

# Mayan Hands Annual Report 2018-2019



## A message from our founder . . .

Mayan Hands is poised to celebrate 30 years of fair trade work with Mayan women! Our work started in 1990, with the goal of accompanying Mayan women in their struggle to overcome extreme poverty and continue living and bringing up their children within the culture they cherish. We see great changes in the lives of our artisan partners and their families. Hope blossoms where despair had reigned.



Much has been accomplished in these 30 years:

- Mayan Hands purchased about \$2,000,000 from our artisan partners. Selling their beautiful handcrafted creations, month after month, has provided a stable income all these years and enhanced their self-esteem.
- Workshops to learn new skills have been crucial to providing full time work and expanding the number of women we work with.
- Mayan Hands has granted 314 scholarships, allowing all the daughters of our artisan partners to attend high school and go on to the university if they so choose. Regular workshops for the girls create awareness about the oppressive gender system in Guatemala and help them learn skills to transcend it.
- Each year, school supplies are distributed to all the children of our artisan partners, a great incentive for parents to enroll their kids in school.

As we celebrate our 30th anniversary, we are setting forth new ambitious goals:

- To expand our reach beyond the 200 women that we work with, by reaching out to new groups of women living in conditions of extreme poverty, working with them to develop new products and bringing these to market
- To expand our scholarship program by offering many more girls the opportunity to transform their lives through education
- To offer our artisan partners workshops on occupational health and safety, preventive health, nutrition, reproductive health, and diabetes
- To develop a program to train and advise our artisan partners who, because of their age, can no longer work on their craft

Please join us on this journey of empowerment and hope, as more women and girls experience the transformative benefits of economic and educational opportunity.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brenda Rosenbaum". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Brenda Rosenbaum

## Artisan Spotlight: Cecelia Chiroy Pixtay

Cecilia is a determined woman and her persistence has reaped benefits not just for her, but for other women in her community as well. Like many Mayan women, she is a weaver and adept at handwork. After finishing school, she worked in the fields, then took a basketry class in hopes of earning income. However, the organization that sponsored the class gave her few orders and paid too little. She picked up sewing piecework from another organization, but orders were few and far between and payments were always late.

She'd heard about Mayan Hands and three times traveled hours from her rural community in search of the opportunity to present samples of her work. The fourth time was the charm. She found our office and fieldworkers Nancy and Mayra recognized the potential. Cecilia and her *compañeras* started weaving coasters, our simplest pine needle product, which allowed them to earn income while mastering the finer quality Mayan Hands required. Their stitching is now fine and regular, and they are creating their own new designs. Their Catarina Basket has catapulted to the bestseller list.



The members of her cooperative elected Cecilia as their leader. She coordinates orders and presides over the weekly Sunday meetings when the women gather to weave baskets together. Children dart in and out among the women as chickens scramble at their feet and they catch up on family news as they work. Cecilia talks with each woman, checking in on the progress of her monthly order, reviewing quality, and reminding the women to do the stretching exercises that will help prevent repetitive stress injuries. She's a natural teacher and has even traveled to teach a group of Mayan Hands basket makers who live a day's journey away.

Cecilia says that being able to count on income month after month allows her to plan for the future. "I am very grateful that now I have opportunities. I am happy that I can help my parents who work very hard. I am saving so that I can continue my education. I want to be a good leader of my group and help the women in my community."

## In her words: Virginia Churunel

*Virginia Churunel is the daughter of Rosa Churunel, a member of the Mayan Hands cooperative that makes our felted wool animals. Although her mother had not been able to attend past the age of 10, Virginia completed high school. Virginia shares her perspective on the impact of educational opportunity.*



*Virginia Churunel (left) with her mother Rosa and sister Mirna*

My name is Virginia Churunel Churunel. I'm 21 years old and am a specialist in Business Administration, thanks to a scholarship I received from Mayan Hands. I'm grateful that I was able to attend school and graduate. Even though my dad has a disability, I had the opportunity to achieve my goals. I now have a job working in an office and am grateful for the enormous support given to me and my family.

This support is very valuable because it helps girls to follow dreams. Education is so important. If a girl gains knowledge, experiences and learns new things, she will be respected and taken into account in the community where she lives. She can be an entrepreneur or follow another path.

The felt products that our community makes for Mayan Hands is very good work. The women do it from their hearts, for all the people who buy it in your country. We are all very grateful for these purchases that support each member of the cooperative and allow her to support her family.

I thank you again for your support of me, because without you I would not have achieved my goals. I wish you the best in your life and your work and bless you for supporting all the girls in my community.

## Highlight of the Year: Crafting Change



In Guatemala, a country with more than half a million weavers and far too few local and international outlets, artisans are too often forced to sell their goods below the cost of production. Mayan Hands has found a solution to this competitive race to the bottom through the introduction of innovative artisan processes, something that our creative artisan partners have taken to places they and we could never have imagined.

Using new techniques in basket making and needle felting has allowed cooperatives to expand their membership and bring income-generating opportunity to more women. Teacher leaders have trained additional groups of women who now earn consistent income month after month and are proud to include fair trade stores, museum shops, and gift stores among their customers.

