



Dining for Women

***MC Preview
March 2008
El Salvador***

If you dream of a world where all women enjoy human rights, have the means to feed their children and work and live in communities with dignity and respect, you are invited to join our efforts. We're making it possible for women to work their way out of poverty one business at a time.

SEW website

I feel joy on the days I come to work with my companions and I feel I am advancing in my life.

Rosa, 47, Parajo Flor Sewing Group supported by SEW

NOTE: Because of DFW Strategic Planning the last week of February, *Making Connections* will be a couple of days late in March. If you meet very early in the month and need recipes or *Voices* sooner than March 4, please email me:

corrienorman1959@yahoo.com

We have a new project (Salvadoran Enterprises for Women), a new country (El Salvador), and a lot of new friends to be thankful for this month. One of the best things about being Education Director for DFW is getting to work with so many inspiring women—especially the visionaries who've created the projects we support and their staffs. Each month, I run across bright and gifted people who could have a much easier life (and higher—or in many cases at least *a*—salary) if they weren't so committed to making the world a better place for others. But I can't remember when I've encountered someone more inspiring or helpful than Anne Marie Gardiner, the founder of SEW. Anne Marie would say that the inspiration is to be found in the women she and SEW strive to help—and she's right too. You'll see that firsthand as you encounter them in the ample resources we have this month.

I also want to thank SEW Board Member Dr. Patrice Flynn, the founder of a socially-responsible research firm (flynnresearch.com) that aids a number

of organizations assisting the poor around the world. She made time to make her research on global economics available to me while preparing for a conference with the likes of Noble Laureate Mohammed Yunus and former Federal Reserve Chair, Allan Greenspan.

Quite by coincidence this month, while assisting a group of Furman University students with an unrelated project, I discovered that we shared an interest in El Salvador. Indeed one student, Angel Cruz, had spent last summer living with a family in a remote rural area while interning with a sustainable agriculture program. As I write this, Angel is back in El Salvador, this time leading other students into what will no doubt be a life-transforming experience. It certainly was for her—she hopes to return there to work full-time after graduation this spring. Before she left (in the middle of final exams!), she wrote about her experience this summer for us, particularly about one young woman who she can't forget. You won't either when you read her story in *Voices*. Through Angel I also am grateful to Liz Gandolfo, who recommended our book of the month and shared her extensive insight into the plight of Salvadoran women with me.

And I want to thank some DFW friends too. Writing *Making Connections* has become a lot easier and more fun for me in the last few months because of chapter leaders Carolyn Mayers and Miriam Bisk who help with shopping and recipes and so much more. This month Shannon Gordan, a leader in Carolyn's chapter, helped us out as well, saving me time *and* calories, by testing dessert recipes. If you're game for testing recipes or reviewing books, or have experience with or research interests in a topic that might be appropriate for FYI and would consider a "guest appearance" in it, I'd love to talk with you about joining our "party."

Rosa puts it very well, "I feel joy on the days I come to work with my companions"—even if it is on-line. Thanks everyone.

What to Expect in Making Connections

FYI: (Poor) Women and Money in a Global Economy

While Oprah and Suze Orman have got everybody talking about women and finance here, poor women around the globe face financial challenges that most (but sadly and certainly not all) of us can't imagine. But while we may not face the same pitfalls they do directly, we do face them as contributors to philanthropic programs. In this *FYI*, we'll just begin to scratch the surface of a very deep subject—how global finance and banking impact poor women in El Salvador and elsewhere and what we need to understand before supporting business development endeavors abroad.

Recommended Book

Liz Gandolfo worked in social justice projects in El Salvador and helped to develop the program for college students in which Angel participated. She's also an activist for Latino immigrants here as well as a doctoral student and about-to-be mom. I asked Liz to recommend one book that might help us understand Salvadoran women and challenges they face. She chose a novel that focuses on a day in life of a grandmother and granddaughter during the Salvadoran Civil War. Liz says that besides understanding the immediate factors that keep so many Salvadoran women in poverty, we have to recognize a not-so-distant past that they still live with. Little has been done to acknowledge the trauma so many women have experienced—rape and torture, abandonment, the loss of loved ones, the destruction of homes, the constant threat of violence and displacement, the sexism exacerbating it all—for so many years. Even less has been done to try to create reconciliation among neighbors who may have perpetrated violence on each other or been on opposite sides in communities that must come together for survival today. To understand better that past that still determines the present and threatens the future, she recommends **Manlio Argueta, *One Day of Life*, trans. by Bill Brow (Vintage International Edition, 1991).**

Socially Responsible Shopping

<http://www.peopleofhopecrafts.org/>

We highlight **People of Hope Crafts** that features the work of 20 Salvadoran artisan communities including women's groups supported by SEW. Contact PHC to find items specifically made by SEW-supported groups. How nice it would be to have an item or two to display at a DFW meeting!

