



Creating a  
 Transnational  
 Community

**Date:** Saturday, October 20, 2012  
**Time:** 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.  
*Registration begins at 8:30 a.m.*  
**Location:** Needham Congregational Church  
 1154 Great Plain Avenue  
 Needham, MA

The Guatemala Partnership Forum is an opportunity to celebrate the partnership of Santa María Tzejá and Needham, share ideas that promote social justice, discuss the impact this unique partnership has had on our communities and explore where the partnership is headed in the coming years. The day includes informative keynote speakers, interactive breakout sessions and time to catch up with friends.

### Agenda-at-a-Glance

Time	Activity
8:30 am – 9:00 am	Registration and Breakfast
9:00 am – 10:00 am	Opening General Session
10:00 am – 10:15 am	Break
10:15 am – 11:30 am	Breakout Sessions
11:30 am – 11:45 am	Break
11:45 am – 1:00 pm	Breakout Sessions
1:00 pm – 1:45 pm	Lunch
1:45 pm – 3:00 pm	Breakout Sessions
3:00 pm – 3:15 pm	Break
3:15 pm – 4:00 pm	Optional Roundtable Session

The Guatemala Partnership is a collaboration between the Congregational Church of Needham and the village of Santa María Tzejá, Ixcán, El Quiché, Guatemala. This year marks the 25-year anniversary of the partnership. The mission of the partnership is to

- Witness for social justice in Santa María Tzejá, Guatemala and around the world
- Offer financial support for community-wide education and development programs
- Encourage one-on-one interaction between the members of the village and members of Needham and greater Boston community

**Register now** to join us for this special event. The \$15 registration fee includes admission to all sessions, snacks, and a delicious lunch. Go to [www.guatepartnershipforum.eventbrite.com](http://www.guatepartnershipforum.eventbrite.com) or purchase tickets at the Needham Congregational Church during coffee hour on September 30, October 7, or October 14

# Opening General Session Panel

## General Session Panel: Celebrating Transnational Communities

9:00 am – 10:00 am

This General Session explores how people from very different cultural, ethnic, faith, economic, historical and political backgrounds find their way to a common sense of community. Our panel speakers include:

- **Paula Worby:** Associate Director of the Multicultural Institute in Berkeley, CA
- **Clark Taylor:** Retired Professor from the College of Public and Community Service at *Since 1987 the Congregational Church of Needham has been engaged with a novel and far-reaching relationship with the rural community of Santa María Tzeja in Guatemala.*
- **Ross Lohr:** Director of the Newton Tanzania Collaborative *Since 2006 the NTC has worked to improve educational opportunities for Tanzanian children through participatory development initiatives and relationship building between schools and communities in the United States and Tanzania.*
- **Jim Wallace:** A founder of the Cambridge Sister City Project *Since 1987 the City of Cambridge and San Jose las Flores in El Salvador have worked together for human rights, social justice and cultural exchange.*

## Breakout Sessions Themes

Breakout sessions are organized around three themes. You can pick and choose sessions between themes depending on your priority and interests.

### Theme One: A Unique Transnational Community

These sessions examine how the partnership has impacted our communities from a past, current and future perspective. Be part of this discussion to explore the very new "territory" of what it means to form a genuinely transnational community between a suburban church and a rural Guatemalan village.

### Theme Two: Promoting Peace and Justice

These sessions explore what we need to know to become effective partners in a globalized world. This track brings to our attention issues of poverty, governmental neglect, corporate exploitation and immigration. We will learn how these issues impact both communities and discuss ways we can support each other.

### Theme Three: Experience Santa María Tzejá

This track will take you on a journey to the village and its surrounding area. Join us on a virtual tour, learn about Partner Families, visit the marketplace and celebrate the rich Mayan culture.

## Breakout Session Descriptions

### Theme One: A Unique Transnational Community

#### Celebrating a 25-Year Partnership: Santa María Tzeja Perspective

Twenty-five years ago, when our Partnership began, it would have been impossible to imagine that one day the village would have schooling as exciting and progressive as anywhere else in the world! Such a possibility would have been beyond the wildest imaginings of Santa Marians and their Needham visitors in the early years. We'll talk about education and include other areas that have been transformed over the last 25 years.

