



The Association of Health Promoters of San Pedro (APROS) is an organization of female health promoters from six rural, isolated coffee-growing communities around Lake Atitlán in Guatemala. Coffee Kids has been working with APROS since 1995.

### Life in Guatemala

Guatemala suffers from the highest rate of chronic malnutrition in all of Central America and access to doctors and professional medical help is limited in many communities.

People in poor communities, like many of those around Lake Atitlán, are subject to easily preventable gastrointestinal and respiratory illnesses. Because many women are malnourished, and pre- and post-natal care is almost nonexistent, it is not uncommon for mother and/or child to die during birth. Women also face the strain of frequent pregnancies.

In impoverished communities in Guatemala, many families cannot afford medicine. Traditional and herbal medicines provide a safe and affordable alternative, but many people lack the knowledge for diagnosis and proper usage.

### Coffee Kids and APROS

APROS's community-based health care project, which benefits indigenous women and their families, provides training to local volunteers, who teach women in their communities about basic health care and hygiene. Workshop topics include the use of medicinal plants, prevention of common ailments, the importance of a nutritious diet, and pre- and post-natal care.

In 2006, APROS initiated a project for widows with Coffee Kids help, offering medical check-ups, basic food supplies, recreational activities, emotional support and a sense of belonging for women who have lost their husbands to emigration and years of civil war.

APROS also coordinates an environmental education project for children in two local schools. This project teaches children the importance of protecting local natural resources, including Lake Atitlán.

### 2008 Results

- Health care promoters taught 150 women about the use of medicinal plants, prevention of common ailments and the importance of a nutritious diet.
- Women working in the reproductive health project taught 75 pregnant women about pre- and post-natal care including how to prevent and treat malnutrition.
- Over 75 widows were provided with medical check-ups, nutritious food supplies and recreational activities.
- The environmental education project reached 300 children from two elementary schools in San Pedro la Laguna with lessons on how to protect and preserve their natural environment including the lake.



*APROS' program for widows provides a constructive outlet for many women who have lost their husbands and families to war and emigration.*