

Thanks to all of you, we are now partners with the world's first and largest crowdfunding community that connects nonprofits, donors, and companies in nearly every country around the world.

From Books to Brilliance

2016 Newsletter



It was almost midnight on Giving Tuesday in November. We were stunned. Do you know that feeling you get when everything seems perfect? We all felt it. Over the past decade your support for From Books to Brilliance (FBTB) has allowed us to create access to books and educational materials for thousands of under-served children, making a difference in their world. On Giving Tuesday you made a world of difference for From Books to Brilliance. Though we had weeks to accomplish it, we met *GlobalGiving's* fundraising challenge in one day! We are now

partners with the world's *first and largest crowdfunding community that connects nonprofits, donors, and companies in nearly every country around the world*. This advancement enables us to promote library creation on a much larger scale and on a global stage. We asked and you answered. Thank you, dear friends.

Together we have built a firm foundation. FBTB began with a grant from the Dr. Seuss Foundation in 2007, accompanied by a beautiful note from Audrey Geisel. She explained that the

Foundation primarily served the literacy needs of children in California, and she wished us great success. Several *Min-eGrants* followed from Rotary eClub of the Southwest USA, where FBTB is given the opportunity to present our work annually. Delta Kappa Gamma Educational Foundation, an educational sorority that gives to *educate the world*, recently approved a fourth grant. We appreciate your ongoing trust and know that you appreciate the many challenges we face in accomplishing this literacy mission.

“Civilization begins where chaos and insecurity end. For when fear is overcome, curiosity and constructiveness are free, and man passes by natural impulse towards the understanding and embellishment of life.” - Will Durant

From the Field:

GUATEMALA

Debbie Gonzales
Board Member

It is a joy to support From Books to Brilliance projects. When visiting our libraries in Nicaragua and Guatemala, energetic individuals greet us - welcoming, engaging and truly interesting. I am uplifted by the enthusiasm, energy, and natural curiosity that the children freely share. Specifically, they are truly motivated to read. They know that books are a pathway to their own exciting education. The word is out regarding the success of the libraries we have established and continue to support. They value our investment in their communities.

During our recent trip to Guatemala, for example, we completed site visits and library readiness assessments for two locations where we hope to create libraries. The first, *El Instituto Nacional de Educación Básica de Telesecundaria*, in Paquip, is a public school that has a limited number of textbooks, yet no literature for the students to enjoy. We met with administrators, teachers, and the parent association who gave us a tour of the school and discussed how they would greatly benefit from a library. A secure room with abundant space and natural light is already reserved; they simply await the books. The second, Kajib Noj in Momostenango, is

a K-12 school that has a number of projects in place, including organic gardening and a water initiative, that provide revenue for operating expenses.



Momostenango, Guatemala



Biblioteca Rabinal, Guatemala

From the field:

PROJECT MANAGER

Luke Baca

Luke is a freshman at Sandia Preparatory school in Albuquerque, NM. He has traveled and supported multiple trips to Central America and is FBTB's first Project Manager.

After traveling to Nicaragua as an FBTB volunteer, I put together a picture book that showed some interesting things I saw that are different from my life in New Mexico. When riding in a taxi in Granada, I noticed a little turtle crawling up my feet. That's never happened to me when riding in American taxis, which I guess have been rather boring in comparison. Why not drive a taxi with your pet turtle as a constant passenger? My book is entitled, *There's a Turtle in the Taxi!* and it shows some great and different ways of life in beautiful Nicaragua.

One of my recent projects was to develop a journal calendar for the children in FBTB libraries to use. The purpose is to provide them a way to keep track of the books they read throughout the year and to write about them. In the journal, space is provided for them to draw a picture inspired from their favorite book that month. I wanted to give them another way to encourage them to read, receive stickers for their progress from the librarians and teachers, and to create something special for themselves. I want these students to really enjoy reading and to help them have substantial, successful lives. Strong reading skills

are important to build a foundation for a brighter future.

In December, I shared some of my FBTB experiences during a presentation at Jubilee's Clubhouse in Los Lunas, New Mexico. After learning more about our work in Latin America, we earned encouragement and support from the audience members for future projects. We really appreciate that! Several who attended sent me photos for my next book project, an alphabet book with a variety of pictures from our country to share with the students who visit FBTB libraries. Nicaragua and the USA have so much in common. We learn a lot from each other, including how to make each other smile. Laughter sounds the same in all languages!



