

## Parish Staff at San Jose de Tesoro de Yalpemech

The parish staff in Yalpemech consists of Sister Joannes Klas, Sister Elena Felipe de Jose [both School Sisters of St. Francis], and Manuel de Jesus Gonzales. They are very excited about the possibility of grant money from Lake Atitlan Libraries over the next four years to build up the book collection and enrich it as a computer center.

Sister Joannes Klas -- who is a winner of a United Nations Nassen Prize for her work with this



Guatemalan refugees when they were at a camp in Honduras -- is the executive director of the parish and library.



Living with her is Sister Elena Felipe Jose -- who is from Huehuetenango, Guatemala. She is the director of the program in Perito Contador (accounting and professional business skills) that is taught in the library center. She teaches fourth grade in the mornings at the Yalpemech elementary school and teaches language and communication in the Perito Contador program in the parish library in the afternoons.

Manuel de Jesus Gonzalez, works as Klas's secretary an assistant in the library two and a half days a week. He is a married man from the community with two children, whom the parish supported to study computation and computers. He suffered a broken leg a number of years ago and has pins in his leg, so he can't do heavy work -- thus this work helps him and his family and certainly assists the whole community and library. In addition to the secretary and library work, he takes photos, plays music and sings, and is part of a band and theater group, which perform at the library center and other places. He is very good at the computer and has one in his house.



***“I am Manuel Gonzalez and the children at my side are my two children, Deiry and Cristian. I am the person who helps Sister Juanita at the library. On Sundays I help the adults and young people and on Monday I help the school children. I am very grateful to Sister Juanita for giving me the opportunity to work these two days a week and with this job I am able to help support my family. I have also had the opportunity to watch the boys and girls taking advantage of their free time to expand their***

***knowledge through reading. This is the reason why the library is very important to our village.”***

The library center has books organized at three levels: adult, intermediate youth, and young children. There is presently no computer or internet access, though there are computer classes (without internet access) taught in a classroom in the library center. To use the internet, students have to go to Manuel's house, which is out of the way and a little expensive. So the planned improvement of adding a computer and internet access to the library and internet access to the computer classroom in the center (through funds from the Lake Atitlan Library Foundation) will greatly reduce the community's isolation, bringing the youth and adults access to the rest of Guatemala and the world. A library internet connection will also allow Manuel to assist in community outreach by doing some of the computer work from the library and teaching others.

### **Community Appreciation for the Cameron Library at the Parish**

Manuel de Jesus Gonzalez conducted interviews in Yalpemech about the library on September 23, 2011 and summed up their responses.



This young man says that it is very important to have a library in San Jose el Tesoro. It helps the children and the young people develop reading habits. At the same time it helps the students find information they need in the library thus eliminating the necessity of going to other places to look for information. He also says that it would be very helpful to have a computer with access to internet because what they don't find in the books, they could find that information on internet. He says that something else that they also need and would be very useful would be to have up-to-date books.

This little girl says that the library has helped her a lot because she has learned to read well. She says she would like it if there were more new books.





This young boy is in sixth grade and he says that the library has helped him learn to read well. He now helps other children who are having a tough time learning to read.

This young boy is in fifth grade and he says that the library is very important because it opens up the world to those who enjoy reading. Through reading they learn about the history, culture and way of life in other countries. He says that he is very grateful to Sister Juanita. It is because of her that San Jose has a library, which not only benefits us who live here but also people who come from other areas.



This young man was a student and is now a teacher. He says that the library is very important and that he used it while he was studying. Because the library had the books he needed, he didn't have to go far to other places to look for the information. He said that many of his fellow students from the town of Raxruha used to go with him to the library because unfortunately Raxruha does not have a library.