

Presbytery Hunger Grant Aids in Guatemalan Crisis

An ongoing grant from POJ's Hunger Ministry is helping mission partner CEDEPCA (Protestant Center for Pastoral Education) address hunger needs in Guatemala that have deepened due to the pandemic caused by COVID-19. With the grant funds, CEDEPCA purchases high-quality, non-genetically-modified seeds for crops such as tomatoes, spinach, and other greens.

The seeds are provided to nearly 200 families in the Western Highlands of Guatemala, where women are among the most vulnerable and marginalized in Guatemalan society. With the seeds, recipients plant family gardens and grow their own food.

“[Home gardens provide] immediate access to food that is fresh, rich in nutrients, and free from chemicals,” explained Luis Sarpec, who leads this program for CEDEPCA.

The family garden project also is supported by New Castle Presbytery, which represents churches in Delaware and eastern Maryland. New Castle funds an agronomist who provides training and technical support to the gardeners.

Some of the family gardens are so successful that the women sell excess to neighbors. They use the income to buy other foods like rice and beans or more seeds to expand their small businesses.

Your financial support of our Hunger Fund through the five cents a meal offering or by a designated contribution to Presbytery of the James sustains this vital mission. Together, we can address hunger and make a better world for all, especially the “least of these” of whom Jesus spoke.

Learn about POJ's Hunger Ministry and how you can help at presbyteryofthejames.com/hunger. For more photos and information about Guatemalan family gardens, visit ncpguatemala.com/projects/family-gardens.



Women plant seeds in soil-filled eggshells, then place the shells into egg cartons. This keeps the seeds secure during transport and aids in transplanting the seedlings.



New Initiative Helps Christian Educators Reach Out

A six-month pilot of an initiative to support Christian educators has not only received rave reviews from its beta group participants—it has also been a lifesaver for them during the pandemic.

The project is titled Presbyterians Supporting Christian Education (PSCE), its initials honoring the legacy of the Presbyterian School of Christian Education. Its purpose: “...to support and encourage educators’ ministries through engagement in critical and theological thinking... to enhance the teaching of Christian education.”

It is the brainchild of a planning team convened by H. Carson Rhyne, Jr. that met at Union Presbyterian Seminary's Charlotte campus in March 2019.

Rhyne retired as general presbyter and stated clerk of Presbytery of the James in December 2018 and has served on the adjunct faculty of Union, teaching polity and practical theology, since 2005. Upon his retirement, his colleagues established the Carson Rhyne Fund for Christian Education, which supports the new PSCE initiative.

“Christian education needs a higher profile in the church, and we need a support group for Christian educators,” shared Rhyne.



Rev. Carson Rhyne Jr.

Participants in the project's three beta groups experienced immediate benefits and saw significant advantages for Christian educators and for the church as a whole.

“The cohort group has provided a place for me to listen and to learn,” noted Mary Todd Peters, director of Christian education at New Hope Presbyterian Church in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. She and others have been forced to think outside of the box in the time of COVID-19, learning from colleagues what tactics they are employing to “bring educational ministry into the home.”

“I couldn't have imagined 20 years ago what we are doing now,” said Peters.

See CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS on page 8