Luke in Guatemala

A Special Thank You

Isabel Tafoya

For accompanying FBTB to Nicaragua this summer to lend her photography and videography skills!

Pamela Witt

For inviting FBTB to speak at Jubilee Ladies Night at Los Lunas, NM ...complete with tropical desserts and coffee!

Civilization starts where chaos ends. In Nicaragua that chaos is unmistakable. Directionless youth with little education and few economic opportunities seem destined to complete that ill-fated cycle of poverty. The correlation between low literacy rates and youth drug use is daunting. However, those are precisely the villages where we, at From Books to Brilliance, love to work! FBTB strives to redirect their path. Our village libraries serve as hubs for a change in direction. We know that with access to books and information it is possible for citizens to become seekers of knowledge and educated innovators who dream of something better for themselves, their families and their communities.

As FBTB continues to grow the village library in Villa Solidaridad, we witness signs of yet another community on a better path, one that could lead to prosperity. Indira Morales, FBTB's long-time partner and Projects Director for the Association of Nicaraguan Women Luisa Amanda Espinoza (AMNLAE), founded this small library *in the style of From Books to Brilliance* in 2014. She then asked for our help. Housed on the second floor of their newly constructed community center, children of all ages are ever-present. They color, put puzzles together and laugh. Thanks to a generous grant from Delta Kappa Gamma Educational Foundation, they choose from over 600 books to read, then write about their favorites in FBTB's *journal calendar*. Now Solidaridad's children, grades one through eight, study from Nicaraguan texts accessible at their own library and in their own neighborhood. For Solidaridad's youth, librarian Willian Wilson, is a true champion. He understands the numerous challenges they face and integrates himself into their daily struggles. He leads them on a different path, one driven by literacy, and the entire community is eager to follow. As they embrace Willian, they also embrace Biblioteca Solidaridad.

Founded nine years ago in El Fortín, Biblioteca Paraíso del Niño continues to thrive in this village's community center. Indira Morales of AMNLAE claims that this little library, with fewer than 1000 books, has changed the entire community. When assigning homework, local teachers coordinate with Rosalía, the librarian. Children come to play, read books and study; adults come to develop their literacy skills. Surprisingly, FBTB did receive complaints from a few mothers in town...there were no romance novels! (I can assure you all that this very serious problem has been remedied.) We look forward to interviewing several of the library's original readers, now studying at Nicaraguan universities.

News of FBTB's library creation is spreading. Our newest project, located at an elementary school in La Laguna, was a welcome surprise. The school's parent association was so eager to partner with FBTB that they renovated a small building, and painted the word *Biblioteca* over the door before we arrived to meet with them in 2015. With a matching grant from Rotary eClub of the Southwest USA the parents' dream has become reality. Their children have beautiful books to read. As a founder and field volunteer with FBTB, I am so, very grateful for the humbling opportunity to partner with you all and with all the amazing communities that we serve together.

From the field:

NICARAGUA

Maggie Covill, Founder



Biblioteca Solidaridad, Nicaragua



Biblioteca Paraíso del Niño, Nicaragua

From the field:

UNITED STATES

Kim Covill, President & Founder

In New Mexico FBTB partnered with James Monroe Middle School's National Junior Honor Society to spearhead a schoolwide book drive. The goal was to provide books for Cuidando Los Niños (CLN), an organization that cares for children of homeless families in Albuquerque. Tremendously successful, students donated almost three thousand children's books, benefitting not only CLN, but two Pueblo preschools, two homeless centers, and Albuquerque Christian Children's Home.

From Books to Brilliance now finds itself in a difficult, but enviable position. Requests for libraries are coming from several Central American communities, as we continue to promote literacy in New Mexico as well. Our organization needs to expand in order to serve more children in more villages. With this global outreach, we believe it will. Thank you for your continual support as we travel on this step-by-step, village by village, path to literacy.



Student authored books from Moreno Valley HS!



Board of Directors

Kim Covill: President, Founder
Maggie Covill: VP, Founder
Debbie Gonzales
Bronwyn Stephanz

From Books to Brilliance

www.frombookstobrilliance.org

P.O. Box 56716
Albuquerque, NM 87187
505-554-7107

donate@frombookstobrilliance.org