#### Celebrating a 25-Year Partnership: Needham Congregational Church Perspective

What motivates people to join their lives and resources with others a world away? How does a unique school vacation experience end up transforming so many lives? How has this partnership created an opportunity for us to learn what it means to be faithful in a world torn by suffering, injustice, oppression and war? This panel will lead us thru an interactive discussion on how the partnership with Santa María Tzeja has enriched our lives in so many different ways.



*2010 Delegation Visit*

#### Anticipating the Next 25 Years in a Maturing Transnational Community

Building on what has developed to this point in both Santa María and the Congregational Church of Needham, we have the stimulating and exciting opportunity to think ahead to what it might mean to create a maturing unique transnational community. Is the vision Santa María Tzeja will become a center of education on the level of ancient Athens and Maya Tikal? We will draw from discussions the August delegation had with the village community on this theme.

### Theme Two: Promoting Peace and Justice

#### External Threats and the Response of a Courageous Community

Though the internal armed conflict in Guatemala officially ended in 1996, many indigenous and peasant communities in Guatemala claim that the war never really ended. Instead, the war has shifted focus; instead of fighting to eliminate so-called subversives, a war is being waged on dissent and resistance to large-scale mega-projects, like gold mining and hydroelectric dams. Caught between corporate interests, private security hired

## Breakout Session Descriptions



to protect industry (often with ties to narcotraffickers and ex-military personnel), and State institutions that sacrifice the rights of its people for profits, communities are organizing to protect their rights to life, health, cultural identity, a healthy environment and a future for their children. This workshop will hear about some of the paradigmatic cases of megaprojects Guatemala, the conflicts that have arisen and the inspiring response of civil society to defend itself. We will explore ways that investment from us in the United States impacts these conflicts and discuss how we can support communities' right to self-determination from our position in the North.

### **Standing in Solidarity**

More than 30 years later after the fact, in January, former dictator Efraín Ríos Montt was charged with the crime of genocide – the first such formal accusation in all of the Americas. It has been a long struggle to get to this point and the international community has played a role in supporting, accompanying and standing in solidarity with the survivors of the Violence. However, there are inherent power dynamics in our relationships when we work with the global South; this workshop will encourage us to think about our own privilege and, in particular, what decide to do with it. What is the difference between charity and solidarity? What does courage mean for us as we work with people confronting much greater dangers and sacrifices in the pursuit of justice? We will explore what it means to be an ally, a true partnership, and what solidarity looks like across race, class and privilege lines.

### **Immigrants by Choice?**

Why do people uproot themselves from home and family to emigrate to the U.S., where they might become targets of anti-immigrant hostility? What pushes them out? What pulls them here? What do they contribute to our culture and economy? Why and in what ways is our immigration system broken? What do we need to know in order to be in a position to help fix it? What resources can we bring to help resolve address these issues?

## **Theme Three: Experience Santa María Tzeja**

### **A Virtual Visit to the Village**

Imagine your journey on the three conveyances that carry you to the village. Experience the welcome on arrival and the evening welcoming party. Tour the village center, visit in homes, go to a “parcela” (a family’s farming area), meet village people, attend a meeting with village teachers. Get a chance to ask your questions and feel like you have been there, in a distance sense, at least. Every question will be a welcome, good question!


## Learn about Mayan Markets and Crafts

Come join on us on a guided tour thru several different markets. Will start off by sampling some of the main products from the local coop before heading into the craft shops in Antigua. Our tour guide will share the history behind some of the beautiful Mayan crafts and artworks.

## Rehearse for the Despedida Performance

Every delegation visit to the village concludes with the much anticipated 'despedida' farewell celebration where youth lead entertainment that is often comprised of singing and dancing. During this time you'll rehearse a group song that will be performed and the close of today's Forum (along with an encore performance Saturday night).

## Optional Roundtable Discussion: Forum Wrap-Up



Join us at the end of the event to share highlights from the Forum and reflect on some of the key points discussed in the general session and breakout sessions.

### Visit the Marketplace

During registration, lunch and after the last breakout session you'll have a chance to purchase crafts produced by Guatemalan artisans.

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