

Weaving for Justice & Sophia's Circle Annual Newsletter, 2026

Email us at weavingforjustice@gmail.com

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

Proponer y No Imponer (To Propose, Not Impose)
Representar y No Suplantar (To Represent, Not Supplant)
Convencer y No Vencer (To Convince, Not Conquer)
Construir y No Destruir (To Construct, Not Destroy)
Servir y No Servirse (To Serve Others, Not Serve Oneself)
Bajar y No Subir (To Work From Below, Not Seek To Rise)

1 February 2026

Dear Friends

In our work with Maya weavers and students, we are inspired by the guiding principles of the Zapatista movement, expressed in the phrases above. While those in power in our nation have turned these principles on their head, our brothers and sisters in the resistance movement in Chiapas keep standing up for them -- with courage and compassion. We're encouraged by their resistance as well as the many other forms of resistance to oppression in the world today.



Visitors from Missouri (from left, Tom, Rainie, and Meredith) with the weavers of Tsobol Antsetik (Women United) at their meeting house in Chixiltón, Chenalhó, Chiapas, January 17, 2026. Photo by Sam Jewett.

ABOUT OUR WORK IN LAS CRUCES & CHIAPAS, MEXICO

Weaving for Justice has its roots in the mid 1980s in Chiapas when Maya weavers were organizing themselves into collectives in their communities. Christine Eber had been conducting research in their communities at the time and was honored to be asked to find fair markets for the weavers' work in the U.S. Over the years, students who Christine met in her teaching as well as community members

where she lived, joined her in helping the weavers sell their work. Weaving for Justice evolved from these efforts which have continued through the dedication of volunteers in the U.S. and Maya weaving collectives in Chiapas.

The members of the weaving groups we assist are in the resistance, that is they do not participate in economic development projects that fail to take their basic needs and human rights into account. Instead, they focus on developing local economies of solidarity in collaboration with civil society organizations in Mexico and other nations, and in the U.S, organizations such as Weaving for Justice.

Tsobol Antsetik (Women United), featured in the photo on page one, is a group of thirty-three weavers with which Weaving for Justice has been working the longest. They welcome visitors to their meeting house in Chixiltón, Chenalho', Chiapas, such as the folks in this photo. Meredith Ludwig who organized the visit in January, said it was a joyous encuentro.

Our Mission

Weaving for Justice recently revised our mission to include three parts:

- 1) We stand in solidarity with **Maya weavers** in defense of their right to live with dignity in their home communities and countries. We provide financial assistance through selling textiles for Maya weaving collectives in Chiapas, Mexico and through passing on donations from our supporters to their projects.
- 2) We stand in solidarity with **Maya youth** in Belize, Chiapas, Mexico, and Guatemala in their pursuit of an education in their homelands in order to give back to their people. We raise scholarship funds through selling donated textiles and other items from Latin America and pass these funds on to the Maya Educational Foundation to disburse to scholarship recipients.
- 3) We educate **the public** about conditions in the communities where the weavers and students live and also about the significance of their cultural traditions, social movements, and escalating violence from cartels and paramilitary groups. To keep informed about assaults on human rights in Chiapas we urge you to go to the webpage of the Center for Human Rights Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas (<https://frayba.org.mx>) Three other important sources of information about conditions in Chiapas are: Schools for Chiapas (<https://schoolsforchiapas.org>); Las Abejas (www.acteal.org); and EZLN (www.ezln.org.mx and www.enlacezapatista.ezln.org.mx)

Over the past year, we've encountered several challenges that have complicated our original mission to sell textiles for Maya weaving collectives in the U.S. We are striving to overcome these with the help of generous friends. In the meantime, we are focusing on the 2nd and 3rd parts of our mission.

FERIA MAESTROS DEL ARTE, AJIJIC, JALISCO, MEXICO

"I live in Chiapas, but I'm happy to be here in this place with our compañeras from the United States selling for the women of Tsobol Antsetik. I hear that you work a lot for us, the women of Tsobol Antsetik. Thank you for supporting us...We continue to weave a lot on the backstrap loom because where we live we suffer to fill our basic needs for our families and our homes. That's why I want to say to you, our compañeras in solidarity in the United States, thank you for listening to me and I hope you will not be discouraged and will continue to support us to feed our families."

- Verónica Arias Pérez, 9 November 2025

In early November, 2025, two representatives of Tsobol Antsetik (Women United) participated in the Feria Maestros del Arte in Ajijic, Jalisco, Mexico. Verónica and Juana María Arias Pérez traveled 26 hours by bus with other artisans from Chiapas to Ajijic where they were hosted in the home of a Feria volunteer. Seven Weaving for Justice volunteers - Ana, Anne, Christine, Julia, Kathy, Lorena, Mario, Sheryl, Susan - traveled from New Mexico to help our compañeras sell. This was the first opportunity for these volunteers to meet with weavers from one of the collectives we assist.

