



Red Wind Councils

Spiritual & social awakening through indigenous restitution

~ 2014 Thanksgiving & Holiday Newsletter ~

Hola dear friends & supporters of Red Wind Councils,

We send you a warm "muchissimas gracias" from the Maya people who all deeply appreciate the financial support you have shared with us through Red Wind this past year.

Social justice efforts & native spiritual renewal are two aspects of our work at Red Wind which support Maya dignity & the changes that must take place for a more sane, just world, aligned with the true dreaming of Earth. As every year, we would like to invite you to read our Holiday Newsletter 2014 where we bring news of this past year & share with you 3 moving stories. Although different from one another, they are living examples of hope, courage, transformation & spirit.

The first story is about a young girl, Dominga, whose experience with Red Wind has saved her life & restored dignity to her family. It is vulnerable children like Dominga that Red Wind most helps with crucial support at perilous times in their young lives.

The second story tells of a ceremony at our Red Medicine center of Chiapas attended by the children of rural communities of Red Wind Councils to celebrate the children & youth of Mother Earth.

The third story, Ancient Fires Rekindled, was written by a US member of our organization telling of her experience at a sacred Fire circle for Maya spiritual students at Red Wind center in Chiapas.

The ancient Maya, in their prophecies, foretold much of the confusion, chaos, & Earth imbalances that we each encounter every day. And the living Maya continue their prayers & ceremonies for protection & awakening for all of us. Their legacy of wisdom reminds us that we are all heading towards a rebirth & regeneration of consciousness with our sacred Mother Earth, & a saner, more balanced & just way of life.

Yet the Maya in Chiapas continue to suffer a great deal. We had a severe drought this summer & the corn of the people is almost entirely dead. Unfortunately the rains came too late to nourish the crop which is the year's food source of the people. So life-sustaining food relief projects are now crucial until the harvest of next year. This will be a major effort in the year to come, as the people are in dire need of corn.

There is also another factor which further complicates the life of the impoverished Mayas. A few decades ago, world economists predicted that the damaging effects of globalization would first impact the 3rd World countries. This is now a crushing reality in the world of the Maya which has seen a 50% inflation rate in only one year.

We hope you will be moved by our newsletter & continue your contributions to the river of hope that Red Wind brings to the Maya people here. Let's help together once more this year the many Maya brothers & sisters who consciously walk with our beloved Earth, not only for themselves & their families, but for the families of the whole world.

We send our warmest prayers that the life of you & your loved ones is protected & blessed in the year ahead!

With deepest gratitude,
Ohki Siminé Forest, Amalia Forest, Francisco Yolte, & Eliberto Molina Jimenez
for Red Wind Councils



Donate by credit card on our website by clicking on the **PayPal** button or donations can be sent to:
Red Wind Councils
P.O. Box 413
Littleton, MA 01460



You can now follow Red Wind & Ohki on Facebook & Twitter at **Red Wind Councils** & **Ohki Siminé Forest**

www.redwindcouncils.org
www.ohkisiminéforest.com



DOMINGA, the Reality of an Urban Indigenous Girl

Dominga, a bright & lovely little girl, began selling gum & friendship bracelets on the streets at the almost unbelievable age of three years old. The streets of the city of San Cristóbal de las Casas are filled with vulnerable, barefoot, indigenous children of all ages selling whatever they can in order to feed themselves & their impoverished families. Dominga's parents fled to San Cristobal to escape the violence & intimidation of the government's paramilitaries in their native village. They lived in an extremely poor indigenous colony in town, in a shack with a broken cardboard roof & walls which flooded each year when the rainy season came. Crushed by this new degraded life, her father began to drink heavily & beat Dominga's mother who developed severe diabetes. One day her older sister simply disappeared. Dominga was never to learn if she had been kidnapped & drugged, sold into the sex trade or for organ trafficking, or simply had run off of her own volition.



Dominga was forced by bitter necessity to work with other little indigenous boys & girls like her for a "boss" who controlled the supply of the trinkets children sell. He forced these children to sell late into the night making them even more vulnerable to all abuses of the street. This boss would control the incomes & Dominga received only a small portion of money to give to her mother for the whole family. Finally, at 10 years old, when the situation at home had deteriorated to the point of being unbearable due to domestic violence, she decided to band together with other girls like her & left her home. They slept on cardboard boxes in the streets, ate from dumpsters when they couldn't afford to buy any tortillas, & were sometimes robbed by street teenagers of their tiny earnings. But while on the streets, Dominga proved to be fortunate. Before she was reduced to starvation, illness, or became a victim of sexual predations, she heard of Red Wind Councils, our nonprofit organization, who supports the impoverished indigenous Mayas.

