

MACHI NEWS

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Riecken Foundation staff and library leaders from Xolsacmalja and San Juan la Laguna look over the shoulder of Israel Quic during a training session in Jocotenango, Guatemala.



Youth in San Juan la Laguna search for icons on their GPS units with the assistance of cultural promoter José Mendoza Quic.



In Xolsacmalja the group hiked to the top of the community's sacred mountain to map its ceremonial sites and valued plants. Photo by Adia Bey.

Heritage Mapping Begins in the Guatemalan Highlands

After months of anticipation, special icon-driven GPS units were delivered in February 2011. The icons, created by the Quiche' and Tz'utuj'il communities of Xolsacmalja and San Juan la Laguna, represent a variety of local natural and cultural heritage whose conservation is valued by the community. This February, MACHI and the staff of the Riecken Foundation, participated in training sessions along with local youth from each community. Those trained last month will help to train other members of their communities!

MACHI Selects Winners of the 2011 Bi-Directional Knowledge Exchange Grant

MACHI warmly congratulates Dr. Brent Woodfill of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and Dr. Scott Hutson of the University of Kentucky, our 2011 winners of the brand new Bi-directional Knowledge Exchange Grant. The BKE Grant offers archaeologists matching funds to develop collaborative programs in local communities that not only disseminate information about archaeological excavations underway but require the archaeologists, themselves, to learn more about the culture and heritage of local people. The funding awarded to Dr. Woodfill will go towards his project at Salinas de los Nueve Cerros and local Q'eqchi' communities in the Alta Verapaz of Guatemala; Dr. Hutson will use his funding at the sites of Ucí and Kancabal in Yucatán, Mexico, as well as with members of the Mayan diaspora community residing in Los Angeles, California.

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Award Winning Heritage Curriculum Begins in 3rd and 4th Grade Classrooms

With the start of the 2011 school year, twenty schools in El Petén, Guatemala began a new heritage curriculum developed by MACHI and Fundación ProPetén which was awarded a grant from the Ford Motor Company for Cultural Heritage Conservation and Education. The program combines two student activity books with a teacher's manual which inserts heritage studies into the basic curricula instead of imposing a new set of responsibilities on already overextended teachers. In many schools, these books, and the accompanying CD of carefully selected episodes of the radio soap opera *At the Crossroads* (a previous MACHI-ProPetén collaboration), are the only classroom resources of which all 3rd and 4th grade students and teachers have a copy. So far, the response has been overwhelming – students love the interactive materials and teachers are pleased with the detailed descriptions of their lessons. The program is already so popular, in fact, that teachers from around the department that are not participating in the pilot program have written to ProPetén asking for copies for their own classroom!



Children in San Miguel race to add their Mayan numbers and win the mathematics game in their new heritage curricula.

Tumul K'in Students and Staff to Begin Recording *Echoes of the Sacred Mountain*

In early March, MACHI staff visited the Tumul K'in Center for Learning in Blue Creek, Belize to discuss the developing radio soap opera *Echoes of the Sacred Mountain*. A dozen staff and students trained with MACHI partners Fundación ProPetén to



learn more about radio broadcasting and producing a radio soap opera. The series is slated to begin in May and will focus on the residents of a “typical” Maya village in southern Belize to explore different Maya values.

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