

# Avivara Annual Report - 2009



**“You may say that I’m a dreamer,  
but I’m not the only one.”**

*-John Lennon*

## *Avivara: Enlivening Futures Through Education*

### **Our Mission:**

*To improve the quality of and access to education in Guatemala, and to cultivate interconnectedness between the peoples of Guatemala and the United States.*



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Website: <http://www.avivara.org>

# *Avivara Organizational Accomplishments - 2009*

## *Preface*

2009 was clearly a difficult year for many non-profit organizations. Recent reports indicate that, on average, revenues for non-profits decreased by 9-11% from revenues in 2008. Fortunately, Avivara countered that trend with an overall increase in revenues of nearly 60% over 2008, and an increase in its number of contributors from 58 in 2008, to 143 in 2009. Therefore, we wish to sincerely thank those people who supported the programs of Avivara this year with their generous contributions of time, talent and treasure.

## *Building Relationships*

Obviously, we were able to build relationships with a much wider network of people over this past year. Much of that was accomplished through “shoe leather” i.e., simply getting out and speaking to more groups, along with efforts by our Board and our supporters to share their experience of our organization with their friends, family and co-workers. We enjoyed the opportunity to speak with a number of Kiwanis Clubs, Rotary Clubs, churches, community groups and schools during our staff visits to the United States.



One very important new connection we made was with the Latino community in the Los Angeles area. With the help of a number of volunteers

recruited by our board member, Veronica Cruz, we spent two days at the CONFECA (Confederacion Centro Americana) annual parade and street fair, mingling with the crowds and explaining the programs of Avivara.

Another important relationship that was established this year was recognition by the Guatemalan Ministry of Education of the work Avivara has been doing with the Guatemalan schools, and the Ministry’s formal appreciation of the financial assistance provided by our partner schools in the United States. In the fall, our Executive Director was able to visit those U.S. schools to make presentations of the Guatemala government’s Awards of Recognition. These visits generated a series of newspaper articles in the Pacific Northwest that expanded awareness of our mission and programs.

## *Communications via the Internet*

Because it is difficult (and costly) for our Guatemalan staff to meet face-to-face with people in the U.S., we invested much time and energy enhancing our website to support the person-to-person contacts that were made throughout the year. Also, in October, we began using a U.S. based email service that helps us more consistently deliver our newsletters and also helped to ensure that our emails were in full compliance with U.S. CAN-SPAM regulations. We first began using this service to email our “Giving Hope to the Future” fund-raising appeals, and from that experience were quite happy with this new approach for keeping our community of supporters informed. We also added *Skype* to our repertoire of communication tools and can now make calls to the U.S. quite easily and inexpensively.

# *Avivara Program Accomplishments - 2009*

## *School Improvement Grants*



In addition to building relationships in the U.S., we also strengthened our working partnerships with seven schools in Guatemala serving a total of slightly over 1200 students.

Our increased revenues

allowed us to provide many more supplies and materials, including teacher curriculum guides, and much needed classroom equipment (whiteboards, chairs, tables, shelving, learning activity games, etc.) We also expanded our teacher workshops and modeling of “best practices” teaching methods in the classrooms. We shared with the students and the teachers examples of integrated lessons in the arts, science, math and language arts. In appreciation for this, our Associate Director, Ann Austin, was named the “Madrina” (godmother, or honored person) for the 6<sup>th</sup> grade graduation ceremonies in El Yalu and Tunino.

## *Scholarship Program*

We were very pleased to be able to increase the number of scholarships we awarded from two in 2008 to seventeen in 2009. We provided seven scholarships to students attending high school and ten primary level (grades 1-6) scholarships to students who were in foster care because of past abuse, or who had special learning needs. Our secondary level scholarship students demonstrated excellent use of the help we provided with nearly all earning “bonuses” for either maintaining a GPA above 85% or improving their grades over the course of the year.

## *After School Learning Centers*

In our after-school learning center in San Pedro Las Huertas, we provided after-school support for 16-18 students per week and offered a supplemental school program (Escuelita) for 18 students, 3 days a week during the “summer” vacation. The Community Center and Library in Zacatecas also continued to expand its after school learning resources and sponsored a number of community events (Friday night movies, cross country races, and community fiestas) to build awareness and involvement of the people in their community. Avivara continued to support this group with partial funding for their programs to help them with the purchase of additional reference book and materials and staffing for the center in the afternoons.