For the first time Dominga has met people who care about her & gave her refuge at one of our Red Wind schools. Through us, she received medical care for the malnutrition that was slowly killing her. She has been able to study in our Red Wind alternative schools & has also learned a work skill through our Fair Trade Crafts projects. And most importantly she has felt accepted, loved & respected by us through our educational & cultural programs. Today, she is a promising young teenager of 14, healthy & happy. Red Wind was also able to find a good work for the father who has now resolved his drinking problem, & the family has moved to a more decent place. Rocio, Dominga's mother, has received medical care for her ailments through RWC.

A Maya's Children Ceremony for World Changes

On August 30 of this year, many Maya children & youth of Red Wind families joined their peers around the world through the Regeneration Festival organized by Lyla, a Navajo friend, <http://www.regeneration-festival.com>. Every year, Lyla invites people from all over to join in ceremonies to celebrate the youth of the world. Her festival began several years ago in Taos Pueblo, NM, in response to the suicides of 5 young natives of her tribe. Since then, this festival has been dedicated to giving a sense of hope to young people. This year, the focus was on the Israeli/Palestinian war & how children, youth, women & mothers in that region are severely affected & hurt by this conflict.

In Chiapas, we chose to make a ceremony of Prayer ties. Everyone of us, children, youths & adults in the circle, made different drawings & wrote prayers which we all shared afterwards. All the prayers were poignant poems & heartfelt drawings. Then we proceeded to tie our prayers in little bundles in red cloths blessed with sacred tobacco. At a Maya altar by the woods near the Medicine center, we smudged with Copal incense & everyone hung their ties in the trees with prayers for abundance & well being for all. The children were given small candles to burn altogether at the foot of Maya Goddess statue. As the candles burnt, we watched all our prayers being taken to the Hearts of Earth & Sky. And the prayers of the ties were taken far to the 4 directions by the Winds.



It was moving to see these Maya children, despite coming from illiterate families & remote communities, being so conscious of the suffering of all children of the world. The indigenous autonomous schools in Chiapas have taught Maya children to be more compassionate by opening their view of the world & the many different cultures.

To read some of the children's prayers, please see the next page



A Maya's Children Ceremony for World Changes, contd.

Some of the children's prayers to call for a better world;

Emilio, 8 years old: May there be peace. I pray that there will be no more children living in the streets. That they may have food & clothing. That they may have health. I pray that people cut no more trees. That they do not contaminate water, rivers & earth. I pray that the Earth be clean, that we are all healthy. And I pray that mothers do not suffer anymore for the loss of their children.

Lucia, 16 years old: I pray for all the children & young people so they may not live in armed conflicts. Wars is their reality. I pray for all those who think they cannot be happy or find the meaning to their lives. I pray for them so they can see the beauty in the midst of wars. May their spirits flourish, may they find their path always, & help others who are lost also find their paths.

Nayeli, 13 years old: Light, strength & love for all the indigenous people of the world. May their children never forget the Earth, their ancestors, their cultures & their own inner power.

Ho, Ho!

Ancient Fires Rekindled

Part of Red Wind Council's work in Chiapas includes encouraging the revival of indigenous culture & spirituality. Recently, I had the immense privilege of sitting in a native teaching circle at the Red Wind Medicine Center in the luscious highlands of San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas. As the shadows of evening gathered, indigenous men & women, young & old walked in the Center together, & sat in silence & reverence around the central fire. Their brown faces, bright in the warm light, were glowing from within by their intense attention to this precious sacred knowledge. Knowledge which was forbidden not so long ago to their forefathers & mothers by the Spanish conquistadors. Now they are able to hear again their spiritual ways. Ohki, our Medicine teacher, led a lively review of the teachings that they had received at the previous circle & together their words brought to life the Medicine Wheel in the Center. It was a meeting which was so profound & real. Our drums, with their heartbeat voices, took us all to journey deep within to connect to this ancient, collective wisdom.

