MINUTES

IOWA-PARTNERS ANNUAL MEETING

**Saturday, November 13, 2021**

Jester Park Nature Center, Granger, Iowa

Zoom hosted by Jeff Wilson

Attendees: Jeff Wilson, Sorrel Brown, Janet Secor, Ken Choquette, William Edwards, Jane Edwards, Sara Huddleston, Matt Huddleston, Robin Fortney, Rebecca Hoeppner, Deb Wooldridge, Allan Goldberg, Cesar, Jim Secor, Jewell Walker, Niah Howard, Marissa Hirshman

Zoom participants: Elias Alcocer, Ober Anderson, Doris Montgomery, Brent Parker, Sue Jarnagin, Jan Beran, Karla McCollum, Teresa Parmenter (president of Iowa Sister States Board of Directors)

Sorrel welcomed everyone present and those participating with Zoom.

Sorrel asked for approval of the August minutes. Approved Jane/Sara

**Update on Health of Members**

* Both Brent Parker and Ober Anderson are quarantining at home and doing well.

**Financial Report:**

* William Edwards stated we have $14,709.46 in our checking account. This includes dues, donations, the Hunger Hike (HH) allocation and the Janet Obando Memorial Fund.
* The Yucatan Chapter has $1,690.44 in unrestricted funds available and the Iowa Chapter has $6,121.05 unrestricted funds available. We have total funds of $25,052.04 that includes $10,343.04 in a CD.
* We received $1,150 from HH. In the past we have received $2000, but probably due to the pandemic overall donations have decreased. At our last meeting Sorrel suggested that we make up the difference to $2000 for donations to Yucatan charities from our unrestricted funds and this was Approved.
* It was previously approved, but not yet realized, to use some of the Janet Obando Memorial Funds for a TV at *Hogar de Angeles,* a place for parents and children to stay while children are undergoing cancer treatment (similar to Ronald McDonald house). William stated he will follow through with Roberta to get this done.
* Disbursements were $4,438.53 and include $800 for the oxygen concentrator in Munha, $2000 for Hunger Hike, $900 for Yaxunah scholarships, and $280 for funeral flowers.

**Hunger Hike (HH)**

* Sorrel participated in the HH on October 10th with about 65 walkers. Ober reported that IA Partners donated $500; William asked Ober to research why a $100 check from Partners hasn’t yet been cashed. Our usual allocation is $2000; we received $1,150 as our HH allocation this year due to fewer hiker/donors. As previously stated IA Partners will make up the $850 from our unrestricted funds to distribute to the Yucatan Partners’ choice of recipients.

**2022 Immersion Tour to Yucatan**

* William presented a slide show of some of the sights for the 2022 Cultural Immersion trip scheduled January 21-31, 2022. The itinerary includes cultural interaction and visiting sites off the beaten path. The cost, excluding airfare, will be $1700 per person (double occupancy) plus $350 per person (single occupancy). Please contact William soon if you want to reserve a seat on the trip. A $300 deposit is requested by December1. William Edwards can be reached at 515-520-3988 or [wedwards@iastate.edu](mailto:wedwards@iastate.edu) . The Ppt will be posted on the IA Partners Facebook page, the ISS website & sent to members.

**Yucatecan Dinner Chef Exchange**

* Janet Secor is researching a Fall chef exchange in 2022 at Iowa Central Community College. The chef is involved in international activities and very interested.

**Visually Impaired Activities**

* Niah and Marissa plan to visit Merida for a week in March 2022 to learn about the services provided to blind students in the Yucatan. Their goal is to gather information, look for connections with services there, and compare and contrast teaching strategies. Members approved using the $550 for visually impaired students plus undesignated funds to offset half of their airfare. They will provide an itinerary before going. They will report back the results of their visit and their future goals.

**Retirement Recognition for Jose Casares & Mercy Hospital Medical Exchange**

* Sorrel plans to recognize Jose Casares years of service at the Partners Dinner during the Immersion Trip.
* Doris will work with Elias and Sara to frame a new proposal for Mercy Hospital while researching the historical significance of the program.

**Yucatan Partners on Zoom**

* Elias regrets not being in Iowa for the annual meeting. He couldn’t enter the USA because he was given the Chinese Covid vaccine, which is not approved for travelers to the US.
* Elias stated that 2020 Hunger Hike funds were totally allocated through the Yucatan Chapter. Food was purchased and distributed to Divina Providencia and Hogar de Angeles.
* He recognized the success and impact of the oxygen concentrator in Munha.
* Also mentioned was that several students helped with our on-going scholarship funds to Yaxunah have graduated and are now members of the Yucatan Chapter.
* Adela continues to work on building bridges toward inclusion and to promote disability awareness. She still has unspent funds.
* Elias also stated that the new members of the Yucatan Chapter are interested in several projects, such as rain water harvesting for sustainability, training or education in pandemic times, and on-line workshops and trainings between chapters.

**Social Media Update**

* The Iowa-Yucatan Partners Facebook link is located below
* <https://www.facebook.com/Iowa-Yucat%C3%A1n-Partners-of-the-Americas-Iowa-Yucat%C3%A1n-Sister-States-114081431975528>
* If you have items to post on our Facebook page please send an email to Matt Huddleston [matt.huddleston@outlook.com](mailto:matt.huddleston@outlook.com)

**New business**

* Sorrel proposed establishing scholarships for Iowa students to encourage youth involvement. Central College, Simpson, and University of Northern Iowa all have the framework for student exchange programs. A committee of Sara, Sorrel, Jeff and Janet will research this opportunity. They will contact Molly Tun, Spanish professor at Simpson, for input.
* Jeff will update 2021 Plan of Work between the two chapters.

**POA Zoom Meeting on Best Practices from DC**

* Sara attended a recent Zoom meeting facilitated from Washington DC that discussed a number of issues relating to collaborating with other Partnerships. Items discussed were problems unique to a non-profit; increasing membership, training, professional development, grant writing, communication, and global citizenship.
* It was suggested that we need a 2-year plan and a 5 year plan, and how to utilize training to increase self-sufficiency.
* Elias mentioned that there are now fewer partnerships in Mexico and he is working with DC to review what changes need to be made to increase Mexican chapters and US partnerships.
* Deb Wooldridge volunteered to prepare an on-line course about understanding cultural differences.
* It was also stressed that we need to do a better job recognizing volunteer time on the POA PartnersConnect portal. POA presents this data to potential donors to show impact and involvement.
* Sara was nominated and approved as the IA Partners voting delegate to the upcoming election for the International Board of Directors of POA.

**Iowa Sister States Citizen Diplomacy Summit February 22, 2022**

* Sara and Deb will attend the Summit that features David Ignatius, Washington Post, as the featured speaker.

**Officer Nomination and Acknowledgement of Service**

* Doris and Jane made the following nominations for the officers for a two-year term, renewable: President-Jeff Wilson, Vice President- Sara Huddleston, Secretary- Deb Wooldridge, Treasurer-William Edwards. All approved.
* Sorrel and Allan’s years of service were also acknowledged at this time.

**Travel to Mexico**

* Jeff recently traveled to Mexico and talked about antibody testing within 72 prior to leaving Mexico and returning to the states. The test cost $20 and goes into a database; he was not required to show any proof of the test on his entry to the US.

**ISU Library**

* William stated that the top floor of the ISU library is housing approximately 66 boxes of historical Iowa Yucatan documents. Contact William to request an information search.

**Future Meetings**

* March 5 – Zoom, May – to be determined, August 20th (at Ken’s cabin), and November 20th.

Meeting adjourned.

Lunch catered by *El Fogon del Chivo* (steak tacos & chicken fajitas).