## *School to School Partnerships*

A significant accomplishment for us in 2009 was that Avivara and its partner schools in the U.S. were officially recognized by the Guatemalan Ministry of Education for the work and financial support provided to schools in poverty-impacted villages in rural Guatemala. This recognition was shared with the students and teachers in the U.S. schools. In addition to the formal partnerships we have already established, we were also able to make new connections with two public elementary schools in Washington and a Catholic high school in Oregon.

## *Service and Study Abroad (SAGE) Program*

This program had minimal activity in 2009, but we do have several groups already scheduled to use this service in 2010.

# Avivara Financial Statements - 2009

2009 was a very gratifying year for us financially. We saw a significant increase in total contributions and a very substantial increase in the number of people who donated to our programs. Below are the Consolidated Summary Income Statement and Consolidated Summary Balance Sheet for Avivara and our Guatemala affiliate NGO, Asociacion Avivara.\*

<b>Consolidated Summary Income Statement*</b>	
<b>Avivara &amp; Asociacion Avivara</b>	
<b>For fiscal year ended December 31, 2009</b>	
<b>Revenues</b>	
U.S. Contributions	\$ 55,044
U.S. SAGE Program Fees	1,200
U.S. Misc. Revenues	1,412
Guatemalan Contributions	<u>3,270</u>
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$ 60,926</b>
<b>Disbursements &amp; Expenditures</b>	
<b>Administration &amp; Fundraising</b>	
U.S Administration Expense	\$ 545
U.S. Fundraising Expense	<u>4,369</u>
<b>Total Admin &amp; Fundraising</b>	<b>\$ 4,914</b>
<b>Program Expenses</b>	
U.S. Education Programs	\$ 1,623
U.S. Purchases for GUA programs	748
Guatemala Program Administration	3,025
School Improvement Grants	13,844
Scholarships	5,067
After School Learning Centers	7,830
Service/Study Abroad (SAGE) Program	<u>3,555</u>
<b>Total Program Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 35,692</b>
<b>Consolidated Operating Surplus-2009</b>	<b><u>\$ 20,320</u></b>

<b>Consolidated Summary Balance Sheet*</b>	
<b>Avivara &amp; Asociacion Avivara</b>	
<b>As of December 31, 2009</b>	
<b>Assets</b>	
<b>Current Assets</b>	
Current Assets-Avivara U.S	\$ 31,159
Current Assets-Avivara Guatemala	<u>1,953</u>
<b>Total Consolidated Currents Assets</b>	<b>\$ 33,112</b>
<b>Fixed Assets</b>	
Fixed Assets-Avivara U.S	\$ 0
Fixed Assets-Avivara Guatemala	<u>0</u>
<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b><u>\$ 33,112</u></b>
<b>Liabilities</b>	
<b>Current Liabilities</b>	
Current Liabilities-Avivara U.S	\$ 0
Current Liabilities-Avivara Guatemala	<u>751</u>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 751</b>
<b>Equity/Retained Earnings</b>	
Retained Earnings from Prior Years**	\$ 12,041
Current Year Operating Surplus	<u>20,320</u>
<b>Net Equity/Retained Earnings</b>	<b>\$ 32,361</b>
<b>Net Equity plus Liabilities</b>	<b><u>\$ 33,112</u></b>

\*In the U.S., our level of financial activity does not bring us to the threshold of requiring audited reports. However, in Guatemala, all financial transactions are audited on a monthly basis by the licensed accounting firm of Oficina Contable Asesoría Fiscal.

\*\* The Retained Earnings from Prior Years amount may fluctuate slightly from year to year. This is due to the fact that a portion of our retained earnings are maintained in the Guatemalan currency (Quetzales) and their value compared to the U.S. dollar will fluctuate with currency exchange rates.

