

# ENFOQUE IXCÁN SPECIAL ISSUE

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## ENFOQUE IXCÁN EXCEDES 2007 GOAL!

*"It sounds like you continue to do wonderful work with EI, which is terrific."*

*"Keep up the great work."*

*"I've enjoyed receiving the EI newsletter and getting a better understanding of the work that goes into this wonderful vision project."*

*"It sounds like things are going well in the Ixcán. Of course, there are always more needs than can be satisfied."*

*"You do such great work."*

*"Wish I had more to give, but the budget only stretches so far."*

*"It sounds like your project is going well. Congratulations."*

*"We both think EI is very worthwhile, and we will make another donation soon."*

*"I am glad to be able to help with the very good project for Guatemalan villagers. Wish there was a way to make things more equal in the world."*

*"I know you are doing a great job and I am thankful I can contribute to your cause."*

*"I am pleased I was able to help a little bit this time. I respect the work that you are doing to help those who are unable to help themselves."*

These are just a few of the comments that we have received from our wonderful donors and supporters. We can't thank you enough for your generous response to our requests for assistance.



Our heartfelt gratitude to all of our 2007 donors.

## 2007 ENFOQUE IXCÁN HIGHLIGHTS

*A message from Enfoque Ixcán's President, Dr. Scott Pike*

I'd like to take a few lines to let you all know what a great year 2007 was and to thank all of you who offered support to EI. We appreciate your trust in our work. An important step for EI was contracting with our eye health promoter, Felipe, to do the work of EI throughout the year, doing eye exams, coordinating trips to Guatemala City for eye surgeries, promoting our services in the Ixcán and keeping good records. Felipe and Pedro, the community health coordinator, are becoming known in the Ixcán for their eye care work.

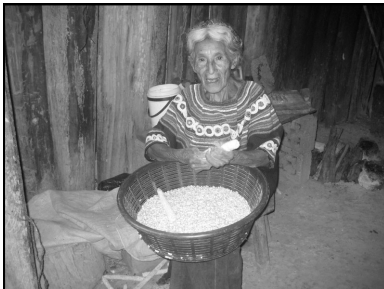
In 2007 EI funded 7 eye surgeries, dispensed nearly 100 pairs of glasses and had 10 pairs of glasses specially made for people requiring unusual prescriptions. On our trip with the Amigos Eye Care, from Pacific University College of Optometry, we examined over 800 people, dispensed 365 more glasses and identified 40 more people who need cataract surgery. This trip served people from 70 different villages. When one considers not only the material value of these services, but also the savings to the people in travel expenses and time away from home, had they traveled to

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 Dr. Lee Ann Remington



Maria preparing corn for tortillas



Maria sewing a traditional huipil

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the nearest eye doctor, the total value of our accomplishments would exceed \$45,000. We did it on a budget of just under \$10,000!

2007 ended on a high note when we received a gift from a donor offering to match all dona-

tions up to our year's income goal. We made it with \$800 to spare. Thanks to everyone who pitched in. Felipe hopes to take 15-20 people to have cataract surgeries in 2008. We're setting our sights high to do even more eye care in the Ixcán this year. I hope we can count on your continued support.

## HELPING ONE PERSON AT A TIME

Maria Amborsio walked to the health post to see about getting glasses for her sewing and weaving. There's nothing unusual about that since walking is the most usual mode of transportation in her village, Santa Maria Tzejá, Ixcán. What struck me as unusual in Maria's case is that she is 87 years old and lives about a mile of hilly gravel road from the health post. Her son, Tomas, said he walked with her, but only had to help her on the 2 steepest inclines "where the gravel was loose and a little slippery."

Maria was dressed in a traditional red woven huipil (top) with a rainbow of embroidery work in circles around the neck, which she was able to stitch herself since her cataract surgery. She also wove the fabric for the huipil on her backstrap loom. Her surgery, funded by Enfoque Ixcán, was done in August of 2005 in Guatemala City at the eye clinic, Visualiza. For about 5 years before the surgery she had been almost totally blind. "She had to have someone with her all the time," her son told us, "for eating, getting to her bed, and going to the latrine. To 'see' she had to touch everything."

When asked how the surgery had helped her, Maria proudly told her son in her native language, K'iche (key-chay), "Well, I can see that tree on the other side of the football [soccer] field." But, that's not all. According to Tomas his mother is not only sewing and weaving, but she makes clay pots for cooking and storage. "She's now able to dig the clay and mold

it into pots. Another son has an oven where the pots can be dried for use.

After 15 minutes of testing with Pedro and Felipe, Maria left the health post with a new pair of glasses for her near work. As I watched her, Tomas and her daughter-in-law walk away, I decided I really wanted to see Maria at work in her home. The next morning it took me 20 minutes of brisk walking to reach the Ambrosio home at the far end of the village. I arrived sweating from the steep hills and jungle heat. Maria was in the kitchen breaking dried kernels off corn cobs. They would become tomorrow's tortillas, which Maria can make once again for her son and his family.

I watched as she stitched more colorful thread onto her next huipil, and witnessed some of her renewed independence when she walked around the yard. After so many years living in the same home, I'm sure she could negotiate the yard with her eyes closed, but now it was clear by her smile and confidence that she could see the flowers and trees, and the rocks and ruts in the path.

As I walked away I could hear Maria, in her limited Spanish, repeating, "Muy agradece. Muy agradece." Many thanks, to Pedro, Felipe and Enfoque Ixcán for her renewed vision and life. Examples like Maria inspire the work of Enfoque Ixcán.