

BECA Program Criteria & Requirements

Criteria for selection of scholarship recipients:

- Youth who demonstrate interest in their studies
- Youth who are ready to begin high school, university, or technical school studies
- Youth who can demonstrate financial need and would not be able to continue their studies without the program's support
- Youth who are active in the parish

Requirements the students must meet to maintain a scholarship:

- The scholarship must be used for academic purposes only.
- Satisfactory academic performance, demonstrated by a transcript of grades
- Demonstration of appropriate behavior by the student with regard to family, community and educational institution
- Participation in community activities and events
- Regular class attendance
- Presentation of all requested documentation by the deadlines given
- Submission of a monthly budget for school expenses
- Submission of copies of checks or receipts to demonstrate payment of expenses
- Submission of bills or invoices for expenses
- Attendance at monthly scholarship program meetings



This woman is making pupusas, the national food of El Salvador, made of tortillas filled with beans, cheese, and meat. Delicious!



Ana Aviles with parishioner Mari Tellson during the delegates from San Francisco de Asís's visit in 2014.

“Thank you for your willingness to give without thought to receiving anything in return, only the satisfaction of helping so many young people like myself. We can only put forth our best effort and say thank you... and wish that our loving Father will abundantly bless you each and every day of your life.”

—Ana Ester Aviles, Scholarship Student

To Our Sponsors

Ana's words about the importance of the Scholarship Program echo the feelings expressed by all of our students. Clearly, without you, the sponsors, none of this could have happened. In the Jubilee Year of Mercy, your selfless support of these students is a wonderful example of what Pope Francis is calling us to.

On behalf of our students and their families, may God continue to bless you for your generosity, support and confidence in them.



The BECA Scholarship students and the program team gathered at San Francisco de Asís parish to celebrate Octavio's college graduation. He is the first St. Peter's scholarship student to graduate from university.



Octavio Alonzo Ortiz grew up in San Francisco de Asís parish and is the nephew of Father Octavio Ortiz. Fr. Ortiz was assassinated during the civil war as he was leading a retreat for young men.

Octavio graduated in 2015 with a degree in

Public Accounting, the first student sponsored by St. Peter's to graduate from a university. He is very thankful for his scholarship because not everyone in El Salvador has an opportunity for an education. Octavio said that he would not have been able to attend the university if he had not been given a scholarship. He also worked while he attended the university to cover his expenses.

Octavio is very active in his faith community where he teaches catechism, plays the guitar and sings in the choir. He also serves as a member of the Scholarship Program Committee, meets regularly with the students in his community and helps to plan the monthly workshops for the students.

SAN FRANCISCO DE ASÍS Scholarship Stats 2011-2015

YEAR	U STUDENTS	HS STUDENTS	TECH SCH. GRADS	HS GRADS	U GRADS
2015	22	3	2	0	1
2014	24	4	4	2	0
2013	20	11	4	12	0
2012	18	21	2	7	1
2011	23	22	0	0	0

Sponsor or Contribute to the Scholarship Program

If you are interested in sponsoring a student or contributing to the scholarship fund, you can send a check made out to "St. Peter's Mission Fund" with "BECA" on the Memo line. Checks can be dropped off at the Legacy Center or mailed to Legacy Center, 815 E. Meyer Blvd., Kansas City MO, 64131. You can also go to St. Peter's website, click on DONATE and then BECA to contribute.

If you have further questions, please contact Laura Arensberg at 816-309-7206, email l.g.arenberg@gmail.com or Nancy Caccamo at 816-853-6855, email nancy@kccaccamo.com.

El Salvador—a Land of Contrasts

Nestled below Guatemala to the north and west and Honduras to the north and east, this tiny Central American country boasts lush mountain forests, volcanoes and volcanic lakes. The warm Pacific Ocean and volcanic sand beaches form its southern border.

But the country's natural beauty is in sharp contrast to the signs of poverty in tiny villages and big city neighborhoods. San Salvador, the country's capitol, has shopping centers, car dealerships, high-end restaurants and American chain restaurants, museums and movie theaters. Mejicanos, the home of San Francisco de Asís Parish is a municipality on the northern edge of San Salvador. Most Mejicanos residents live in two- to four-room cinder block homes, many covered only by plastic bag-like roofs or noisy sheet metal. Standing side-by-side and abutting the deteriorating streets, these homes have no yards or trees.

