

RENEWING OUR COMMITMENT: ALDEA AND ABPD UNITED

A SHARED LEGACY OF CHANGE

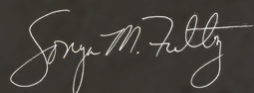
Hello Friends,

There are moments in an organization's history that call for a renewed sense of purpose, and ALDEA has reached one of those moments. After taking three years away, it is my great honor to return to the board and step back into the role of President. I am eager to continue the incredible work of this organization and to ensure that the foundational principles of our founder, Dr. Carroll Behrhorst, remain the bedrock of our future. His vision of community-led development—trusting in the wisdom of local communities to drive their own progress—is a powerful legacy that will continue to guide our mission.

Our commitment to this legacy is strengthened by our ongoing partnership with ABPD. This enduring collaboration is a powerful testament to Dr. Behrhorst's vision and the shared future of both our organizations. By working together, we are not just continuing his work; we are amplifying it. We are ensuring that the values and principles he instilled—values of local empowerment and sustainable development—are carried forward for generations to come.

Your support makes everything we do possible, and I am confident that together, we can achieve great things.

Sincerely,



Sonya Fultz
ALDEA Board President

CONTINUING A FAMILY'S MISSION

Dear Friends,

It is with a great sense of pride that I reflect on the enduring legacy of my grandfather, Dr. Carroll Behrhorst. The mission he began decades ago, rooted in the belief that communities hold the power to improve their own lives, continues to be the driving force behind the work of ABPD. This vision of local empowerment isn't just a part of our past; it is the very foundation of our future.

Our partnership with ALDEA is a powerful continuation of this shared legacy. For many years, our two organizations have worked side by side, united by a common purpose. This collaboration is a living testament to my grandfather's dream. By working together, we are able to leverage our collective strengths, amplify our impact, and ensure that the principles of well-being, progress, and development continue to thrive in the communities we serve.

We are deeply grateful for your support, which allows us to carry this important work forward. It is an honor to continue my grandfather's mission, and I am confident that with your help, we will continue to build a brighter future for generations to come.

Sincerely,



Jonathan Maupin
ABPD Board President



Health promoter Pedro Chacach checks the breathing of a patient in a village in Chimaltenango in 1968.

HEALTH PROMOTERS CARRY FORWARD DR. CARROLL BEHRHORST'S LEGACY

By Shea Bronson-Doherty, ALDEA Interim Executive Director

In 1964, Dr. Carroll Behrhorst pioneered a revolutionary approach to rural healthcare in Guatemala emphasizing local empowerment and self-sufficiency. Recognizing the potential of community members to diagnose and treat basic illnesses, he established the village-based Health-Agricultural Promoter Program. This initiative placed trained local health promoters at the forefront of rural healthcare, with the Behrhorst Clinic serving as a backup for more serious cases.

These health promoters played a dual role, not only addressing basic health needs but also acting as catalysts for nutritional and agricultural advancements. They introduced fertilizers, new crops, improved seeds, poultry projects, and modern animal husbandry practices. Over the years, the program expanded, comprising over seventy health promoters across fifty rural villages. Without realizing it at the time, Dr. Behrhorst was creating a globally recognized model for rural healthcare,

one that would be cited by the World Health Organization (WHO) as an example of effective work among the rural poor.

During the early years of the Peace Corps, volunteers such as Jim Kukas and Wayne Haag collaborated with Dr. Behrhorst to integrate agricultural improvements into the program, reinforcing the connection between health and nutrition. World Neighbors also played a key role, funding rural outreach efforts that enabled health promoters to apply agricultural innovations under the leadership of Roland Bunch.

In 1975, WHO recognized Dr. Behrhorst's work in Chimaltenango as one of ten global models for rural health solutions. His chapter in Dr. Kenneth Newell's publication, *Health by the People*, and the documentary *Seeds of Health*, presented at the 1978 International Conference on Primary Health Care in Alma-Ata, Kazakhstan, solidified the program's international influence.

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HEALTH PROMOTERS CARRY FORWARD DR. CARROLL BEHRHORST'S LEGACY

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Building on the success of the health promoter model, Dr. Behrhorst and his collaborators developed several spinoff initiatives:

- ULEU (Kaqchikel for "land"): a land-loan program to help indigenous farmers purchase adequate land.
- Kato-ki (Kaqchikel for "we help ourselves"): a credit union and agricultural cooperative providing access to affordable seeds and fertilizers.
- Women's health programs: focused on family nutrition and birth spacing, run by nursing staff in partnership with male health promoters.
- A second Behrhorst Program: established in Uspantán, Quiché, mirroring the Chimaltenango model.

