



Fotokids

Fundación de Niños Artistas de Guatemala

June 2009

LETTER FROM THE EXEC. DIRECTOR

Fotokids marches toward the Fortune 500! Well maybe *stumbles* or *inches* toward are more realistic verbs, as we expand our commercial photography work. This quarter has seen our design studio Jakaramba! labor to light and photograph over 30 different cans of *Sirena* brand sardines! In various languages!

We know that mermaid on the sardine label now as intimately as our sisters *and* we can expertly highlight the flip top action on the lid. It took us a bit to get it all down, what with studio lights burning out and other technical details I won't go into- but having success at this seriously gives us another service we can offer.



*Sardine can for client Otis McAllister photo
by Design Studio Jakaramba*

The design group has been busy shooting a break dancing video for a

Dutch non-profit that works with former gang members. It uses dance as a medium not only as a tool for reinsertion into society, but also as a means of thwarting gang recruitment. Not as easy filming as it sounds. Those break-dancers have a tendency to flip right out of the frame.

Two other video projects for existing web sites are also in the works.

We have deigned a series of booklets for Child Aid, a charity which promotes and Develops children's libraries all over Guatemala. If !Jakaramba! gets the go ahead, they will be redesigning the librarian teachers manuals as well.

Two more large projects loom on the horizon. We are still in the running for the month-long UNESCO photography course to be held in July with student leaders from 5 communities. The workshops will be held in Puerto Barrios, a port town on the Atlantic coast.

The other opportunity is a series of videos produced this fall by young people living in rural Guatemala, who will be examining community health and education issues under the guidance of AED (Academy of Education Development).

Fotokids is also working on individual's web sites and both Nancy Morales and Bree Hankinson have designed the

outstanding photo book, which talks to teen mothers in Nicaragua then and 10 years later, *Entre querés y quisieras*, (*Between Wishing and Needing*), by Michaele Cozzi.

The successful **Design4Kids** workshop led by Jeff Speigner will take place again this June offering professional mentors in design and photography an opportunity to share and teach our kids from Santiago Atitlán and the City the ins and outs of a design studio. Josefa, one of the Fotokids from Santiago Atitlán, designed the logo. This year's client is a permaculture non-profit on the shores of lake Atitlán. www.design4kids.com

Bree has started the new design class offered to working kids who haven't had a chance either economically or opportunity wise to finish middle or high school and who live around the Lake.

Then we also have been selling our photo prints of the month, have had our Jakaramba! brochure printed in Spanish, and may be part of an upcoming exhibit of contemporary Guatemalan documentary photography. The exhibit showcases the photography of Jean Marie Simmons, who worked here during Guatemala's horrific war years.

The violence that marked so much of Guatemala's past has continued to increase, as I have written in previous newsletters. This past couple of weeks has seen societal tumult as the result of the murder of a prominent educated attorney gunned down a couple of blocks from our school while he was riding his bike.

This assassination was in no way unusual as last year over 6,000 people were murdered. What was unusual though was

that the attorney made a video to be played in the event of his murder and accused the President, his wife and the presidential secretary (and others) as being the responsible parties. see www.economist.com

As our students struggled with the theme of violence in their communities and positive things they can do to prevent it, the country erupted with massive demonstrations, calls for the President's resignation, and *coup* rumors all filling the air.

It has been hard to get the kids to see that shootings and extortions are not a normal part of life. Kids here live a very circumspect lifestyle, which includes staying home a lot and under the blanket of a pervasive fear of being kidnapped or killed on a bus.

Remember Estiven, whose brother was shot and sister in law killed in along with 11 others either killed or wounded by gang members during a football game? He didn't show up last week for class. We tried calling the cell phone number we had for his Mom, but phones are so often stolen here that it was no surprise when we couldn't get hold of her. We asked Vidal to look him up and make sure he was okay. Vidal played things close to his chest saying, "yeah, he's alive."

Estiven finally arrived this week and I said, "Estiven we were really worried about you, everything okay?" He kind of laughed and started shuffling around. "No seriously did something happen?" "No," he said kind of looking down and away.