I have heard in the past similar teachings in the USA but these were pale experiences compared to the awesome power of this circle. These dignified & humble Maya have a strong call today to reclaim their ancestral knowledge. They hear their traditional teachings with deep respect & seriousness, & above all, with integrity, yet with much laughter & enthusiasm. We could not miss hearing the ancestors' voices in the silence between all the words. These Maya, students of Ohki's ways for a few decades, gather at the Red Wind Center of Chiapas as if at a well that draws crystalline water & healing renewal from the very Heart of Earth. Despite that I was a non-native person there, I felt the great movement of restoration of the indigenous world all over. It is a world of true medicine for all which offers a place for every thing & every one, a world of true inter-relatedness with nature, Earth, the ancestors of this continent, a world where all are relatives & connected in Spirit which is offered to us by these incredible wise native people. It felt as if I was sitting with these indigenous around a fire in a continuum that has no time. It could have been 30,000 years ago, 525 years ago, yesterday or today, a place where time is all the same, magical & beyond limitations.



We, at Red Wind Councils, contribute to many important projects that help support the life of the Maya people in Chiapas: education, agriculture, healthcare & craft cooperatives, to name a few. I have seen first-hand how these projects evolve in practical & life-sustaining ways. But primary is the work of the Center for the spiritual renewal of the Maya people, for everyone here knows that the health of a people depends first & foremost on their connection to spirituality. The work of Red Wind Councils in Chiapas revives this important dimension for so many.

In this season of thankfulness & giving, I hope that you will also hear the voices of native ancestors, & support Ohki, Red Wind Councils & all the Maya in their most important work.

Wendy Rosa Jenner, apprentice to Ohki S. Forest & Founding member of RWC



Some of Red Wind's Accomplishments in 2014

This year Red Wind went forward in the many projects that it has undertaken with the Maya for the last 30 years. Here we have highlighted some of the work that we accomplished through the dedication of our Councils, the persevering work of the Maya people & the generous donations of our supporters:

- ◆ **Promoting Maya crafters & artists:** Ohki brought the exquisite crafts from Maya artisans & communities to the annual Gathering of Nations Powwow in NM where 40,000 people had the opportunity to learn more about the mission of Red Wind & support Maya artisans. One of the new artisans featured is Maria, an extremely gifted young woman who has grown up in the Red Wind family of Chiapas. She creates remarkably refined embroidered "tortilla cloths," the beauty of which evoke the spirits of the Maya people & land.
- ◆ **Emergency Medical project:** Red Wind tended several urgent care cases this year & a few dozens with a multitude of different ailments.
- ◆ **Community School project:** We have continued with our Red Wind schools which provide the children with food & school supplies where there are none, & where they are taught in their own indigenous languages in a culturally sensitive & supportive environment, learning the values of their communities & deepening their connections with their roots.
- ◆ **Green House project:** In this year of terrible drought, we fostered the Greenhouse project. The traditional Maya diet consists mainly of corn & beans. This leaves the people's food supply highly vulnerable to weather as well as to the introduction of GMO corn by the government, which mixes the corn & creates infertile seeds. At Red Wind Medicine Center of Chiapas, a member of the Guiding Council, Francisco Yolte P. maintains year-long a model vegetable garden & greenhouse where he trains members of interested Native communities in proper methods of organic production.
- ◆ **Fogon Wood-saving Stoves project:** We are happy to report we have continued to provide over a 100 stoves to Maya families this past year. Besides saving much firewood, these stoves completely eliminate the smoke in the kitchen, thus eradicating chronic lung & eye problems in women, children & babies.
- ◆ **Micro-Loans for Women:** We have extended micro-loans to 3 women's groups. The loans helped launch a craft project in one village, a corn mill serving several communities, & a community store administrated by local women.



Donations to Red Wind Councils:

Your gifts of hope for the Maya children are received each holiday season with many prayers of gratitude. Those gifts, no matter how small, create so much good in the lives of the Maya people & we ask you to please continue to generously share what you have with our brothers & sisters in Chiapas. We are all interconnected & the love & support you give to them, you give to the world.

Please send your donations to:

Red Wind Councils

P.O. Box 413

Littleton, MA 01460

(978) 633-7388

Donate by credit card on our website by clicking on the **PayPal** button

www.redwindcouncils.org

Your contributions are tax deductible as allowed by law. Tax ID#: 20-3633955

