

AMISTAD  
CANADA

## Summer 2016 Update

Between newsletters, AMISTAD CANADA occasionally sends out brief email updates to keep members and supporters up-to-date.

Below you'll find information about our new project partners along with highlights of the 2016 Annual General Meeting.

Between now and the next newsletter (in November) you can also follow *Amistad* activities by joining our [Facebook Group here](#).



## Meet our newest partners:

2016 is promising to be an expansive year for *Amistad*. Even before the first day of summer, we welcomed three new SMA project partners:

# The Children's Art Foundation, Opera de San Miguel and the Rural Education Institute

The **Children's Art Foundation** (*Arte de los niños*) helps underprivileged children in San Miguel de Allende's rural communities reach their full potential through art. Established six years ago, its mandate is to teach "life skills of self-expression" – drawing, painting, imagining and story writing – in order to improve fine motor skills, attention to detail, problem-solving abilities and general self-confidence. And have lots of fun!

CAF delivers about 165 two-hour classes each year, some in rural classrooms and others on field trips. There's an award ceremony and winning pictures are published in a popular book and calendar. The painting above was created by 13-year-old Reynaldo Aarón Soria Lopez.

CAF also creates employment for artists who work with the kids, and promotes goodwill within the communities it visits by engaging volunteers, training local teachers, and reinforcing sustainability. Contributions made via AMISTAD help pay the art teachers' salaries and buy paints, paper, brushes, canvas, clay figures and books etc.

( [Visit the CAF website](#) )



For the past eight years, **Opera de San Miguel** has organized and presented an annual 'Concurso' competition for the very best young Mexican singers. While all have rich voices, many come from poor circumstances and so are dependent on financial assistance for further training and career development. The investment pays off: several 'Concurso' winners and finalists have gone on to international singing success.

To see – and hear – all the winners of the 2016 'Concurso' competition [click here](#). (The photo above is of Soprano Yamel Domort performing at the 2015 Concurso.)

Now Canadian opera lovers who'd like to support the next generation of up-and-coming talent can do so through AMISTAD; donations will help fund OSM scholarships, bursaries and grants.

( [Visit the OSM website](#) )



The **Rural Education Institute of Mexico** (Rural Ed) works with 8-18 year-old students in three rural SMA communities with the goal of getting more children to attend high school. It establishes community centers as a place to promote lifelong learning for local youth so that they can continue their education, improve their economic situation, and give back to the community.

Programs include after-school activities, English language instruction, computer &

internet training and scholarships. Since it started in 2007, Rural Ed has worked with 380 children; 120 are participating this year. As a result, 20% more students are attending high school.

The programs are delivered by local volunteers working with carefully selected international interns including from Canada (the photo above is from the community of La Palma). All are university graduates with skills in international development, teaching English, and/or working with and mentoring youth. They receive at least one-week of intensive training per semester, and are evaluated at least twice per semester. Donations made via AMISTAD help pay interns' travel and living expenses.

( [Visit the Rural Ed website](#) )

## 2016 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our AGM took place in Toronto on Tuesday, June 14th. President Charles Novogrodsky began with an overview of how donations to *Amistad* are being used by our partner organizations:

- La Biblioteca** awarded 12 scholarships, purchased 87 Spanish children's books and gave computer classes to 120 kids,
- Jóvenes Adelante** awarded nine university scholarships,
- CASA Midwifery** students safely delivered 200 babies and the model has been adopted in seven communities in Mexico and Guatemala,
- CASA Elegir** program supported 166 women who faced domestic violence,
- CASA Rural Libraries** (now 14) have a total of 3,700 books for 946 children,
- and **Apoyo** provided educational workshops to 64 small business entrepreneurs.

*Amistad* members at the meeting approved a motion to increase the number of Board Directors from 11 to 15. Subsequently, three new Directors were elected: **Jenny Formanek, Mark O'Neill and David Winfield**. In addition, **Mel Kliman, Howard Swartz, Ivan Garcia and Ted Johnston** were re-elected to two year terms. (President **Charles Novogrodsky, Jaci Winters**, Treasurer **June Oliver**, Secretary **Joy Levine, Myra Novogrodsky and Donna Rubenstein** each have another year to serve.) This brings the current number of directors to 13, leaving two positions open.