The women faced a lot of challenges during the Feria, but did so with grace and good humor. Juana María had never left the highlands of Chiapas before this trip. Her collective selected her to represent them as their master weaver. She is monolingual in Tsotsil, but Verónica speaks Spanish and communicated well with customers and volunteers. Both women learned to use the CLIP machine for credit card sales. This was no small feat for even some of us volunteers!

Below, in the photo on the left, Verónica (l.) and Juana María (R.) laugh with volunteer, Lorena in the foreground; the photo on the right shows volunteers Susan, seated, and Mario and Ana, standing.



DONATED TEXTILE SALES TO FUND SCHOLARSHIPS FOR MAYA YOUTH

For over twelve years, Weaving for Justice has been partnering with the Maya Educational Foundation (www.mayaedufound.org) to raise funds for scholarships for Maya youth in Belize, Chiapas and Guatemala by selling textiles and other items from Latin America that are donated to us. Through the generosity of eighty-one textile donors in the U.S., each year more and more children and youth in Belize, Chiapas, and Guatemala, are pursuing their dreams of an education.

We are grateful for our partnership with the Maya Educational Foundation (MEF) which recently moved its office from Cape Cod to Antigua, Guatemala and is now under the direction of Amy Holly. We are delighted to be working with Amy who took over the leadership of MEF after Elisabeth Nicholson retired as Executive Director. We are deeply grateful to Elisa for her support over the years, especially in launching our fundraising efforts by encouraging MEF donors to send us textiles from their

collections. Information about MEF's scholarship programs can be found at their website: <https://mayaedufound.org>

This year we scaled down our **Annual Scholarship Fundraiser** to one day and held it at First Christian Church on October 20th, the same day as our third Saturday sale in Las Cruces. We made this change to give volunteers going to Ajijic, Mexico, time to prepare for their trip. (See previous page).

During the fundraiser it was moving to remember that most of the women who wove the clothing we now sell, had no formal schooling. Unbeknownst to them, through the generosity of textile donors in a far-away nation and time, they have given to the future generations in their communities the opportunity to pursue an education. The photo below shows some of the donations we offered for sale this year.



At the fundraiser, we featured posters of two students for whom we have raised funds. One is Cristóbal "Kixtup" Pérez Tadeo, now a professor of Anthropology at the Intercultural University in San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas. Next to Kixtup's photo and words we displayed a huipil from a Chuj woman donated to us from the collection of Janice Mahlberg. (See photo below).



Kixtup grew up in a refugee camp in Chiapas among Chuj-speaking Mayas who had fled there to escape the violence in Guatemala in the 1980s. After Guatemalan soldiers started crossing the border into Chiapas to kill refugees, Mexican officials told the people to stop wearing their traditional clothing so they wouldn't be easily identified. Kixtup recalls his grandmother telling him about the day her Chuj huipils, that took months to make, were placed in a long trench and burned. Generous donors helped us buy this huipil to send Kixtup to aid him in his classes as he shares the stories of his people's culture, language, and history.

We welcome donations of textiles and other items from Latin America, including books, jewelry, and tourist items. Please email us at weavingforjustice@gmail.com for guidance on donating. Thanks to our donors and customers, since 2015 we were able to pass on **\$68,474.03** from textiles sales to the Maya Educational Foundation for scholarships.

A MEMORABLE SALE AT JEMEZ PUEBLO IN NORTHERN NEW MEXICO

On August 3, 2025, Weaving for Justice volunteers traveled to Jemez Pueblo to sell weavings from Chiapas at a Pueblo Fest. We sold textiles while being treated to music and performances of the hoop dance (see photo) and Capoeira, a Brazilian art form that blends martial arts, acrobatics, dance, music, and cultural expression. The day also commemorated the historic run that Jemez runners made to Washington DC in 1994 to raise awareness and celebrate the enduring resilience of Pueblo culture, languages, and sovereignty. We enjoyed sharing the cultural expressions of weavers in Chiapas with members of the Pueblo and others who attended!



Photo by Christine Eber, Jemez Pueblo, 3 August 2025

PRESENTATIONS ABOUT MAYA WEAVERS & STUDENTS IN CHIAPAS

Over the past several years, Weaving for Justice has appreciated the opportunity to share our work with student groups from around the country who visit our border region to learn about immigration and human rights. Our presentations are part of a **Border Immersion Program** sponsored by the **Border Servant Corps** - <https://www.borderservantcorps.org/border-education>. Below is a photo of students from Augustana University in Sioux Falls, South Dakota who came to our store at First Christian Church on January 21, 2026.



