation.org).
- **Fall fundraiser**—This was the premier event of the last year. Debbie Sahn organized it with the help of Laura Moehling. I had seen Laura's organizational skills at work at a fundraiser my wife and attended several years ago for the Carmel Free Clinic, a medical facility for the needy and homeless in an otherwise very affluent suburb of Indianapolis. Laura agreed to help us. The fundraiser was a sit-down dinner at a local wedding facility. Over 100 people attended, and donations were matched by a very generous supporter. Close to \$85,000 was raised and after expenses, the Foundation netted over \$75,000. (The aforementioned video cost \$2,000 of those expenses, but we now have a creative and permanent marketing tool.) The evening was very organized, with blow-up posters of some of our Salvadoran friends in Guarjila hung along the perimeter of

the hall, more pictures of villagers at each table, an open bar, a good meal, an array of speakers setting out their stories of meeting and growing with our Tamarindo friends, all ending with the screening of the new video and the rustle of reaching for those checkbooks. A big reason it worked out so well is that Debbie insisted on a dress rehearsal earlier in the day. A lasting benefit of the evening is that we are now well placed financially to ride out the current recession, if it is not too long and if we exercise balanced stewardship in the handling of expenses and keep looking for new money-raising opportunities.

Whatever happened over the year was the fruit of dedicated people caring enough to make it happen and holding themselves accountable to their promises. To give you some sense of the commitment, the Board of Directors held 10 meetings over the period from January, 2008 through May, 2009. In addition, the Executive Committee of the Board attended an additional 12 meetings. Everyone also worked hard on implementing assignments created at those meetings. My thanks to each and every member of the Board. My thanks also to those of you near and far who help support this project.

All best for the Foundation.

June 1, 2009