



Canadian Friends of Oaxaca Inc. (CANFRO)  
PO Box 23043, Belleville, Ontario K8P 5J3  
[www.canfro.ca](http://www.canfro.ca)

The R.R. Smith Memorial Fund Foundation  
c/o B.C. Retired Teachers' Association  
#100 -550 West 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Vancouver, BC  
V5Z 4P2

Feb. 14/2025

Dear Foundation Members,

PROJECT UPDATE FOR 2024-25

Thank you for your donation of \$2500 which was received by CANFRO in April 2024 for the school year 2024-25. The request for support was to provide scholarships to deserving young people in Oaxaca to help break the cycle of poverty and assist them in achieving their educational goals.

Our project partner – The Oaxaca Learning Centre – was in the midst of construction of a second level of classrooms and a computer lab all last year. This delayed the selection of scholarship recipients until January 2025. I am happy to report that two outstanding Grand 10 students have been chosen to start receiving \$1500 pesos per month for 10 months in 2025. This converts to approximately \$1200 Canadian per year per student. CANFRO deducts a 5% administration fee to cover banking charges and other expenses. The \$2500 from R.R. Smith Memorial Fund will be properly tracked and accounted for in our final report January 2026.

On February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025 The Oaxaca Learning Centre held an Open House for donors to tour the new facilities. I attended with Penny Hopkins, CANFRO's Vice President of Finance. We were able to meet the two young scholarship recipients, Ingrid and Yecenia in person -see attached photo. We have translated their scholarship request letters into English – see attached. They are highly motivated young women and we hope to be able to support them in the years to come as they complete high school and move on to University. They both have BIG DREAMS!!

Please accept my apologies for the delay in reporting to you about this grant. Rest assured that we will provide updates as we receive them from the students and our partner agency. I would be happy to answer any questions you might have. I will be in Oaxaca until the end of March. I will be returning to Nanaimo, BC in early April.

Sincerely,

Sandra Thomson  
Volunteer President  
[president@canfro.ca](mailto:president@canfro.ca)

December 19, 2024

Yecenia Gómez Martínez  
Colonia Arboleda, calle Paraíso S/N A Villa de Zaachila Oaxaca

It's a pleasure to write this. To begin with, I am Yecenia Gómez Martínez, 15 years old and a student at Comprehensive Community High School Ext 42 in the La Gotera neighborhood in Zaachila city. I am in Grade 10. I am writing to you to explain some of the reasons why I am applying to this scholarship program and why I may be worthy of it. With this scholarship I will be able to improve myself and have a little more support in my education. I have a good academic performance, and always have, since I was little. I could improve in one or two subjects, but overall, I am diligent and meet the requirements of my classes. I participate in many different events and school projects. I always try my best and I attempt to stand out, always improving in both academic and extracurricular activities.

The school I attend now is new, so we have classrooms still under construction and use temporary, improvised classrooms; despite this, we have the basics to be able to have a class every day. The place is very nice. The teachers we have teach well and are very kind. I also have activities outside of school: I am a PDMU (El Pentatlón Deportivo Militarizado Universitario) cadet, so apart from attending school and giving my best, I also give my best to an institution like the pentathlon (*Note from CANFRO: similar to a social service organization, not military*). I dedicate my time to improving my own physical abilities to strengthen the country of Mexico. I am building my character and improving ordinary daily skills such as teamwork, camaraderie, leadership and responsibility.

Furthermore, I have economic need. My family is made up of my father, my mother and my younger sister and me. Being the oldest I try to give the best of myself and be someone who can contribute to the community. My father works, but his salary is not enough for maintaining the household and our education. My sister and I lack important and necessary materials to continue our education. In addition, my father is getting older, so he may have to stop working at any time due to his declining physical condition. This scholarship would allow me to access resources and opportunities. Also, I would like to buy a printer and not have to go to the print shop late at night.

My goal is to enter a university and be able to study a career in chemical or mechanical engineering. These are professions that are usually considered only for men, but I do not want that stereotype to continue. Studying is difficult and costs a lot of effort and money, so I continue applying myself each day so as to fulfill my dream. The scholarship would not only help me continue with my studies, but also help with the financial burden that my parents have and give me the opportunity to continue developing as a student and person in society.

On a personal level, I can say that I am very happy for this opportunity. I can see my efforts are paying off and I am pleased with this. I have psoriasis, and I have had problems being able to socialize and develop as a citizen. Despite this, I have managed to ignore the comments that have been made to me in the past and focus instead on the present. In the past, this stopped me from doing various physical activities. Today, I can say that I am a normal person. I am treated like any other boy or girl and I socialize very well.

I am grateful for this opportunity to be considered for this scholarship. I promise to continue with good grades and ethical standards throughout my high school cycle, as well as at all times in my life. I remain available to receive any general information and I also hope to show you that with my achievements and effort I am a worthy candidate to receive the scholarship.

Sincerely,  
Yecenia Gómez Martínez  
Student at BIC EXT 42 La Gotera

Greetings. I am fifteen years and enrolled in Grade 10. I am the eldest of five children, three girls and two boys. I am the first person in my family to be in high school and to dream of a good future. My big dream is to study to be a doctor for children – Pediatrician. After high school it is six years of study plus one year of community service.

This scholarship would be very beneficial for me to get ahead with my studies. It would help me to have financial resources to support me and thus move forward. It would mean my family would not have to sacrifice too much for me to stay in school. I will have a better learning experience with this scholarship and with the support of the other students, the tutors and staff at The Oaxaca Learning Centre. Thank you for considering me for this support.

Ingrid Ramirez



Left to Right - Yecenia Gómez Martínez, Penny Hopkins, CANFRO Vice President, Ingrid Ramirez, Sandra Thomson CANFRO President February 8, 2025