



# MASCP

Madison Arcatao Sister City Project  
U.S.-El Salvador Sister Cities



OUR PARTNER:  
CRIPDES

U.S.-El Salvador Sister Cities

December 2009

## IN THIS ISSUE: 2009 August Delegation brings Arcatao to Madison

### “Re-organizing” Our Organizing for 2010!

By Joan Laurion

It's a good practice to step back every once in a while and take a careful look at how an organization is spending its money and achieving its mission. We're proud to report that MASCP recently saw that there were places where we could save some money and still stay strong in our sistering relationships and our education and coalition building role here in Madison.

We are so grateful to all of you who send checks to support MASCP and we want to make sure those funds go even farther towards meeting the goals that we all believe in. Here's what has changed: We are closing up our small office at St. Marks Lutheran Church and we're also changing from a having a dedicated phone line to a voice box that our officers can check from anywhere. We are cutting back on staff time and only hiring help for tasks that none of us can do competently.

**We are excited about the new possibilities! We hope that you are too and will continue with your generous support for 2010!**

Joan is a member of MASCP's Core Group and a member of the August 2009 delegation



Joan Laurion presents a poster of MASCP's August 27th Party to Arcatao's Town Council President Ulises Guardado.

## From Arcatao: First 100 Days of The People's Government

An open letter from Agustin Menjivar, Arcatao Directiva (Town Council) member to Madisonians

September 1, 2009

Greetings to all the valiant women from the August delegation to El Salvador. You filled us with joy with your presence and your music and strengthened our spirit in the community of Arcatao.

We look forward to a great strengthening of sistering between Madison and Arcatao. We will never forget all the activities we shared: being together in our community and sharing the music of the "jaranas" [Mexican instruments played by delegation members, Rosalinda and Cynthia]. We would also like to thank you for the medicines and all the other donations.

**We want to share about the first 100 days of the people's government of the FMLN party with Mauricio Funes as our president. We have struggled for this day for more than 30 years and so many Salvadorans have made the greatest of all sacrifices for this day.**

We (as *campesinos* – peasants) have now received Agricultural Packets with beans and fertilizer for the August growing season. To stem part of the crisis, our government is also providing jobs in the building of 3000 homes for those most in need.

All students from kindergarten to high school will be given 2 uniforms, a pair of shoes and school supplies for 2009.

Fifty ambulances have been given to different health clinics throughout the country and on September 2, the new pension program for the elderly will start its first payments in Concepción Quezaltepeque in Chalatenango.

Good news for all of us has been the beginning of street and highway repair from Chalatenango City to Arcatao. These repairs will be finished in two weeks.

Now, the President's office is opening its doors to social organizations looking to better the conditions of grassroots people so that these groups can meet with the corresponding governmental bodies to look for solutions to the many of problems of the common people.

[Prudence Barber is MASCP's official Arcatao communicator and translates correspondence.]

## A New Dawn For Solidarity and Sistering

Mauricio Funes of the progressive Farabundo Martí National Liberation (FMLN) party was elected president of El Salvador on March 15, 2009. Maria Serrano, (Maria Chichilco) (Salvadoran mother, wife, guerrilla leader, National Assembly Representative and long time friend of Madison and MASCP) relates her joy to MASCP August 2009 delegation:



**There was such great joy that I thought I was going to die of happiness. My God, I felt like I was having a heart attack. I was really afraid that this would happen to me. There were old men and women on their knees crying and saying 'I feel that my child is coming' [people's children who had died in the war]. 'I just don't know, but I feel so happy that I am seeing my child....' It was a flood of joyful tears, it was a enormous cry of happiness. It was something that we had never, never experienced in all our lives!**

## Arcatao

I was inspired  
with the people  
and their strength  
for their faith.  
I was inspired  
with the union,  
with your song  
with the coffee.  
I was inspired  
with your humanity  
and your solidarity.  
I was tired  
at the *Cañada*.  
I fell in love  
with the community  
of Arcatao.  
But I am saddened  
that it was a short amount of time,  
and I am saddened  
that our time...  
time to say good-bye  
has come.  
I leave a piece  
of *café con pan*,  
and of my heart.  
I will take with me  
a beautiful memory  
that lets me believe  
in the illusion,  
and that we all  
finally sing  
the same song  
of struggle.

–Rosalilia Mendoza

*Rosalilia is part of the musical group “Son Mudanza” and a member of the August 2009 Delegation to Arcatao.*



Delegation members, Cynthia Zanow and Rosalilia Mendoza playing their “jaranas” and singing “café con pan.”

