

Sophia's Circle & Weaving for Justice Annual Newsletter

Friend us on Facebook at Weaving for Justice/Email us at weavingforjustice@gmail.com

Visit our website and on-line store at www.weaving-for-justice.org

We are also on Instagram at Weaving for Justice

"When a woman rises, no man is left behind."



March 2019

Dear Friends,

Since the Zapatista uprising in 1994, women have been embroidering sayings on cloth which give voice to their beliefs, work, and dreams for a better life. The words on the cloth above reflect what we have seen vividly in our work with weavers in Chiapas -- when they make money from selling their weavings or earn praise for their talents, they use their earnings and recognition to lift up both themselves and the men in their communities. Research and advocacy have shown consistently that when women living in conditions of poverty and marginalization receive assistance they do not use it only for themselves, but for their families and communities.

Inspired by this cloth, we asked the weavers of Tsobol Antsetik (Women United) of Chenalhó, Chiapas to embroider similar cloths for us to sell in both Spanish and English. We now sell these at our sales and will soon offer them on our website store. (<http://weaving-for-justice.org/online-store-books-for-sale/>)

OUR WORK WITH WEAVERS IN CHIAPAS

The weaving cooperatives we assist are **Tsobol Antsetik** (Women United), a group of 30 women and their children in the township of San Pedro Chenalhó, with a meeting house/store in the community of Chixiltón (see our website for directions to the meeting house); **Mujeres Por La Dignidad** (Women for Dignity), a Zapatista collective of over 100 women who work in small groups throughout the state of Chiapas, with their headquarters in Oventic; and a small **doll-making group** based in San Cristóbal de Las Casas. All the women in the weavers groups are in the resistance, that is they do not participate in top-down economic development projects that fail to take their needs into account.



Some of the weavers in Tsobol Antsetik in front of their meeting house. Photo by Carol Vanier, 2018.

HUMAN RIGHTS UPDATE

When we chose the name Weaving for Justice for our organization we were thinking of the Maya weavers we assist in Chiapas who every day weave the old and new into a fabric of life founded on respect, dignity, and hope. We were also thinking of our efforts to help them stay on their ancestral lands and continue the farming and weaving that has brought meaning and sustenance to them throughout the centuries.

We weren't thinking then about the thousands of women and men in Mexico and Central America who would arrive in our community fleeing from their lands in fear for their lives.

Refugees began to arrive in Las Cruces in January 2018 through the efforts of Annunciation House in El Paso which dispatches groups of refugees and asylum seekers to area churches throughout the border region. Since then Weaving for Justice volunteers and members have been volunteering at area churches and motels in Anthony, Las Cruces, and El Paso, organizing donations, preparing and serving food, distributing clothing, washing bedding, arranging transportation to a family member or a host in the US., among many other tasks.

Volunteers are always welcome, as well as donations of clothing, money, and other items to area churches. To donate to **Annunciation House** please go to: <https://annunciationhouse.org/financial-donations/> To donate Spanish and bilingual books for refugees through **Libros Para el Viaje** contact Denise Chávez at 575-523-3988. comezonog@comcast.net

NEW FELTED ANIMALS made by Zapatista weavers in Mujeres Por La Dignidad

At our sales we now offer a variety of small felted animals including cats, dogs, horses, rabbits, zebras, roosters, tigers, crocodiles, and mama turtles with baby turtles on their backs. Some of these animals were symbolically important to ancient Mayas. For example, ancient Mayas represented **Earth** as a **TURTLE** and the underworld as a **CROCODILE**. In Maya creation myths, the maize god **Hun Hanahpu** directed a set of gods to put the universe in order on August 13, 3,114 B.C.E. by setting up the **Cosmic Hearth** in the constellation of Orion. The appearance of the Three Stones in the sky marked the beginning of Earth's Creation. The three stones of the **Cosmic Hearth** were: **jaguar, snake, & crocodile**.

Still today contemporary Maya women transform corn into tortillas on a clay griddle held up by three stones (or sometimes other objects) that form the hearth of their homes. Three is the Maya number for women. The woman symbol on weavings shows her with three fingers and toes, symbolizing the three hearth stones.



WAYS YOU CAN HELP:

- **DONATE MESOMERICAN & LATIN AMERICAN TEXTILES** for our Fall 2019 sale at the New Mexico State University Museum. We turn your donations into scholarships for Maya students through partnering with the University Museum and the Maya Educational Foundation (www.mayaedufound.org). Each year more and more children and youth in Belize, Chiapas, and Guatemala, are pursuing their dreams of an education thanks to the work of the Maya Educational Foundation and the Maya men and women who facilitate MEF's scholarship programs in their home countries. In 2018 our sale corresponded with Days of the Dead. We celebrated this beautiful fiesta of remembrance in the museum courtyard with NMSU students and members of the community. If you would like to clean out your closets and donate to a worthy cause, please contact Christine Eber at ceber@nmsu.edu. Your donation is tax-deductible.

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Donated textile sale at New Mexico State University Museum, November 2018.



Weaving for Justice Day of Dead ofrenda (altar) at The NMSU Museum, 2018.

* **BECOME A MEMBER** - All proceeds from weaving sales go back to the weavers. We depend upon memberships and donations to cover the costs of holding sales and events. Costs include printing literature, and covering booth fees and a small monthly electric bill at our new storage and sale space in Las Cruces. Our membership form is on the last page of this newsletter. If you are already a member, please take this opportunity to renew your membership.