Despite these successes, the program suffered devastating setbacks during La Violencia (1979-1983), a period of extreme political violence in Guatemala. Health promoters were targeted, and many lost their lives. The clinic persevered, but village-based work was halted. Dr. Behrhorst and his family received death threats, forcing them to leave Guatemala. Nevertheless, as stability returned, a modest health promoter training program was reactivated in 1985, with Pedro Chacach, one of the original promoters, serving as coordinator.

More than fifty years after this trailblazing model first took root, the health promoter program lives on. The Guatemalan organization ABPD has designed an approach aimed at reducing chronic childhood malnutrition where female health promoters, chosen by their communities, play a central role in implementing their programs. It has grown and adapted to meet new challenges, continuing to serve as an example of community-led development.

Dr. Behrhorst's vision and his model of local empowerment and integrated development continue to guide our work. ALDEA is committed to honoring his legacy through innovative approaches to tackling public health challenges in rural Guatemala.

The successes of ABPD's health promoter program demonstrate that prioritizing women's health and empowerment have a significant impact on rural public health. Doc believed that sustainable change must come from within communities, and ALDEA strives to embody this principle. By focusing on advancing women's health and leadership, we honor his pioneering vision and help ensure that Guatemalan families have the resources, knowledge and voice to build healthier, more resilient communities.

Health promoters participate in a workshop about their role in community development in the community of El Rosario in 2024.



HEALTH PROMOTERS CHAMPION A NEW ERA OF CHANGE

By Shea Bronson-Doherty, ALDEA Interim Executive Director

Dr. Carroll Behrhorst's health promoter model continues to impact rural communities in Guatemala. Today, through the Guatemalan organization ABPD, the program has evolved to address not only health concerns but also broader issues of nutrition, empowerment, and sanitation, ensuring a holistic approach to community well-being.

Health promoters serve as agents of change and community liaisons, ensuring local voices are heard and development efforts align with community needs. Their responsibilities encompass community organization, leadership training, and the facilitation of essential services. By working closely with ABPD, they help implement programs that foster collective empowerment.

Currently, each promoter leads a group of 20 women, providing mentorship and guidance to encourage active participation in development activities. They also play a key role in conducting workshops on empowerment, nutrition, and water and sanitation, equipping their communities with the knowledge and skills necessary for lasting change.

A fundamental aspect of their work is mobilization: health promoters are responsible for informing and gathering community members for workshops, identifying appropriate spaces for training sessions, and coordinating group efforts to carry out community projects. Beyond their regular duties, health promoters support ABPD's field teams by assisting in the identification of households in need, ensuring outreach efforts effectively reach vulnerable families.

Unlike traditional healthcare workers who specialize in specific areas, health promoters receive comprehensive training in all three pillars of the program: nutrition, empowerment, and water and sanitation. This integrated training enables them to address multiple community needs. Additionally, they undergo specialized leadership training within the empowerment program, equipping them with practical skills and knowledge to reinforce their ability to lead holistic development efforts.

The role of health promoters evolves over time. In their first year, they focus on personal development, leadership skills, and building confidence in their new responsibilities. By the second year, they take on greater leadership roles, engage in community decision-making spaces, and facilitate projects with increased autonomy. By the third year, as ABPD's direct intervention phases out, health promoters transition into independent leaders, continuing to support their communities, advocate for resources, and drive sustainable change.

This model encourages local leaders not only to address immediate health and development concerns but also create long-term community resilience. The program's adaptability and emphasis on grassroots leadership reflect Dr. Behrhorst's original vision, proving that sustainable development is most effective when led from within the community. This enduring approach sets the stage for leaders like María Catalina Sirin Cos, whose dedication exemplifies the program's ongoing impact and evolution.

HEALTH PROMOTER EXPANDS ACCESS TO ABPD PROGRAMS IN EL ROSARIO


By Shea Bronson-Doherty,
ALDEA Interim Executive Director

For over 50 years, the health promoter model designed by Dr. Carroll Behrhorst has empowered local leaders to address public health needs in rural Guatemala. Today, this model continues to thrive, as seen in the efforts led by María Catalina Sirin Cos, a health promoter from the community of El Rosario, to increase participation in ABPD's integrated development program.

Seeing the ongoing needs in her community, María Catalina took the initiative to reach out to families in El Rosario who had been unable to participate in ABPD's programs due to political divisions within the community. In order to mend the divide created by unequal access to ABPD's program and foster a more inclusive environment, she collaborated with local authorities to identify 120 families with children under five who faced significant health challenges.