We've also been honored to collaborate with **Mexicolore**, a teaching team in London that travels to elementary schools to teach about the histories and cultures of Mayas and Aztecs. Below is a photo of three girls from the Torriano Junior School in Camden, London, a multicultural area of inner London, holding a napkin with a holy toad design woven by a weaver in Chiapas that their class received. The girls on the left and right are wearing huipils from Chamula, Chiapas, embroidered with corn plants. The girl in the middle wears a huipil from the town of Nebaj, in the Ixil Triangle of Guatemala. For more about Mexicolore, visit <https://mexicolore.co.uk/>. Napkins with a variety of designs are available at <https://weaving-for-justice.org/household-linens/>



WAYS YOU CAN HELP

* **BECOME A MEMBER** - All proceeds from weaving sales go back to the weavers. As an all-volunteer organization, we depend upon memberships and donations to cover the costs of holding sales and events. Memberships in Weaving for Justice come with our gift of a woven bookmark and a 10% discount on purchases at our face-to-face and on-line sales.

Donating on our webpage automatically enrolls you as a member. To donate please go to the **DONATE** page on our website homepage. There you will have the option to make your donation **recurring**. If you'd prefer to become a member by check, please fill out the form at the end of this newsletter or on the membership page of our website - www.weaving-for-justice.org

* **VOLUNTEER WITH US** – We're happy to explore with you how you might become involved in our work. We need help in many ways! Please contact us at weavingforjustice@gmail.com.

* **VISIT THE WEAVERS IN CHENALHO', CHIAPAS** - The weavers of Tsobol Antsetik welcome you to visit their meeting house in Chixiltón, Chenalhó, Chiapas. Directions to the house are on our webpage – <http://weaving-for-justice.org/weaving-cooperatives/>

*PATRONIZE THE FOLLOWING STORES & VENUES:

- * **Las Cruces, New Mexico - 3RD Saturday of the month sale** – Our monthly sales are on the 3rd Saturday of each month, 10 am – 3 pm in the Atrium of First Christian Church, 1809 El Paseo Road in Las Cruces. For appointments at other times, email us at weavingforjustice@gmail.com
- * **Las Cruces - Toucan Market**, 1701 #1 E. University Ave. Pan Am Plaza (tote bags with corn design)
- * **Mesilla, New Mexico - Bowlin's Mesilla Book Center**, 2360 Calle Principal, Mesilla, NM (scarves, shawls, and cloth baby books)
- * **Friends of the Taylor-Mesilla Gift Shop** 2350 Calle Principal, Mesilla (little felted animals)
- * **Phoenix, Arizona - Palabras Bilingual Bookstore**, 906 W. Roosevelt St. Unit 2. (bookmarks, felted animals)

HELP US STAY IN TOUCH WITH YOU

Once a month we send an email newsletter to our supporters and anyone interested in learning about our work. If you haven't been receiving our newsletters, please email us at weavingforjustice@gmail.com so we can add you to the email list.

WE'RE BACK ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

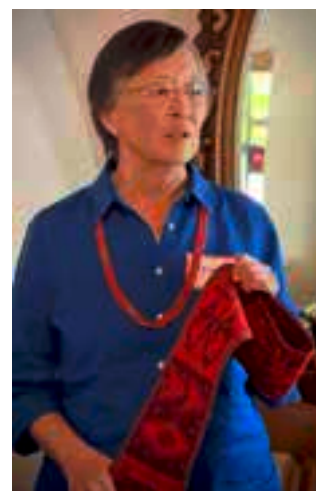


Follow us @weavingforjustice.bsky.social for sales announcements, updates on Weaving for Justice, and beautiful images of weavings and the women who design them.

THANK YOU TO OUR MANY MEMBERS, DONORS, & VOLUNTEERS!

We can't thank you enough for supporting us in our work. As an all-volunteer organization, at times we feel stretched, but then someone offers to help, or a donation arrives in the mail, and we feel renewed and strengthened. We are forever grateful to our 271 members and to the weavers in collectives in Chiapas who have been teaching us about the meaning of solidarity through drawing us into their struggles to create alternative economies that uplift everyone. For a copy of our financial report for 2025, please email us weavingforjustice@gmail.com.

On September 7, 2025 we held a "thank you brunch" for our volunteers at Gail Forrest's beautiful home in Mesilla, New Mexico. After sharing delicious food and fellowship, volunteers gathered together to show and tell "Textile Tales" about their cherished textiles. The photo below shows Guillermo Acosta (left), Steve Robinson (center), and Peggy Swoveland (right).



In solidarity,

The Weaving for Justice Steering Committee

MEMBERSHIP FORM

YES! I want to support Weaving for Justice. Enclosed is my check payable to Weaving for Justice or Sophia's Circle in the amount of US \$_____. Sophia's Circle is a 501c3 organization so your membership/donation may have tax benefits. Please mail your form to: Weaving for Justice, 1825 Myrtle Ave., Las Cruces, NM 88001.

Note: You may also pay with a credit card or through paypal on the membership page on our website – <http://weaving-for-justice.org/become-a-member/> Please consider a recurring monthly or annual membership!

Membership: Budget _____ (\$15); Basic _____ (\$35); Gold _____ (\$50); additional donation _____. (Please indicate if you'd like this donation to go to the following: _____ projects and needs for which the weaving collectives request our assistance; _____; the Weaving for Justice general fund to cover our operating expenses.)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

email: _____

Please tell us anything you'd like us to know: