

## **CEDEPCA extends partnerships**

*By Gwendolyn Wagner  
Board of Directors*

***Sometimes we fail to pursue Christian action because the tasks seem overwhelming and we feel unequipped to do what is asked of us. Fortunately, the founders of CEDEPCA never acted on that thought. But that's not to say they didn't need others in their calling.***

***Partnering has been an essential component to CEDEPCA's success through the years, whether it was providing Biblical and Theological study, Women's and Disaster ministries, or Intercultural Encounters. CEDEPCA's partnerships are practical extensions of these ministries. Partners are selected based on goals and methodologies that empower the people they serve.***

***Over the next few newsletters, we plan to feature some of these unique partnerships that CEDEPCA has engaged in over the years. Our hope is to show you the impact that CEDEPCA has as a hub for these connections. Our first article focuses on "DESGUA" and "La Red Kat" located in Xela.***

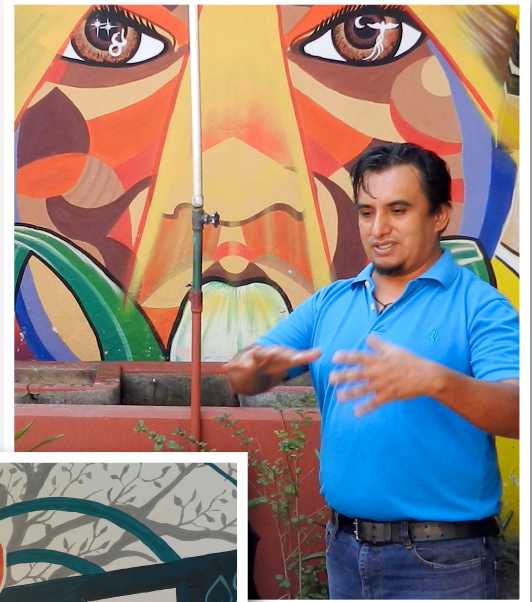
While attending the 2013 International Day of the Migrant, Leslie Vogel, a PC(USA) mission co-worker with CEDEPCA, met Willy Barreno (pictured at right), one of the founders of DESGUA. Willy's story includes joining the guerrilla movement at age 18 and later migrating to the U.S. in search of a better life. Willy says he exchanged an M16 for a vacuum cleaner. When Willy met Karen del Aguila in New York City, the two of them came up with the idea that Guatemalans should not have to migrate to the U.S. to fulfill their dreams of prosperity and success. This inspired the idea of the "Guatemalan Dream." Willy decided to return to Guatemala to regain his identity, rediscover his roots, and fulfill this vision.

DESGUA is located in Xela (Quetzaltenango), in the highlands of Guatemala. It promotes economic and educational opportunities in pursuit of the Guatemalan Dream. La Red Kat, one of DESGUA's initiatives, is a social enterprise restaurant and cultural center seeking to address the root causes of migration and the difficulties of returning migrant reintegration. Its aim is to help Guatemalans succeed without having to migrate.

**DESGUA** and La Red Kat created a job-training program for Guatemalan youth to provide a meaningful alternative to emigrating to the U.S. Fifteen young people were given scholarships for job training provided by DESGUA through INTECAP, a Guatemalan government vocational school that offers technical job-skills training, including the culinary arts. Food prepared in the program appeared on La Red Kat's menu. Graduates received a certificate of completion and help finding their first job. Three of the graduates work at La Red Kat, while the others are seeking employment as chefs.

***La Red Kat** received a 4.5 rating from 45 reviews on TripAdvisor. One review stated it perfectly: *My teen daughter and I had a very nice lunch here. We ate in a lovely and relaxing courtyard. We also love their mission—according to the owner—to help "create the Guatemalan dream."**

La Red Kat supports small-scale



Guatemalan businesses and cooperatives by buying locally and supporting the local economy, organic farming, and fair trade goods and food. Furthermore, DESGUA integrates

Mayan culture and his-

torical memory into the program for social change.

**The DESGUA** staff also provides instruction on the Guatemalan Dream: the desire that Guatemalans can find work and fair wages within their culture and country rather than migrating North. The training includes 1) the "costs" of immigration to individuals, families, and community, 2) the importance of creating a local community-based, self-sustaining economy, and 3) becoming entrepreneurs instead of wage earners by learning how to start and run a business.

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## ‘Men in Mirror’ taught to hundreds in Guatemala

Kevin E Frederick is Pastor of the Waldensian Presbyterian Church PC(USA), Valdese, North Carolina. He served on the Presbyterians Against Domestic Violence Network (PADVN) from 2004 until 2015. Over the last decade Kevin has taught a series of workshops on domestic violence designed for males and females, laity and pastors. These workshops, “Men in the Mirror,” are built on the premise that men can learn relationship skills by studying how Jesus related to others during his earthly ministry. The 13-session curriculum engages the learner with the Bible to understand God’s will for intimate human relationships.

