Arlington Central America Committee

NOV-DEC 1988

P.O. Box 311
Arlington MA 02174

NEWSLETTER

It's Official!

In a unanimous vote, the Arlington Board of Selectmen officially recognized Teosinte, El Salvador, as Arlington's newest Sister City. In supporting the resolution proclaiming our Sister City relationship at the September 19 Selectmen's meeting, Board member Janemarie Hillier asked that this be more than a cultural exchange and that we reach out to help the people of Teosinte.

Teosinte is a recently repopulated village in the Chalatenango province in northern El Salvador. The villagers returned from the Honduran Mesa Grande refugee camp in August. The Salvadoran government attempted to prevent the return of the villagers and confiscated many of their possessions, including cooking implements, so they could not be used against the Salvadoran military.

Now that the villagers are in Teosinte, they are rebuilding their homes and planting crops. Early reports indicate that of a population of approximately 300 people, there are only 40 able-bodied people to carry out much of the hard physical labor required for rebuilding; a great majority of the villagers are small children. Our goals are to provide funds for building supplies, farm equipment, medicine, clothing, and school supplies; and to provide moral support to the villagers to enable them to stand up to military harassment.

Moral and financial support from Arlington to the villagers of Teosinte has already begun. A U.S. delegation attending a Sister City conference in El Salvador this fall brought a copy of the Arlington/Teosinte Sister City Resolution and a check for $500 from Arlington citizens. In addition, several members of the Sister City Project made an audiotape of greetings to Teosinte for radio broadcast in El Salvador.

Other plans underway to support Teosinte include:

- asking people to sponsor the Sister City Project with a monthly pledge
- fundraising projects: sales of Salvadoran crafts at house parties and holiday fairs (see related article), our participation in this year's Greater Boston Walk for Peace, and a Swim-a-Thon (TBA)
- outreach to all Arlington churches and religious groups to build support within the faith community
- expansion of the Rapid Response Network for immediate response to human rights abuses in Teosinte
- organizing a delegation of Arlington citizens to visit Teosinte in the spring of 1989

We need your support for Teosinte. Please indicate what you can do to help on the form on P.3 and send it to P.O. Box 311, Arlington, MA 02174. For further information call Judi Paradis at 646-4283.