Yet the people who live inside these modest homes are loving and welcoming, quick to share a glass of sweet Coke, a cup of coffee and a cookie, regardless of how little they may have. The beauty of Mejicanos lies in the warm smiles and big hugs of its people.

Pupusas are the unofficial national food of El Salvador. Along streets and street corners, women roll corn dough into balls, press indentations and fill them with meat, bean, cheese and vegetable mixtures then fry them on grills. A sure giveaway that you're a first-time visitor is to eat these with a fork rather than just your hands.

El Salvador was torn apart by a civil war between the late 70s and early 90s. In 1992, the military government signed a peace treaty ending the war that killed more than 75,000 people. One of the most moving sites to visit in San Salvador is the Parque Cuscatlan where a wall similar to the Viet Nam War Memorial memorializes the country's history and lists those who disappeared or were killed during the long war.

Today El Salvador is a democratic country, but many of the poor continue to suffer the effects of poverty—lack of clean water, lack of adequate housing, lack of employment and lack of educational opportunities.



Claudia Ramos (left) is a student at the University of El Salvador, majoring in Public Accounting. She attends classes in the morning, five days a week. She is pictured with Mary Ramirez. Mary is 22 years old and attends the Technological University where she majors in Computer Systems Engineering. She travels 45 minutes by

bus to attend classes from 6:30 AM to 9:30AM, Monday through Saturday. Mary reported that job prospects in this field are very good and her goal is find a job in the area of programming.



Hector Diaz is majoring in Business Administration at the University and also works part-time for an accounting firm.



Rafael Flores attends the Salvadoran Lutheran University and hopes to become a lawyer, practicing in the area of family law. He lives with his mother and younger sister and brother. He and his mother make bread in their home and sell it in the marketplace. Rafael attends classes from 4:00 PM to 7:30 PM, studies and helps his mother with their business in the mornings.

History of Sister Parish Relationship

The history of St. Peter's Sister Parish relationship with San Francisco de Asís spans more than twenty-five years. It began in 1988 when Fr. Jerry Waris, the new pastor at St. Peter's, visited El Salvador to see the human rights violations, first hand. In 1989, a small delegation visited San Francisco de Asís with the prospect of establishing a sister parish relationship. When they returned, a vote was taken in the parish and the relationship was formally approved. Since then, over 75 parishioners have visited our Sister Parish and many delegations from San Francisco de Asís have visited St. Peter's.

From the beginning, the relationship has been based upon listening to them about their needs and how St. Peter's could be supportive. Initially, their need was for us to accompany them so that they would be safe from harassment by the military, tell their stories when we returned to the US and advocate for them. They also needed medicines and clothing.

After the Peace Accords went into effect in February of 1992, San Francisco de Asís continued to ask for our support. There were new realities and they wanted us to continue to move towards the vision of economic and civil justice with them. After a large earthquake, they needed material assistance to rebuild. In addition, our sister parish wanted our assistance to help staff and provide equipment for their Technical Center to provide job training for their parishioners.

With the movement toward a more democratic government, a reduced military presence, and the deportation of many Salvadorans from the United States back to El Salvador, the past ten years have seen a growth of gangs. The parish was most concerned about their young people and asked



This is a mural (on the outside of San Francisco de Asis parish church) of martyrs who sacrificed their lives for their faith.

us to assist with scholarships so their youth could attend high school and college and have a better future. You, our parishioners, have risen to the call to assist 73 students with scholarships and we have seen 21 students graduate from high school and 2 students graduate from college. During the coming year, 4 students will be graduating from college and 1 student from medical school.

The St. Peter's Sister Parish Team and the people of San Francisco de Asís thank you for your prayers, solidarity, and financial support over these many years.



Diana Rivas is majoring in graphic design and enjoys all forms of artistic expression. She is a talented artist and has sold some of her paintings at her university's exhibitions. She also likes to participate in mural painting in the community and is currently working on a mural that includes her brother, Denis.