<http://motherearthcoffeeco.com/index.htm>

Mother Earth Coffee Company is a woman-owned company dedicated to purchasing coffees from farms and cooperatives in which women play a major role. Get your fair trade, organic, shade (**and woman!**) grown Salvadoran coffee here.

<http://www.oneworldprojects.com/products/indigo.shtml>

One of the projects that SEW supports is reviving the art of indigo dying. Indigo was once El Salvador's main export and indigo dying is a traditional craft form, popular still in Salvadoran clothing. While the SEW-related projects produce for the Salvadoran market, here's a source that is marketing indigo products you can purchase.

<http://www.justshirts.ca/>

We all need t-shirts from time to time. This fair-trade cooperative of Salvadoran single mothers can fill the bill with a variety of styles for adults and children.

<http://www.heartbeatscatalog.org/cartproducts2.asp?c2id=55>

and Solidarity Crafts <http://www.cis-elsalvador.org/crafts.htm> also carry items made by Salvadoran women's groups.

Dining with Women

Have a pupusa part this month! Pupusas are small, filled tortillas—or as

Liz Gandolfo describes them, “Salvadoran hot-pockets.” They are much beloved by Salvadorans, indeed it’s the national dish. Pupusas are not difficult to make (especially with the tips and tricks Carolyn worked out for us) and have a variety of fillings options. We’ll also offer recipes for the two cakes that Shannon tried for us and a “wedding” main course. Pupusas and desserts are especially appropriate for our dinners because SEW supports bakery, preserving, and “traditional kitchen” projects. We’ll also have some other food suggestions that reflect the work and talent of the women involved with SEW.

Voices: Salvadoran Mothers and Daughters

This month we are honored with two tributes to Salvadoran women by those who know them well. Angel Cruz writes about 15 year-old ‘Tina, who taught Angel so much as her own education was abruptly coming to an end. And Anne Marie Gardiner, SEW’s founder, describes the daily life of many Salvadoran mothers. **Note:** Anne Marie’s essay comes with photos. I’m hoping our web capabilities will allow me to insert the photos into *MC* along with the text. If not, we’ll put it on the website as a separate document on the Program Schedule and will note that in *MC*.

Other Resources

PROGRAM FACT SHEET and SEW WEBSITE

Barb’s drawn on a wealth information that SEW provided about its operating procedures, values and the projects it supports, as well as a brief overview of basic facts about El Salvador. For more on the projects she outlines and SEW’s mission, see the SEW website, which was updated just this month at <http://www.sewinc.org/index.html> .

SEW DVD

SEW will be sending our largest chapters an 18-minute version of its dvd. Smaller chapters can see a shorter version on the SEW website at <http://www.sewinc.org/programsmenu.html> . As I’ve explained before, technical resources are expensive to reproduce and ship. For now, our solution is to send them to large chapters that cannot use the smaller computer format in their meetings and to suggest that small groups set up a laptop for individual or group viewing (or recommend that members view the online version prior to the meeting). We provide some alternative visuals (see below) when we can.

PHOTOS, CAPTIONS, and MEMORY WALLS

At the end of this document, I’ll provide links to four images that can be downloaded and printed onto photo stock for display or passing at your meeting. I’ll include captions explaining each image. Some of our chapters are

constructing “memory walls” of photos of women from the programs we support, adding to and displaying them at each meeting. A folding screen works well for this. Let us know if your chapter tries it.

CHAPTER PROGRAM IDEAS

Sometimes changing things up is good. If you’ve been following a standard format starting with the PFS, why not start with the lives of Salvadoran women? You could begin with one or both stories in the *Voices* section of *MC* or “Nely’s Story” on the SEW website at <http://www.sewinc.org/thewomen.html>. These vividly describe the plights of individuals, but their stories are not unlike those of thousands of other Salvadoran women. Follow that with some of the information from the History/Herstory and “Why DFW Chose SEW” sections of the Fact Sheet.

If using the dvd, play it now. Or pass around the four images (see above) and ask members to read the captions aloud. Follow with Anne Marie’s compelling description of what happens in the women’s groups under “How They Work” in the Fact Sheet. You might add some information from the *FYI* section in *MC* about why programs like this are so important and effective relative to other alternatives being proffered.