### MASCP Winter 2009 Newsletter

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## A Day in the Life of Helia: Wife, Mother, War Survivor, Health Care Worker and Community Leader

By Laura Mason

I would like to tell you about Helia Rivera, whose house I shared while in Arcatao. Helia was busy maintaining her household, and assisting Andres, her husband, with farm chores, yet she still had time to be a community leader with a rich social life. Helia cooked meals and performed many other household chores, while her 17-year old daughter, Jaquelin, helped sweep up and washed dishes when she returned home from school.

Helia and Andres were up early each morning soon after sunrise. Several mornings I woke to clapping, which was the sound of Helia making the day's tortillas. Around this time, Andres would arrive back from the field after milking and feeding their one cow. We had a little of the milk in our morning coffee, but Helia used most of it to make *queso fresco* for lunch.

Friendships and social ties are very important in Arcatao and easy to maintain since most people know each other and have relatives living nearby. Neighbors and relatives came over numerous times in the five days we were there.

During our first morning in Arcatao, Helia talked about her time during the war in the 1980's and about her recent activities with the Museo de la Memoria Sobreviviente (Museum of Our Historical Memory). Besides helping with photo and material displays of events during the war years, she made the wall hanging design for the memory garden. Guatemalan archeologists are

helping return the remains of family members that died in refugee camps in Honduras to Arcatao. Helia is closely involved with this project because she had an infant son die of hunger while in a camp.

After breakfast, Helia took us for a tour of the neighborhood. This meant walking down the middle of the quiet street and stopping to hug and chat with nearly everyone we met. We stopped at the nearby daycare center, and three teachers led a group of 3–5 year olds in several cheerful songs. We then visited Rosa, who lived down the block, and invited us to come join dance lessons to be held at her house. Helia also took us to see the new health clinic. She had been a community health worker nearly twenty years ago when Arcatao was being rebuilt.

On Sunday morning, we said goodbye to our hosts. Our last sight of Helia and her family was of them loading homemade sweets and an antique ice cone making machine into a truck for the museum's food stand at the soccer tournament. Living in community and organizing to better your community involves all facets of life with young and old, neighbors, family and also friends from the US.

*Laura Mason is a member of MASCP's Core Group and was part of the MASCP August 2009 Delegation.*



Helia Rivera in Arcatao's Historical Memory Museum



Helia making tortillas in her home

## From Madison to Arcatao: Our Joint Plans in 2010

In organizing with our sisters and brothers in Arcatao we strive to raise awareness about our common struggles and provide each other with mutual support.

### Our Plans for 2010

#### The Human Development Scholarship Program

We support college age students from Arcatao with educational scholarships that will help them remain in El Salvador rather than immigrate elsewhere for work. (See Areley's story, p. 4)

#### Regional Organizing in Chalatenango Department

We fund the stipend for Santiago Serrano, Regional Organizer of our sistering partner, CRIPDES. Santiago works on the anti-mining and anti-water privatization campaigns, youth programs, and many other projects.



Santiago Serrano with Mary Somers

#### CHALATE ARTS Project

We support a fair trade initiative with Arcatao's Embroidery Cooperative and other coops. In 2009 we bought \$3000 worth of goods in the region.

#### Edgewood College Partnership

Two MASCSP members, Ian Davies and Marc Rosenthal, lead a class at Edgewood College, "El Salvador: Its Land and People" and take students on a spring break delegation (2010) to Arcatao.

#### Arcatao Historical Memory Project

We are raising money to support the purchase of equipment for the newly created history museum in Arcatao. Delegations from Madison in 2010 and beyond will allow us to collaborate on an exhibit about our 24 year sistering relationship and develop other historical memory programs and events.

**Please donate today to MASCSP and help us carry out our 2010 plans!**



Maria Chichilco, (Maria Serrano) her husband José and daughter, Guillermina and Agustin Menjivar of the Town Council Directiva join MASCSP August 2009 Delegation in an evening of song and celebration in Maria, José and Guillermina's home in Arcatao. (Top: Maria, José, Barbara Alvarado, Rosalilia Mendoza, Guillermina, Mary Somers, Agustín, Prudence Barber; Bottom: Cynthia Zanow, Laura Mason, Joan Laurion)

### Arcatao, Madison, El Salvador and the U.S. Need Your Voice!

Both North and South, we are organizing for change in our local communities. Please sign up today to be on our "MASCSP FRIENDS" e-mail group (only 2 to 4 e-mails per month). MASCSP will contact you with:

- Urgent actions from our sistering partners.
- Volunteer opportunities for young and old in Madison.

