

# Fixing a plate to educate

## Local woman continues work for kids in Guatemala

BY JENNY MCCARTHY  
*The Labradorian*

A local woman has put together some of the town's best recipe's and started pinching her pennies to help educate kid's in Guatemala.

Two years ago Brigitte Murphy hopped on a plane and landed in the Central American country. She was going to visit a catholic mission but it turned out to be more than a visit.

When Brigitte saw the lack of resources for school kids she wanted to play her part in helping. Since then, she's been holding penny drives, carwashes, and most recently she had a cookbook published with the proceeds going to buy school supplies and help provide a scholarship fund for the kids. She named the book 'Fix a Plate to Educate.'

Ms. Murphy is used to being around kids so the act came pretty naturally. She retired as a schoolteacher three years ago. Then, while studying in Ottawa, she and some fellow teachers met a priest from Mexico. He invited the teachers to visit his mission in Guatemala. Ms. Murphy was the only one to take him up on his request and it has had a lasting impact on her.

"I went there not knowing what to expect. We have so much and they have so little yet are so happy and content," she said.

When Ms. Murphy was there on her last visit, she stayed for three months. She visited some of the poorest villages, where, she said homes had tin rooms and only the ground for floor. She brought with her the \$4,000 that she had raised for school supplies and the scholarship fund. This money helped to supply 11 schools with basic school supplies. The schools are chosen by the church, which consults with local villagers and leaders to get information on what is needed and the number of students in need.

Ms. Murphy also visited the schools to have a look for herself at their conditions.



Ms. Murphy is pictured with some of the Guatemalan children she's been raising money to educate.

She says some schools had only the bare necessities of chairs and tables and a blackboard and some shocked her. One class had four books for 20 children. Some areas didn't have high schools and it was here that the scholarship fund came into play to allow kids the chance to get pursue a higher education.

Guatemala emerged from three decades of civil war only 12 years ago. The war left many people displaced and even now more than 50 per cent of people live below the poverty line. The literacy rate in the largely agricultural based country is 69 per cent and the average school life is 10 years.

Ms. Murphy said people are just making the money to



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survive day to day and school supplies are often out of their reach.

She recalled one father who came to visit. He had no supplies for his four kids to go back to school and didn't want to send the kids without the necessary supplies.

Ms. Murphy said her fundraising is not a one-time

thing and she plans to do it all long as she can.

As for another visit to Guatemala, she has none planned just yet. For now she said she is just working on raising more money to send along to give kids a chance they might not otherwise have.

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Copies of Ms. Murphy's cookbook book 'Fix a Educate' are available at local businesses around to your eye out for your copy. Jenny McC

### TIDE TIMES

For Terrington Basin:  
Week of Sept. 29-Oct. 5

Monday: Low tide 6:20 am, high tide 11:51 am, low tide 6:19 pm - sunrise 6:59 am, sunset 6:43 pm