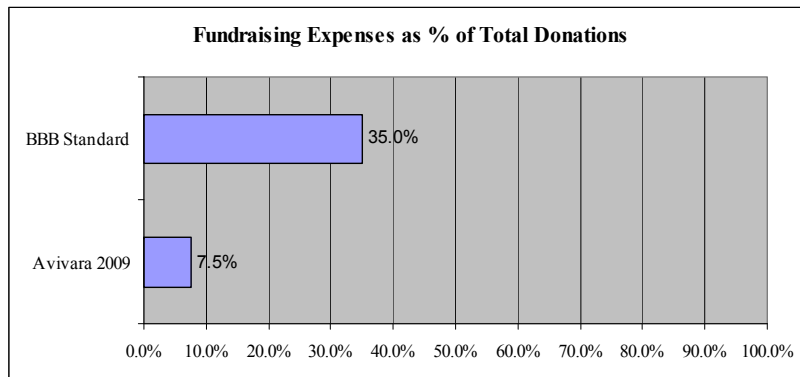
Further details or explanations regarding our financial statements may be obtained by [contacting us](#) through our website.

# Accountability Standards

The Better Business Bureau (BBB) Wise Giving Alliance has established three financial standards to measure a non-profit organization's performance in regards to the appropriate use of donor contributions. The following is an analysis of Avivara's performance in 2009 as compared to those three standards.

## ***Standard 1: Percentage of Fund-Raising Expenses to Donations Received***

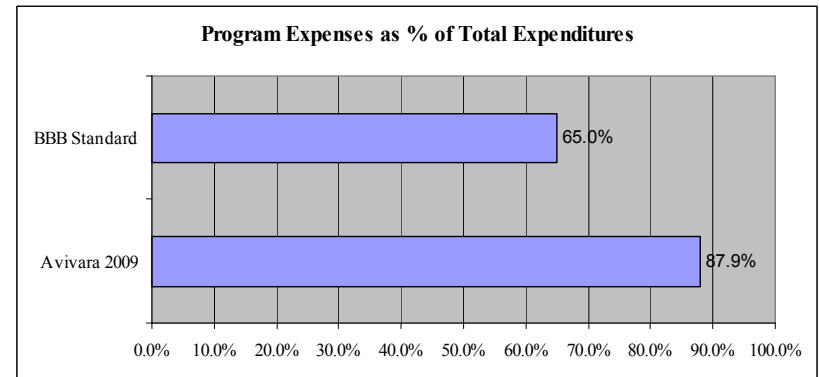
This standard looks at the relationship between the total spent on fund-raising compared to the total amount of donations received. The BBB benchmark is set at 35%. The percentage of money Avivara spent on fund-raising compared to total donations received in 2009 was 7.5%. This indicates that our fund-raising efforts were very cost-effective over the past year.



## ***Standard 2: Percentage of Program Expenses to Total Expenditures***

This standard compares the amount of money spent on program expenses to the organization's total expenditures for the year. The BBB minimum is set at 65%. The percentage of

money Avivara spent on program-related expenses compared to its total expenditures was 87.9%. This is a very favorable ratio for an organization of our size and indicates that we are being very efficient in getting our donations to where they are most needed and will do the most good.



## ***Standard 3: Ratio of Retained Earnings to Annual Budget***

To encourage non-profits **not** to accumulate an excess amount of money that should be going towards their mission and programs, the BBB has determined that the maximum amount of retained earnings of a non-profit organization should never exceed an amount equal to 3 years of operating expenses. In the case of Avivara, the maximum amount of retained earnings that should be maintained according to the BBB standard would be around \$122,000. Avivara ended 2009 with a total of \$32,361 in retained earnings. This amount is favorably below the BBB standard, yet still provides us with sufficient resources to enter into 2010 with a high level of confidence that we will be able to meet all of our school improvement grants, scholarship, and payroll commitments for the upcoming year.

## *Avivara Goals for 2010*

### *Program Goals*

With the financial success of 2009, we have a sufficient operating reserve to expand our programs for 2010. Our projected budget for next year will be just slightly over \$45,000, an increase of approximately 12.5% from our \$40,000 in total expenses in 2009. With that increase we plan to add at least one more school to those we currently support, double the number of students that will be able to receive Avivara scholarships, and provide a small cost-of-living salary increase to our one Guatemalan employee. We also expect to see an increase in the number of groups and individuals who will be utilizing the services of our Service and Study Abroad (*SAGE*) Program.