"Estiven what happened?" "

Well, I was watching TV and it was good I was slouched in the chair with my feet on another chair, a bullet came right in

through the tin wall, and I got shot - and it's okay it just grazed me," he said pulling up his shirt and showing me a reddish purple hard round wound. "I was alone with my younger sister and we could hear gunfire but it wasn't close."

"How many shots?"

"Seventeen, and then we are lucky because our house is tucked down the ravine a bit, but then a bullet came through and hit me. My little sister was really upset. The doctor said it was a good thing I wasn't sitting up straight cause it would have entered right here," he said pointing to his sternum.

It's no wonder that kids don't allow themselves to react to violence, it's either a no big deal or they turn it into a joke.

On another weird note, a plane crashed on our street within three blocks of the school.

So it has been as usual in Guatemala, not boring.

What's New with the Kids

Linda Morales was married to TV cameraman Flavio Guzmán her fiancée of three years! It was a beautiful wedding. Linda's bridal gown was designed by her and incorporated a woven Guatemala waistband. Flavio wore an embroidered vest. They planned to enter the Church property on a motorcycle but were impeded by the rainy season and a Guatemalan law prohibiting two on a bike (in a move to diminish assassinations).

Linda and Nancy Morales sponsors, Chris and Lucinda Covert-Vail flew in from NYC. Chris was immediately press-ganged into helping retouch the sardine can photographs.

Linda's sister **Nancy** went to Mexico City with Michael Cozzi to learn about bringing a photo book to press. She arrived back just before the swine flu epidemic hit.

The swine flu hasn't been really prevalent here but it has put our HIV kids at the orphanage in quarantine and we haven't seen them all month.



Linda and Flavio ©copyright photo by ChrisVail

David and **Abdias** went to cover the pro government support march, which bussed (in many cases obligated) people from the countryside in support of the president. I edited their demonstration shots, something I used to do at Reuters during the 80's. I am starting to train these two as photojournalists.

Berta and **Linda** took a workshop sponsored by Juan Bautista Gutierrez Foundation to teach the dangers of early pregnancies. They were trained as workshop leaders to duplicate the program with other young people.

Berlin and **Andres** will go to GUARUMA in Las Mangas, Honduras to work with the kids there reinforcing their Photoshop skills and introducing them to Adobe Illustrator, a design program. They will be

followed by **Nancy Morales** who will teach them the design techniques involved in producing their annual calendar for 2010. By the time she finishes we should have our new Director of Nature Photography and graphic design in place.

The GUARUMA older students will be offering a one-day workshop to the public in La Ceiba this week-end under the excellent direction of current Director Marcus Sabini .

How you can Help!

We have three high school graduations this year and they are expensive. For most kids, graduating from high school is the zenith! Most parents haven't completed 6th grade, so this is a big deal. The high schools take advantage of this to host the ceremonies in 5 Star hotels and the kids need suits for obligatory internships. So each one is \$250 for the ceremony and another \$200 for the clothes!!

If anyone can help out with this, great- doesn't have to be the whole shot, just whatever and we will send you an And speaking of scholarships we are down about 10% this year so far (not too bad so far considering the economy)- so if you haven't already sponsored and want to here is the info

****We still need some educational sponsors****

❖ **Sponsor a child's education \$300 or \$600 a year (U.S.Tax Deductible) Checks should be made out: "San Carlos Foundation/Fotokids"**

And sent to:

FotoKids, PO Box 661447; Miami Springs, FL 33266

OR Log on to www.fotokids.org and click on **Pay-Pal** at the bottom of the home page

Checks made out to Fotokids without San Carlos Fdn are NOT tax deductible

GOOD GIFT IDEA

❖ **BUY A PRINT AS A GIFT OR FOR YOUR LOVED ONE OR EVEN YOUR OFFICE- See the web site Gallery or iFotokids CD**

Our book *OUT OF THE DUMP* is now available online on our website at www.fotokids.org and can be paid for with the PayPal button.

Donations should be made out: to "San Carlos Foundation/Fotokids" and sent to:

FotoKids, PO Box 661447; Miami Springs, FL 33266

Log on to www.fotokids.org and click on **Pay-Pal** at the bottom of the home page



Here's looking at you! Summertime crab, yum! photo by Yamilett Salvador