



2015 Delegates to Teosinte **Susan Olson, Sandra Swietlik, Sandra McCabe, and David Goehner**

In August 2015, four members of our St. Sebastian community will travel to Teosinte, El Salvador. They will represent all of us as they spend several days living, meeting, and celebrating with families and participate in the Teosinte community's annual repatriation celebration on August 8, 2015.

To help you get to know them a bit more and what they hope to learn and bring back from their experience, they have shared some excerpts from their delegation applications.

Why do you want to participate in the delegation?

- (SM) *To help me make real to young people the missionary component of the Task of Catechesis.*
- (SS) *I have been a member of the El Salvador Committee for many years. My love for our brothers and sisters in Teosinte grows stronger every day. The people of Teosinte and El Salvador have taught me so many things – unconditional love, strong faith in spite of dismal circumstances, family strength and commitment, just to name a few. If I can be a part of continuing and strengthening our relationship with the beautiful people of Teosinte and El Salvador, I feel it will benefit St. Sebastian parish as well as me and my family. I want to continue to strengthen St. Sebastian's bond with Teosinte.*
- (DG) *I am thrilled by the opportunity to represent St. Sebastian parish . . . and share as many of the parishioners' (and my own) questions and ideas are possible with the people of El Salvador, particularly our sisters and brothers in Teosinte. Further, I am thrilled by the opportunity to bring the questions and ideas from our sisters and brothers in Teosinte back to the St. Sebastian parish, so that we can continue to strengthen our sistering relationship in practical and sustaining ways. I look forward to the chance so spend time and energy, stories, laughter, ideas, and hopes with both new people in El Salvador and Teosinte, as well as with those friends that I met on my first delegation in 1999 a-d again in 2011. I look forward to the chance to learn as much as I can from the daily lives of Salvadoran people. I desire to learn better ways to support*

the work and mission of SHARE, as well as other non-governmental organizations that strive to create sustainable programs.

- *(SO) I have been interested in our sister community of Teosinte for a long time. I believe that participating in the delegation will give me an opportunity to witness firsthand the solidarity that we have with Teosinte. I am most interested in the women of Teosinte and the sewing group.*

What is your understanding of solidarity and accompaniment?

- *(SM) This covers a wide spectrum from praying for people, to walking them, listening to their stories and advocating for them.*
- *(SS) The gift of being an advocate is a special blessing from God. While I cannot speak of hardships as if they were my own, I can show love, concern, respect, and pass along the needs to others. Prayer is a strong tool. Sharing prayers, faith, and love builds relationships. The relationships we build can strengthen both communities.*
- *(DG) I know that I am not going to El Salvador to take over and fix problems; I am going to El Salvador to strengthen existing relationships, and build new relationships. I understand solidarity and accompaniment to be about learning, listening to personal stories, witnessing the active problem-solving process that Salvadorans engage in with each other and via non-governmental organizations such as SHARE, and then sharing what I've experienced and learned so as to advocate for social justice, sustainability, and the value of individual life.*
- *(SO) Solidarity means to walk with someone, to gain an understanding of who they are and share a common goal with them. Accompaniment is the ongoing journey and support of the community.*

What special gifts, talents, or abilities do you have to share on the trip or when you return?

- *(SM) I helped people prepare for long term mission and also helped them as they come back to the states.*
- *(SS) My talent as a speaker, teacher, and friend will make the experience during and after the trip comfortable to people who wish to share and learn about our sister community. I love sharing experiences and have done so many times with our school children and parish members, as well as a multitude of family members and friends.*
- *(DG) I have great passion for the people in Teosinte, and about the sistering relationship that SHARE has helped our parish establish. I believe I'm very good with observation and non-verbal as a way to communicate with people. I've used my experiences from my past two delegations to create presentations that I believe have effectively helped keep our sistering relationship with Teosinte alive in the parish. I'm prepared to start the delegation with both many questions and an even greater desire to learn, actively engage with the delegation in interacting with the people we encounter in El Salvador, then stop at nothing to share with experience with my family and parish community.*
- *(SO) I am a nurse, also trained in first aid. I like to crochet. I am a Girl Scout currently leading the 8th grade troop at St. Sebastian. I am interested in bringing the news of Teosinte to the St. Sebastian community.*