Sign up by marking the square on our information/ donation form or send an e-mail to [mascsp@mascsp.org](mailto:mascsp@mascsp.org) and ask to be an e-mail "MASCSP FRIEND".

**Please sign up to be an "MASCSP FRIEND"**



1988 wartme photo to be part of Arcatao's "Museum of Our Historical Memory." Banner: The children of Arcatao greet the children of Madison.

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MASCSP is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

# Our Sistering Future

## Sistering in 2010

By Barb Alvarado

### Thirty Years Ago....

MASCP together with 15 other sister cities from around the US will join with their sistered communities in El Salvador and our national sistering partner, CRIPDES (the Association of Rural Communities for the Development of El Salvador) to actively commemorate three major events from 30 years ago.

- The Assassination of Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero, March 24, 1980.
- The Massacre of over 800 civilians, mostly women and children at the Sumpul River (near Arcatao) by Salvadoran military forces and Honduran military forces, May 14, 1980.
- The Killing of four US churchwomen, December 4, 1980.

### Why We Must Support Sistering with Honduras

Our national sistering partners, CRIPDES, have asked the entire US-El Salvador sister cities network to help take sistering to a third level and join with the newly formed coalition of social groups in Honduras who have fought against the military coup which ousted democratically elected President Manuel Zelaya in June, 2009. Although elections took place on November 29, 2009, the social unrest is very great and the grass roots social movement needs help in defending democracy in Honduras.

CRIPDES reminds us that during the 1980's thousands of Salvadorans fled to Honduras and lived in refugee camps and that now the Honduran social movement has asked for help from their sisters and brothers in El Salvador. CRIPDES also asks for this triple sistering because Salvadorans are defending a new government administration that could possibly be overthrown by right wing forces in El Salvador just as the Honduran government was overthrown by right wing forces in June, 2009.

### Why We Must Support the Anti-Gold Mining Struggle

Once again, MASCP as a part of US El Salvador Sister Cities Network will collaborate with our sistering partners from a local level (in Arcatao) to a regional and national level to



Archbishop Romero mural in Arcatao

support the struggle against gold and metal mining in El Salvador. The mining has been halted for the moment but the new government of President Mauricio Funes is defending itself from international mining corporations and again our sistering partners, CRIPDES, have asked us to be "on alert" to help in the anti-mining struggle.

**MASCP will take its lead from our national US-El Salvador Sister Cities Network, (USESSC) who is in constant contact with CRIPDES as to how to further these areas of Sistering in 2010.**

**Please become a "MASCP Friend" so that we may contact you with urgent actions through e-mail (see p. 3).**

## Meet Arely Ortega Orellana from Arcatao: University Student and Scholarship Recipient

MASCP contributed \$2000 in 2009 into a community scholarship fund that supports students from Arcatao at the universities in San Salvador. During the MASCP delegation this summer we were delighted to speak with one of the scholarship recipients, Arely Ortega Orellana. Here is what she had to say:

*My name is Arely Ortega Orellana. I am studying Library Technology at the University of San Salvador. This is a three year program and I am in my second year. The scholarship that I receive pays for my tuition, transportation expenses, \$32/mo pocket change, and room and board which is \$70/mo.*

*I live in a house with 8 other students and that is why my room and board is so inexpensive. The house belongs to a Catholic Parish and was home for a priest and some nuns in the past. My parents also help me a little so I am not working while I go to the University.*

*My hopes are to finish my studies at the University and work in one of the university libraries someday. I also hope to help establish a public library in Arcatao that would be of service to all the young people in Arcatao.*

*Thank you to all our sisters and brothers in Madison for helping me and many of my friends continue our education at the university level.*

*My email is Ortega\_Arely@yahoo.es*



Scholarship student, Arely Ortega Orellana

## "Radio of the Brave" in El Salvador

By Mary Somers

In El Salvador radio is not only to be enjoyed, but a means for survival. It is the trusted voice to learn of threats and eminent danger, especially for the large illiterate population that can not read or write.

Nicolas, the director of the new museum in Arcatao was told by the recent sister city delegation from Madison that a UW professor may be interested in working with their historical memory project. Nicolas replied he would take all the help he could get as he can not read or write. The museum has a picture of him that illustrates why he could not go to school. He was wounded during the El Salvador Civil War (1980- 1992). Young people were hiding from death squads when they should have been in school. President Funes does not have the same resources that oil rich Venezuela had when Hugo Chavez came into power and brought high school and college classes to the rural mountain areas.