* **VOLUNTEER WITH US** - Our new volunteer handbook is hot off the press! We're happy to share it with you and explore how you might get involved in our work.

* **VISIT THE WEAVERS in CHIAPAS** - Let us help you plan your trip. Directions to the weavers' meeting house of Tsobol Antsetik in Chixiltón, Chenalhó, Chiapas are on our webpage – www.weaving-for-justice.org

* **DONATIONS IN HONOR OR MEMORY** of a special person in your life. (Please see the form at the end of this newsletter or donate on our website. Give us the person's name and address and we will notify them.)

* **HOST A HOUSE PARTY/READING from *When a Woman Rises***, a novel by Christine Eber, Weaving for Justice co-founder. Christine's debut novel is about a friendship between two Maya women of Chenalhó, Chiapas, one of whom is a weaver. The book is available from Cinco Puntos Press (www.cincopuntos.com), or on various internet sites and at book stores. Christine, or another member of our steering committee, is happy to come to your home or organization to sell weavings. As a thank you, you will receive our gift of a weaving. Please contact Christine at 575 621-5999 or at ceber@nmsu.edu.

* **VISIT OUR WEBSITE STORE** to find woven bookmarks, photo books by weavers, nursing mother dolls, and bilingual cloth books of animals or numbers in Tsotsil and Spanish. (<http://weaving-for-justice.org/online-store-books-for-sale/>) Please contact us if you would like to see photos of other textiles in our inventory.

* **PATRONIZE THE FOLLOWING STORES & VENUES:**

* **3RD SATURDAY OF THE MONTH SALE** – You can find us at 525 E. Lohman Ave. in Las Cruces from 10:00 a.m.-4 p.m. on the 3rd Saturday of each month. We are upstairs in Suite C. We thank Beatriz Ferreira for loaning us this space which we plan to use for both sales and educational events.

New stores selling items from our inventory:

* **Beck's Roasting House & Creamery**, 130 N. Mesquite St., Las Cruces, (two sizes of brocaded change purses)

* **Greenspace Gallery**, 517 N. Mesquite St., Las Cruces (a large selection of items)

* **Literarity Book Shop**, 5411 N. Mesa St. 19B, El Paso, TX (shawls, book marks, cloth books in Tsotsil & Spanish)

* **Palabras Bilingual Bookstore**, 1738 McDowell Rd., Phoenix, AZ (a variety of items)

Other stores selling the textiles - Bowlin's Mesilla Book Center, 2360 Calle Principal, Mesilla; The Mountain View Market Co-op, 1300 El Paseo Rd., Las Cruces; Southwest Environmental Center Eco Store, 275 N. Main St., Las Cruces; and Wisdom Through the Pages, 575 N. Main St., Las Cruces.

THANK YOU!

We owe a debt of gratitude to all our members, volunteers, and donors, and to the following individuals for their support in 2018: Jena Camp; Denise Chávez; Cristina Coronado; Meghann Dallin; Judy Forney; Flora Graham; Elaine Hampton; Maxine Inera; Bill Jungels; Linda & Jack Laughlin; Anita Rodriguez; Elise Stuart; Carol and Peter Vanier; Rebecca Wiggins-Reinhard; and to the following organizations & businesses: Beck's Roasting House & Creamery; KRWG Radio & TV; Fumiyasu Arakawa, Anna Strankman, and Braeden Dimitroff of the NMSU University Museum, LC; Carlota Duarte, Juana López López, Lupita Girón Intzin, and Martha López López of The Chiapas Photography Project, San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas; Center for Spiritual Living, LC; Latin American Solidarity Committee of Western New York; Faye McCalmont of the Silver City Fiesta Latina; Lorena Andrade of La Mujer Obrera; Gina Nuñez of Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambio Social; Elisabeth Nicholson of The Maya Educational Foundation; New Mexico Breastfeeding Conference; Parroquia de Corpus Christi, Anapra, MX; Saint Andrews Episcopal Church, LC; San Ysidro Church, Doña Ana, NM; Spirit Winds Café & Gift Source, LC; Southwest Women's Fiber Arts Collective Silver City; Tucson Spinners & Weavers Guild; Weave a Real Peace; and Soroptomist International of Borrego Springs, CA.

In 2018 we said goodbye to steering committee member **Kit Elliott** and were delighted to welcome two new members to the committee— **Aurelia Holliman** and **Til Zimmerman**. Our thanks to Kit for her many contributions over the years to the weavers and other important causes in New Mexico and Central America.

Warmest regards,

Aurelia, Christine, Crystal, Janet, Lorena, Mary, Patricia, Sarah, & Til (Weaving for Justice Steering Committee)

-MEMBERSHIP FORM

YES! I want to support Weaving for Justice in its work on behalf of weaving cooperatives in Chiapas, Mexico. Enclosed is my check payable to Sophia's Circle in the amount of US \$_____ Sophia's Circle is a 501c3 organization so your membership or donation is tax deductible. Please mail your form to: Sophia's Circle, 1825 Myrtle Ave., Las Cruces, NM 88001.

Membership: Bronze membership _____ (**\$15**); Silver Membership _____ (**\$25**); Gold membership _____ (**\$50**); additional donation _____.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ email: _____



Pancha, Flor de Margarita, and Lucia, three of the co-founders of Tsobol Antsetik. Photo by Carol Vanier, 2018.