

July 23, 2009

To: Dining for Women

From: Salvadoran Enterprises for Women

Re: Report on Project supported through DFW March '08 grant, rec'd July '08

From Sister Anne Marie Gardiner, SSND, Executive Director, SEW

Our mission is empowering Salvadoran women through funding small businesses in El Salvador. In learning communication, technical and business skills, small groups of women gain self-esteem, confidence, find their dignity and voice, and became providers for their families. SEW can do this to the extent that we fund trainings, start up business costs and staff accompaniment until the women reach self-sufficiency.

It was particularly gratifying to work with Dining for Women because the chapters were already attuned to international issues of women and DFW provided information not only on our work but some social, economic and educational context of SEW women's lives. DFW's funding helped provide a hygienic work space as well as refrigerated and storage equipment for a team of ten women—five mothers and daughters—who produce quality cheese products in central El Salvador. These women also gained renewed hope for economic stability now and in the future—a priceless gift! Thank you.



The 'factory' was a room in Maria Dolores' home
Maria Isabel and Maria Dolores show their cheese press.

The women of "La Vaquita" (the little cow) in the Department of Cabanas, El Salvador, had been processing milk and making cheese for three years. They began with organizational support from the Development Committee in their locale and basic equipment from two NGOs (non-governmental organizations)..

A team of ten—five women with their daughters—process milk purchased from local farmers. 40% of sales are made daily to families and stores locally; 60% of sales are to wholesalers in the nearby municipality, delivered twice a week. Milk is obtained daily from local farmers, guaranteeing freshness.

La Vaquita milk processing and cheese production business is open for business from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. seven (7) days a week. Each day, the production team takes an hour—6 p.m. to 7 p.m.—to clean up and tally sales. It's a 13 hour day!

When the women realized selling only cream and cheese was not profitable enough, they opened a small store on the premises selling rice, sugar, crackers and basic food.

In the afternoons from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. they sell "liquados"—milkshakes with strawberry, banana or other fruit.

A long term goal is to purchase an oven so the business can make sweet breads with cheese.

Delmy weighs cheese in the new building.

The women had proved successful in marking quality products and they wished to expand their production and markets. This required a larger space and updated equipment.

With the help of the community, a grant from *Dining for Women*, a grant from Lindenhurst, NY Rotary, a generous grant from an individual donor through Salvadoran Enterprises for Women, the women were able to purchase a small plot of land, have a building constructed, and purchase the needed equipment.



Community members dig foundation for new structure



Completed building festooned with balloons, streamers and welcome sign on the day of inauguration.

The long term goal is to construct a second floor to employ more women and diversify product line. Building was designed to accommodate second story. (Note rebar and materials on the roof.)

Community member helps prepare chicken soup for lunch on inauguration day.

Cabanas is one of the poorest parts of El Salvador. This business directly serves the ten women—mothers and daughters—who manage La Vaquita, their families and community. Having fresh milk daily and quality products assures better nutrition and thus better health. Wholesaling provides expanded sales but the chance to learn new markets as well. La Vaquita is a testament to the value of women's role in the local and extended community.

August 4, 2009

To: Dining for Women
From: Salvadoran Enterprises for Women and
The women of La Vaquita

My name is **Kenia Karelyn Menjivar Peña** and I am only 19 years old. I finished my first year of high school. I have a younger brother and two sisters. Danny José is 12 and in the 5th grade. He likes math. Maydelin Jossibeth is six, so she is in pre-school and likes physical education. Emely Juleysi is 3.

I like to work at "La Vaquita" because I like, very much, to make cheese and to sell it. I have also learned many things. I give thanks to God and also to the people who helped us because we now have our own place of work.

My name is **Santos Crisabel Aguilar**. I am 39 years old and I completed 6th grade. I am a single mother of three. Deyci Cecilia is 23. She finished the 8th grade and liked physical education. Sergio Henri finished high school and he liked math. Santos Elda is 18. She completed the 8th grade and liked science. Selvin Vladimir is 17 and finished the 9th grade. His favorite subject was physical education.

I like to work at "La Vaquita" because I can learn to make better products. We have new goals that help us improve as persons, get along with our co-workers, and obtain an economic investment that helps us in these difficult economic times.

I feel very grateful for this gift that you have given us. It helps us to improve our business skills and to do better work. Today, it motivates us to continue our efforts.

My name is **Maria Yessenia Meléndez de Martinez**. I am 26 years old and have completed the 9th grade. My husband is Marcos Enrique Martinez Aguilar. He is 36 years old and finished the 4th grade. He works as a small farmer. Our son is Wilber Enrique. He is 6 and in the Kindergarten. He likes physical education.

I like to work at "La Vaquita" because I learned many things about milk. I like to earn my own money in order to help with the expenses in my home. I also like to be together with my co-workers.

I send words of gratitude for having helped us construct our own place of work. Because of this we feel more content and have more spirit to work and continue forward.

DETALLE DE FONDOS LACTEOS LA VAQUITA-LLANO LARGO

FECHA	CONCEPTO	INGRESOS	EGRESOS
31-10-2008	Salvadoran Enterprises for Women	\$ 6,850.00	-----
31-10-2008	Iron polls for construction	-----	\$ 655.20
20-10-2008	Introduction for the right to water	-----	\$ 450.00
03-12-2008	Construction materials	-----	\$ 1,103.00
03-12-2008	Construction materials	-----	\$ 194.25
03-12-2008	Construction Materials	-----	\$ 1,803.90
19-12-2008	Doors and windows	-----	\$ 930.95
19-12-2008	Construction matierals	-----	\$ 2,127.70
29-12-2008	Salvadoran Enterprises for Women	\$ 1,050.00	-----
15-01-2009	Salvadoran Enterprises for Women	\$ 6,985.00	-----
26-01-2009	Construction Materials	-----	\$ 575.00
20-02-2009	Land	-----	\$ 2,000.00
05-03-2009	Hispanic Concerns Committee Of Athens	\$ 425.00	-----
05-03-2009	1 stove top, 2 large pots, 1 plastic bowl, and cloths	-----	\$ 286.00
10-03-2009	6 plastic tables; 24 plastic chairs	-----	\$ 662.00
24-03-2009	Wooden table	-----	\$ 425.15
24-03-2009	Blender	-----	\$ 85.00
24-03-2009	Cooler	-----	\$ 60.00
03-04-2009	Water jugs, waste baskets, mops	-----	\$ 91.10
03-04-2009	Scale	-----	\$ 325.00
03-04-2009	Cheese Press	-----	\$ 400.00
03-04-2009	Freezer	-----	\$ 1,500.00
	TOTALES	\$15,310.00	\$13,674.25

Nota el balance en el proyecto actualmente es: \$1,635.75