By Kevin E. Frederick  
Board of Directors



During my second week in Guatemala, I traveled with Presbyterian Mission Co-Worker Brian Thompson-Royer. Brian and his wife Sandi, also a mission co-worker, are connected with the Guatemalan Presbyterian Church, INEPG. Together, they are building relationships with the Presbyterian women in their Sinódica church structure and

with the male pastoral leadership in the INEPG.

INEPG has more than a dozen Presbyteries in Guatemala and over the past three years Brian and Sandi have been able to build relationships of trust in more than half of those Presbyteries. After many months of planning and organizing, on Feb. 21-22, 67 male leaders from nine Presbyteries traveled to the Presbyterian Seminary at San Felipe, Suchitepequez, for a two-day study of the materials. The goal of the training was to implement the workshops in their Presbyteries and congregations. In the course of the program, most recognized the destructive role of machismo in their lives and in the society. Most participants affirmed the value of a study for themselves.

The more difficult issue will be for the pastors and presbyters to take the curriculum back to their Presbyteries and congregations and to implement the course at the local level. Clearly seeds of faith and biblical insight were planted in the hearts of many men over the course of the two weeks. Time will tell how this curriculum takes hold as an effective tool of bringing the love and justice of Jesus Christ to familial and church relationships in Guatemala.

For more information contact Kevin E Frederick, Pastor of the Waldensian Presbyterian Church PC USA, 109 Main Street E., Valdese, NC 28690, or by email [pastor@waldensianpresbyterian.org](mailto:pastor@waldensianpresbyterian.org)

The “Men in the Mirror” curriculum is available in downloadable form in English and Spanish at [www.pcusa.org/phewa/padvn/resources](http://www.pcusa.org/phewa/padvn/resources).

Without addressing and stopping the destructive behaviors of perpetrators, the cycle of violence against women and children will never really be broken. In February, CEDEPCA sponsored 7 two-hour workshops where I introduced the “Men in the Mirror” curriculum. Four of these settings were church groups of men. A fifth workshop for members of the Central Nazarene Congregation in Cobán, Guatemala, was attended by 125 church members, including women and children (pictured in photo above).

In each setting, with Emerson Morales of CEDEPCA translating, we were able to challenge the role machismo plays in society and to underscore its destructive force in relationships. I pointed out how Christ related to people in a variety of contexts and brought up other issues that impact human relationships. One of the workshops in Cobán addressed a coalition of government agencies that coordinate responses to natural and human-made disasters impacting large segments of the society.

In each setting the participant response was overwhelmingly positive. The countenance of many men and teenage boys who spoke to me after the workshops was open and appreciative. They recognized a Christ-centered understanding of their own identity as men.

In Guatemala City, I addressed a mixed group of 30 leaders of church youth. This discussion provided them with the tools to help them to train their male and female teenagers about healthy relationships.



## Board honors founders of CEDEPCA USA

*The CEDEPCA USA board said thank you to its three founders who transitioned off the board this year: Anne Sayre, Mary Jane Winter and Mac Pence. Honored at the 2017 meeting in Guatemala were Anne (below), who served many years as president, and Mary Jane (right), who served as the head of the governance committee since the board was founded in 2009. Although he was not able to attend the meeting, Mac (far right), who served as secretary, was recognized as an essential part of the foundation of CEDEPCA USA.*

By Paul Lewellan

It began in 2007 while Anne Sayre was still working with CEDEPCA in Guatemala. After visiting a congregation in the United States, she and CEDEPCA General Coordinator Judith Castaneda “realized the value of personal interpretation.” Their first task was to find a lawyer who would do the legal work, pro-bono, to get a 501(c)(3) status for a US support group.

Although those initial efforts failed, once Anne retired, she tried again. She organized a meeting in Atlanta for people she knew who had a love and an interest in CEDEPCA. “About 25 people joined us at Simpsonwood Retreat Center,” Anne said. “Staff from CEDEPCA came and updated us on their work. The fact that this many people traveled to the meeting proved a deep interest in the work of CEDEPCA.”

Among those attending that first meeting was Mary Jane Winter. Later she called Anne with the news that Mac, a friend in Richmond, knew a lawyer who would do the pro-bono work to obtain the



501(c)(3) with the purpose of raising money for CEDEPCA.

The 501(c)(3) was essential to be able to receive charitable gifts from the United States.

The three proved to be a good team. “Mac had done most of the research about by-laws, etc.,” Anne said. Mac submitted the paperwork with the help of attorney Marc Purintun, CEDEPCA USA’s current registered agent.

The next task was to put together a board. “My experience working with delegations visiting CEDEPCA gave us access to possible board members,” Anne admitted. “Mary Jane’s long association with CEDEPCA added a good deal of knowledge and sensitivity.”

According to Mac, “Anne was the impetus, the person who attracted the initial board, and the person whose birthday inspired our biggest fundraising year. The founding is mostly Anne’s story. CEDEPCA USA would not exist without her.” Mary Jane agreed, adding “Anne was a key to the Board’s development and served as its president for the first years (through the 2014 meeting).”