Nicolas during the war, shown in a Museum photograph

Radio is cherished in El Salvador and people like the listeners of Radio Sumpul (in the town of Guarjila near Arcatao) stand up to the government to keep their voices on the air. The Madison delegation visited Radio Sumpul in August and performed a spontaneous broadcast telling the listeners they are good examples for their neighbors in Cabañas where programmers for Radio Victoria, the sister radio station of WORT, are receiving death threats as power seekers want to silence the voice of concern over mining development.

One murder has occurred in the area, and a priest who worked at Radio Victoria, just narrowly escaped. The delegation reported on their over-2-hour visit with the attorney general of El Salvador, and then two members sang with their Mexican *jaranas*. It was a wonderful unscripted broadcast that anyone including those who can not read or write could have performed.

Radio is a great way to share new and old stories, and in this country everybody has an amazing story to tell. After the long history of violence in El Salvador and the recent overthrow of the Honduras president, it is important to remember how radio helped Hugo Chavez survive a coup by telling the people what opponents in the government were doing. The TV stations played cartoons and soap operas and did not report the news.

The people of El Salvador have reason to want low powered radio for news as they now have a new president after many decades of tyranny. Not just for his safety but for theirs.

CityWIDE Radio volunteers in Madison are operating a 100 watt FM station, WIDE-LP, out of Bob Park's garage on a hillside in southwest Madison that can



Entering the Farabundo Marti Radio Station in cave (*tatu*) in the *Cañada* mountain behind Arcatao during the war, a 1991 Museum photograph.

reach an area larger than Arcatao. The top of the hill where the Arcatao city center is located might be an ideal location for a low power radio station's broadcast antenna.

When the delegation first arrived in El Salvador, the leaders of Arcatao listened to the story of the radio station in someone's garage in Madison. It probably reminded them of Radio Farabundo Martí, an earlier radio station that was in a cave in *La Cañada* mountain range near Arcatao during the war. Pictures of radio in a cave are in Arcatao Historical Memory Museum.

Ulises Guardado, one of Arcatao's young leaders, is studying business administration and is interested in working some day with radio. He plans to listen to WORT Spanish programs through the internet.



Nicolas standing in Arcatao's Historical Memory Museum

As our delegation prepared to leave we asked how Madison can help them in the future. They responded that they would like a radio station, and they are going to put together a plan. What better way to help Radio Victoria and Radio Sumpul and the other brave voices of radio in El Salvador stand up to those who wish them quiet, than to encourage all voices to sing.

*Mary Somers, a member of the MASCP August 2009 delegation is also a volunteer at WORT and a board member of CityWIDE Radio.*

## In Madison.... ¡Fiesta!

About 200 persons joined in a MASCP sponsored Madison celebration of solidarity and sistering through the last 20 years with a celebration of the people's victory in the March 2009 presidential elections of FMLN in El Salvador.

On August 27, musical bands Blue Train, Bonobo Secret Handshake, Sonidos Suaves and Son Mudanza, treated the crowd to a wonderful musical evening at Olin Park Pavilion. Salvadoran "pupusas" made by MASCP volunteers were part of a delicious dinner offered at the party.

**GRACIAS** to all who made the party such a celebration!



Romilia and John Schleuter, "Directors" of pupusa making for August 27th Fiesta.

## ¡Muchas Gracias!

MASCP and sister and brothers in Arcatao thank all Madisonians and friends for their generous donations to our June 2009 Annual Garage Sale. We received \$2000 from the event! We would also like to thank all who donated medicines, medical equipment, soccer balls and art supplies that went to Arcatao in August of 2009 with our delegation.



Son Mudanza



Sonidos Suaves



Bonobo Secret Handshake

*Read and see pictures of Arcatao in Spanish from Rodolfo Rivera, Arcatao Elementary School Teacher:  
[www.conociendoarcatao.blogspot.com](http://www.conociendoarcatao.blogspot.com)*

### **MASCP Mission**

The Madison Arcatao Sister City Project and its Salvadoran partners provide mutual support and raise awareness about our common struggle for peace, justice and democracy. As partners, our central focus is building grassroots coalitions both locally and on an international level as we organize around common issues of sustainable agriculture, fair trade, labor and immigrant rights, and environmental preservation.

**Be a part of our Core Group organizing. We hold monthly meetings to organize MASCP and gather in community. Contact us by phone or e-mail.**

**Help People-to-People organizing in 2010!**

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