

RESOLUTION NUMBER 141

Whereas, in January, 1988, six religious leaders from St. Louis traveled to El Salvador to make a covenant with the people of Guarjila, Chalatenango, one of the communities who returned from the Mesa Grande Refugee Camp (run by UNHCR). Fifteen companion communities joined the St. Louis Inter-Faith Committee on Latin America in the effort to offer economic, moral, medical, and social service assistance to the community; and

Whereas, since the return on October 12, 1987, the citizens of Guarjila have, with the help of sister communities and parishes in St. Louis, Milwaukee and Seattle, and various groups in Europe, built homes and composting latrines for all of the 1900 residents (97% of whom own their homes); developed a potable water system to each home; established a school for the children from pre-K through 9th grade, and collaborated with a neighboring village for a secondary baccalaureate program; sent students to university; maintained a community radio station; and developed small businesses (carpentry, bakery, dried fruit, welding, restaurants, crafts store and many grocery/notions stores). NGOs and the Salvadoran government have paved roads and brought electricity and phone service/internet to the community.

Whereas, Sr. Ann Manganaro, sister of Loretto, was a medical doctor who left her work at Cardinal Glennon Hospital to live and work in Guarjila from 1988 until 1993 when she passed away from cancer. She and Jon Cortina, a Jesuit priest from Spain (who received his engineering degree from St. Louis University), arranged for the buildings and Ann served the people as their doctor and dear friend during the last years of the civil war. Today the clinic is the model site for the free national community based healthcare system for the country. The Salvadoran medical staff, many of whom were trained by Ann, serve Guarjila and the surrounding area with skill and distinction.

Whereas, the St. Louis Inter-Faith Committee on Latin America continues to accompany the people of Guarjila through maintaining relationships, support of the health promoters at the clinic, and immersion experiences for students from Nerinx Hall High School who raise funds for scholarships for young women.

Whereas, there are growing stresses placed on the community by free trade agreements and other economic projects which are contributing to an exodus of young people to the US and the current immigration crisis. The struggle continues for meaningful employment and positive futures for the youth. We recognize that the people of Guarjila continue their valiant struggle to create a community based on the values of self-determination, solidarity and justice, in spite of many challenges from political and economic forces.

Now therefore it be resolved by the Board of Aldermen of the City of St. Louis that we pause in our deliberations to recognize the leaders and courageous people of Guarjila on the occasion of their twenty-fifth anniversary, and applauds the many achievements of the community St Louis continues to be a companion community for the people of Guarjila with moral and material support, St. Louis honors the memories of Sr. Ann Manganaro, SL and Fr. Jon Cortina, SJ and their work in Guarjila, St. Louis hopes for a future of mutual respect and cooperation between our cities and countries and this resolution be presented at the Twenty-fifth Anniversary Celebrations on October 12-14, 2012 in Guarjila, Chalatenango, El Salvador, Central America by Marilyn Lorenz and Mary Jane Schutzius and we further direct the Clerk of this Board to spread a copy of this Resolution across the minutes of these proceedings and to prepare a commemorative copy to the end that it may be presented to our honoree at a time and place deemed appropriate by the Sponsor.

Introduced on the 5th day of October, 2012 by:

Honorable Stephen J. Conway Alderman 8th Ward

Adopted this the 5th day of October, 2012 as attested by:

David W. Sweeney
Clerk, Board of Aldermen

Lewis E. Reed
President, Board of Aldermen