End with the pupusa party. Ample instruction will appear in the *Dining with Women* section of *MC*. Pupusa’s can be made ahead to the point of cooking which takes just a few minutes (they tend to get soggy if cooked too far ahead). You might ask several members to make different variations to bring to the meeting, have a couple of griddles or large skillet set up to facilitate the cooking. Or, if you like to have an appetizer time before you begin your program, you could make mini-pupusas (instructions in *MC*) to serve as members arrive and have the main dish and dessert after the program.

If you haven’t used them in another way, you might especially want to display Images 1 and 2 of women involved in SEW-supported food enterprises on your food table.

INVITING GUEST PRESENTERS

Some chapters very successfully include guests from the countries we are learning about in their programs. There are a few caveats about this. First, we want to avoid asking anyone to serve as “show and tell” entertainment—this can be a simple matter of including someone fully in your meeting as a guest participant, making sure that others speak to the person and include her in other aspects of the evening, etc. Remember, we want to connect! Also, don’t expect someone to speak for or represent all women of their nationality—I certainly couldn’t do that and wouldn’t want to try! It would be risky and incorrect to assume that everyone who comes from a place understands, has experienced, or

is an expert on poor women and the challenges they face. For many, the past they left was a tragic one and recalling it can be quite painful. In the case of El Salvador, thousands of Salvadorans fled to the United States during the Civil War, often having endured horrific experiences or losing homes and loved ones. Some people find it important and even healing to tell their stories; others want to forget. Some may have missionary, business or other agendas that would be inappropriate for our meetings, so you'll need to clear with anyone you invite to speak about our mission and the specific projects we're supporting. Of course you'll be mindful of all these things before inviting someone to speak at your meeting.

Some chapters are enjoying cultural learning opportunities by inviting women from the countries about which we're learning to demonstrate art forms, traditional dance, or recipes that are their special expertise. If you live in an area with a substantial Salvadoran population, there may be a *pupuseria* in your area. You might "take-out" pupusa from it and ask if someone might come to demonstrate how they're made and talk about their significance in Salvadoran culture. Whenever someone does come to teach you how to do something, be prepared to give it a go.

International students can be great resources. Not all know much or are particularly perceptive about their countries, however. (Think about the range of our kids....) But many will be and may be eager to talk about home with women interested in learning about their culture. Some will be part of exchange programs that encourage participation in programs like ours. The best way to find student speakers is through the international student office of a local university or through a faculty member in a relevant area of study.

I'd love to know how your chapter is incorporating invited guests. It can be a great way to learn more and to make connections in your own community.

Photographs and Captions

You should be able to click on the URLs below to access the photos for printing, but it takes some time to load them. It's quicker (in my experience) to copy each URL into your browser. You can find more information on most of these on the SEW website under "Programs."

Image 1: Tortilla Making

www.diningforwomen.org/images/chapterresources/1Tortillakitchen.jpg

Here are members of the *Comité de Mujeres de Palacios*, the Women's Committee of the town of Palacios, on the opening day of their mobile Traditional Kitchen. With so many imports and fast food readily available, many Salvadorans welcome their own foods — tortillas, yucca root, papaya —

prepared in the traditional manner. The women take the kitchen to weekend fairs, community and school events and other celebrations. Here they are making a mainstay of the Salvadoran diet, tortillas. The Women's Committee also has been raising free-range chickens that they will sell as well.

Image 2: Fruit Drying Business

www.diningforwomen.org/images/chapterresources/2fruitdrying.jpg

Women in the village of El Iscanal prepare sliced pineapple for drying. Later, they'll mix it with dried bananas and apples. The mix makes a nutritious, organic snack they can sell. The group has two solar ovens. Each holds ten trays. It takes approximately two days to dry pineapple.

Image 3: Indigo Dying

www.diningforwomen.org/images/chapterresources/3Indigodye.jpg

Indigo is a blue dye that has been associated with El Salvador historically. Before the coffee industry expanded in the 19th century, it was a main export. The dyes and patterns are still very popular in El Salvador however. Through SEW, 15 women in San Luis Los Ranchos were trained and equipped to start an Indigo Dyed Clothing Business. Here, one of them heats ingredients to add to indigo dye. For more on this complicated process, see <http://www.sewinc.org/program9.html>.

Image 4: Business Training

www.diningforwomen.org/images/chapterresources/4businessstraining.jpg

Salvador SEW staff and representatives of SEW businesses meet to discuss progress. Each businesswoman made a "foot" to show where her business was on "the road to self-sufficiency." Here, one woman explains where her business is and how she plans to get it to self-sufficiency.