In December 2024, María Catalina and community leaders organized a meeting at ABPD's offices to explore the possibility of expanding their program to include these families. During the discussion, both she and local authorities highlighted the profound benefits they had observed from previous projects, particularly in improving children's health and well-being.

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María Catalina and other health promoters from El Rosario review the lesson plan for a workshop.

HEALTH PROMOTER EXPANDS ACCESS TO ABPD PROGRAMS IN EL ROSARIO

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A formal request was made to expand the program to serve the 120 additional families identified by María Catalina and local authorities. Recognizing the opportunity to increase their impact in the community, ABPD granted the request and is preparing to incorporate all 120 families into the program this year.

María Catalina's initiative is a testament to the ongoing evolution of the health promoter model; one that not only equips individuals with knowledge and skills but also fosters leadership that bridges divides and strengthens entire communities.

Stories like María Catalina's illustrate how women can be powerful catalysts for sustainable, community-led development. Her experiences align with the insights gained at the recent ABPD Health Promoters' Congress, where promoters come together to share experiences, develop strategies, and reinforce their commitment to improving rural health.

This gathering reinforced our belief that investing in women's health and leadership is the most impactful approach to fostering change. It embodies Dr. Behrhorst's vision that sustainable transformation must come from within the community, highlighting the essential role women play in driving progress and improving rural health.

As we continue to build on his legacy, María Catalina's leadership stands as an inspiring example of how dedicated individuals can drive lasting change, ensuring that more families receive the care and support they need to thrive.

A photograph showing two women in traditional Mayan clothing, including colorful patterned dresses and shawls, sitting at a wooden table. They are looking down at yellow cards or papers on the table, which appear to be part of a training or planning session. The setting is outdoors under a yellow canopy.

Health promoters from El Rosario take part in a training session focused on building leadership skills.



Participants take part in an interactive workshop during the annual Community Health Promoters Congress in Chimaltenango.

HEALTH PROMOTER CONGRESS ADVANCES GRASSROOTS HEALTH INITIATIVES

By Shea Bronson-Doherty, ALDEA Interim Executive Director

Building on the Behrhorst health promoter model, ABPD continues to invest in community leadership through its annual Community Health Promoters Congress. This past November, 56 health promoters gathered for two days of training and collaboration, reinforcing their role as agents of change in their communities. These women lead efforts to improve access to clean water, install gray water filters, develop family gardens, and distribute vitamins to combat malnutrition.

A key focus of this year's Congress was gender-based violence prevention, a critical issue affecting the health and stability of families. Through interactive workshops, participants learned to recognize and respond to violence in both domestic and community settings, equipping them to support affected individuals and connect them with useful resources. The Congress also strengthened leadership and facilitation skills, enabling promoters to guide discussions, mobilize their communities, and challenge harmful social norms.

To enhance program impact, ABPD introduced a new system for collecting data and tracking participant experiences, ensuring the Congress remains responsive to evolving community needs. Early findings highlight the need for expanded training topics and additional support for emerging leaders, particularly as they balance their roles with family responsibilities. Looking ahead, ABPD plans to refine its approach to create even more inclusive and effective training opportunities.

The success of the Congress reaffirms the power of investing in local leadership. By equipping health promoters with knowledge and tools, ABPD is not only strengthening individual capacities but also reinforcing the foundation of sustainable, community-driven health solutions rooted in the Behrhorst model's legacy of empowerment and resilience.

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including donations, to:

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Dr. Carroll Behrhorst
LEGACY SOCIETY

**Make a difference for generations to come by including
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To learn more, visit ALDEAGuatemala.org and click "Get
Involved," or contact Interim Executive Director Shea
Bronson-Doherty at shea@ALDEAGuatemala.org.

CONTRIBUTE TO ALDEA'S WORK IN RURAL GUATEMALA THIS YEAR.

*Use the enclosed envelope to mail your gift, or visit
us at aldeaguatemala.org/donate.*

Below are some examples of the impact your gift
can have:*

- **\$1,600** can support a family through our full, three-year integrated development program.
- **\$1,000** can provide clean drinking water, a gray water filter, a sanitary latrine, and a vented, efficient stove to help a household stay healthy.
- **\$300** can buy a dairy goat (along with the vitamins, basic medicines, and shelter it needs) so young children can benefit from its nutritious milk.
- **\$100** can support nutrition training sessions addressing topics like breastfeeding, appropriate weaning foods, food safety, and recipes made with fresh garden produce.
- **\$50** can provide empowerment training for women and youth to become change agents and emerging leaders in their communities.

* Gifts made to ALDEA contribute to our entire mission, and we apply your donations where they are needed most to support our long-term goals. These estimates are approximate as prices and exchange rates are constantly changing.

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