### *Organizational Goals*

Organizationally, we are hoping to increase the number of people on our U.S. Board of Directors from five to possibly seven or more. We do not anticipate any changes to our administrative staff for next year.

In terms of development/fund-raising, we will continue to maintain a strong online presence and hopefully increase our network of supporters by sending out our newsletter, *The Blackboard*, on a monthly rather than quarterly basis. We will also continue to update our website based on visitor/user feedback. As in years past, our Guatemalan staff will make two trips to the U.S. in 2010, one in the spring and a second in the fall. During those visits the staff will make small group and community presentations. We are also looking at the possibility of a major fund-raising dinner in the Seattle area

in October to coincide with the beginning of our 2010 *Giving Hope to the Future* annual fund-raising campaign.

When Avivara was founded two years ago, we were not sure whether it would be able to become a viable organization. While it is still quite young as non-profit organizations go, it has shown excellent growth and vibrancy since its inception, even in the midst of the “Great Recession.”

### *Enlivening Futures through Education*

Notably, Avivara and its donors have had a substantial impact on the education of over 1200 students in Guatemala. Through its programs, Avivara has provided teachers and students with the materials they need to have a much improved classroom learning environment. It has allowed students from very poor families to continue their education, when that would have been economically impossible otherwise. It has provided after school learning support for students in two communities, and provided schools and students in the United States a “window” into the lives of people living in poverty in the developing world.

We are proud of our accomplishments this year. We look forward to increasing the help we can provide the students of Guatemala, and serving our donors by ensuring that their contributions are always used wisely and appropriately. If we have any regrets, it is that our donors cannot be with us as we deliver supplies, equipment and scholarships, and experience the heartfelt expressions of hope and gratitude that are shared with us by the Guatemalan students, teachers and parents.

# Appreciation and Acknowledgements

*“Success, like happiness, cannot be pursued; it must ensue, and it only does so as the unintended side effect of one’s dedication to a cause greater than oneself.”*

**-Victor Frankel, *Man’s Search for Meaning***

## ***Thank You to Our Donors***

Avivara is able to accomplish its work only through the generosity and social awareness of its donors. “Mil Gracias” (a thousand thanks) from the students, teachers and parents of Guatemala to all 143 individuals, schools, churches, community groups and businesses that donated to our efforts this year.

## ***Thank You to Our Boards of Directors***

Without their many hours of work, thoughtfulness and support, we would not have been able to move forward as successfully as we have this year.

## ***Thank You to Our Partner Schools***

Through the efforts of their principals, teachers, and student leaders, the following U.S. schools made significant contributions to support their partner schools and the programs of Avivara in Guatemala:

Archbishop Murphy High School, Everett, WA  
Darrington Elementary School, Darrington, WA  
Holy Rosary School, Edmonds, WA  
Jesuit High School, Portland, OR  
St. Anthony School, Renton, WA  
St. Bernadette School, Burien, WA  
St. Madeleine Sophie School, Bellevue, WA  
St. Monica School, Mercer Island, WA  
Thornton Creek Elementary School, Seattle, WA

## ***Thank You to Our Corporate Sponsors***

For their contributions and help, both financial and in-kind, we wish to thank the following businesses and corporations:

Bell Consulting Services  
Blue Heron Upriver Yoga  
First Data Corporation  
First Regional Bank  
Seattle Artists  
SLB Marketing

## ***Thank You to Our “Magnificent 7”***

Our network of supporters grew appreciably this year, much of that being the result of people sharing our story with their friends, family and co-workers. Knowing that we could not list everyone who helped us in those efforts, we would still like to mention and appreciate the following people who were instrumental in connecting us with a wider audience:

Bert & Cornell Atwater  
David & Laurie Austin  
Ruth Carpenter  
Veronica & Louie Cruz  
Tom Friedman & Rosemary Byrne  
Veronica Leticia Grajeda Castillo (in Guatemala)  
Tom & Cathy Miller

***Blessings to all and may 2010 be as successful!***

***the Administrative Staff of Avivara***