In 2019, Mayan Hands introduce another new technique, woven metal jewelry, to our artisan partners. Anticipation was in the air when thirteen Mayan Hands weavers gathered to work with Anastasia Azure, a weaving and jewelry artist based in Rhode Island. For three days, the women wove with non-precious sheet metal and color wires to create jewelry for US customers. The first jewelry samples will arrive in December and the women look forward to Anastasia's return so that they can hone their skills and create new designs.

Our artisan partners are grateful to Anastasia for sharing her expertise, her time, and her teaching skills, and especially thank the many friends of Mayan Hands who support programs that can open doors of possibility for them and their families.



# Highlight of the Year: SERniña



Mayan Hands scholarship recipients participate in a group exercise.

*"I'm learning that as a girl I have the same rights as my brothers. I can dream and make plans for my future and nobody has the right to take these dreams away from me. I want to study and work in what I choose. And I learned that just like me, every person deserves respect regardless of their age or gender."*

These powerful words were spoken by Marina, a Mayan Hands scholarship recipient, who is participating in a dynamic new program Mayan Hands is offering. SERniña ("being a girl"), which

raises awareness about the marginalization of women in Guatemalan society and how to change it through education.

Since our inception, Mayan Hands has been committed to working with Mayan women to both alleviate poverty and empower them. Because of the prevailing ideology of *machismo*, which affirms and reinforces the superiority of men in every aspect of life, and devalues women, and the general racism against the indigenous population in Guatemala, Mayan women have few opportunities to choose their path in life. They experience triple discrimination, as Maya, as women, and as people living in poverty.

The girls participate in guided discussion, reflections, and participatory theater activities that focus on the importance of discovering one's real self and one's "gifts for the world." The program also fosters important intergenerational dialog that deepen understanding. Mothers and daughters alike look forward expanding horizons as they continue their participation in the program.



Mothers and daughters share their aspirations.

## Statement of Financial Position as of May 31, 2019

### ASSETS

#### CURRENT ASSETS

Cash and cash equivalents	158,282
Inventory	104,357
Accounts receivable	19,504
Deposit	<u>500</u>
Total Assets	<u>282,643</u>

### LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

#### CURRENT LIABILITIES

Accounts payable	8,235
Accrued expense	<u>6,024</u>
Total Liabilities	14,259

#### NET ASSETS

Unrestricted	268,384
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## Statement of Activities Year Ending May 2019

### SUPPORT

Donations	59,881
Miscellaneous	<u>917</u>
Total Support	<u>60,798</u>

### PROGRAM REVENUE

Product Sales	495,984
Cost of sales in support of Mayan women	<u>324,476</u>
Net Program Revenue	<u>166,508</u>

### EXPENSES

Program Services	126,881
Support Services	<u>49,661</u>
Total Expenses	<u>176,542</u>

<b>CHANGE IN NET ASSETS</b>	50,764
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<b>NET ASSETS</b> , beginning of year	<u>217,620</u>
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<b>NET ASSETS</b> , end of year	<u>\$268,384</u>
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*For a complete copy of Mayan Hands Foundation audited financial statements, please contact us at (518) 729-1900.*



## In Memoriam

Mayan Hands mourns the death of beloved artisan partner Catarina Barán, who had worked continuously with Mayan Hands since our very earliest days.

Catarina was an excellent basket weaver and wove some of our most technically challenging designs. During an interview several years ago, Catarina told a visitor, "I thank God for this opportunity. It brings me happiness every day. I have security, knowing that when I work hard, the income will be there. Every time I deliver baskets, I am paid. With this, I can meet the basic needs of my family, like food and education." She was especially proud that she was able to send her children to school. In her later years, she dearly loved visits with her grandchildren.



thank you • gracias • matiox

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all who accompanied us this year on this journey of creating opportunity and hope.

### Artisan Partners

You inspire us each day with your dedication to your families and communities, your enormous talent, and your perseverance in the face of so many obstacles. We are honored to work by your side.

### Donors

Your generosity changes lives by helping to lift families out of poverty through programs that empower and educate. Thank you for your support.

### Wholesale and Retail Customers

We appreciate your commitment to putting people before profits by purchasing Mayan Hands products. Your collaboration is integral to our success.

### Volunteers

Thank you for countless hours of service at our warehouse, in stores, churches, weaving guilds and at other events around the country.

### Fair Trade Allies

We are grateful to the collaborative network of fair traders who educate, inspire, and support us.

### Board of Directors and Staff

Thank you for the passion, dedication, and skill you contribute to our work together.



### Mayan Hands Foundation Board of Directors

Ricardo López-Torrijos, president  
Vera Eccarius-Kelly, vice-president  
Dan Welch, treasurer  
Laurie Naranch, secretary  
Kathy Hatfield  
Liva Jacoby  
Brenda Rosenbaum, founder  
Alice Schrade  
Mark Van Wormer

### Staff

Anne Kelly, USA  
Diane Yoder, USA  
Kylie Gorski, USA  
Julio Cardona, Guatemala  
Damaris Martínez, Guatemala  
Jennifer Menéndez, Guatemala  
Nancy Cosme, Guatemala  
Mayra Rocché, Guatemala

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Hands  
  
handmade • fair trade

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