CEDEPCA USA, though, is more than the sum of one or two people. Mac believes the group’s “best achievement is the quality and geographic diversity of its Board of Directors. Geographic diversity is not typical in this type of new organization. For decades prior, CEDEPCA had major centers of support in various parts of the country. The Board effectively ties them all to CEDEPCA USA for support of CEDEPCA.”

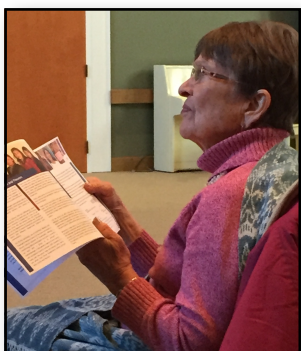
Expertise is also essential. Mary Jane explained among Mac’s contributions was his knowledge of non-profits.

“He knew how to set up the financial recording of gifts and the means to transfer to CEDEPCA. He knew how to do the 990 form required by the IRS. He was incredible and absolutely essential to this nonprofit. He was a businessman and knew how to make an organization succeed,” said Mary Jane.



Mac enlisted the help of Jennie Southworth to be the bookkeeper. She continued in that role until 2016. Eventually Mac turned over the treasurer’s responsibilities to Will

White. (See the [cedepca.us](http://cedepca.us) web page for more photos, history, and new board member information.)



### Partnerships, continued from page 1

Leslie and her Encounters team believe DESGUA is an important partner, since it works directly with returning migrants and those wishing to migrate. After meeting Willy in 2013, Leslie took her next Intercultural Encounters group to meet Willy, DESGUA, and eat at La Red Kat. During my Intercultural Encounter at La Red Kat, I saw my first glimmer of optimism for the people that want to migrate. The Guatemalan Dream is a message of hope that many need to hear. By the way, the food and setting were fantastic!

To learn more about DESGUA and La Red Kat, please visit <https://desgua.org> and <http://www.cafered.org/>.

# Chen Bac credits success to seminary classes

By Sunny Stautz  
Board of Directors

"The best gift CEDEPCA gave me was to find myself," explained Edgar Chen Bac, speaking to the CEDEPCA USA board on their recent trip to Guatemala. He told the board his biblical study courses at CEDEPCA are what changed his life and moved him to a place he never envisioned: his current position as the director of education for the province (or department) of Alta Verapaz. Edgar oversees 3,000 public schools with a total of 300,000 students.

Like many students who take classes at CEDEPCA's Road to Emmaus Biblical and Theological Seminary, Edgar already had college degrees. But as he studied with CEDEPCA, he realized the message of reconciliation offered by the gospel meant starting with reconciling oneself. "You have to forgive yourself before you can forgive others," he said.

"A lot of people think they're Christian because they go to church, but CEDEPCA taught me something way beyond that, that Jesus is life," he said.

Edgar said he grew up in poverty and blamed his father, who abandoned the family when he was young. When he started school, he spoke only the Mayan language of Kekchí, and classes were taught totally in Spanish. He said teachers told him he was an idiot and hit him when he didn't catch on.

He carried that anger and frustration with him, through high school and college, where he earned masters degrees in bilingual and intercultural education. The anger continued right up until he started classes in CEDEPCA's



Theological Formation program. Through CEDEPCA, he had a chance to travel to the United States as part of the Presbyterian Church (USA)'s Reconciliation and Mission program in Central America in the '90s. The reconciliation project made him write, tell his story, and "get out what I had inside." As a result of that participation, he said, "I began to live the life Jesus wants me to live."

Edgar said seven years ago he forgave his father and asked his father for forgiveness. "God had me go through some very difficult moments so I could understand and help others who go through the same experience," he said. "CEDEPCA classes mean change—change for the good."

As a result of the classes, Edgar now sees things in a different way, which affects his relationships with family and friends, as well

as those he encounters in his work. In 2014, he began working for the mayor's office for a town outside Cobán. His philosophy, developed through CEDEPCA classes, was that "dialog should prevail at any moment," and he created a violence prevention program. When the governmental education position for the entire province opened up last June, Edgar applied.

In his role as education director, Edgar wants to change the mentality that Mayan children must be forced to learn Spanish before they learn anything else. He said many primary students repeat the same grade over and over because everything is taught in Spanish. "I understand why kids quit school because they don't catch on. We need to first strengthen language skills, then introduce Spanish, so students graduate bilingual." Edgar hopes to also promote chess programs because they help with logic and math skills.

Edgar told the board he was excited and challenged by his new role. "God gave me the opportunity to have this position and I don't want to disappoint God," he said.

## Donate today

Your donations are what enables CEDEPCA to carry out its mission of "education that transforms." CEDEPCA USA is a US 501(c)(3) non-profit and your contributions are tax-deductible.

Donations by cash or check can be sent directly to:  
CEDEPCA USA  
PO Box 920243  
Norcross, GA 30010

Donate online at:  
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