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PANAJACHEL, Guatemala

Donor Letter Guideline - Website

At Mayan Families, we believe that exchanging letters is a great way to connect with your student and learn more about one another! While your financial support is essential to contribute toward students' schooling costs, words of encouragement are another form of support you could provide to your sponsored student.

Letter-writing is an opportunity to learn about your sponsored student's life, share something about yourself and get to know your sponsored student's personality better. Letters should be about creating a friendship, connect and getting to know your student's interests, rather than focusing on donations.

You can email us up to two times a year at studentletters@mayanfamilies.org and we will ensure the students receive your communication at one of three set times for students to write letters. When your student writes back to you, pictures of their letters (including the translated version) will be added to the link to your personal SmugMug gallery and you will be receiving an email notification about it.

While writing letters can be a fun and exciting way to engage with your sponsored student, sometimes it can be difficult to know what to write about. Here are some tips to keep in mind!

Feel free to share information about yourself and your life or even include a photo, just keep in mind that your student lives in a culture that is probably quite different from your own. Very personal questions and sharing personal information about yourself can be uncomfortable for both the student and yourself, so we encourage you to keep things friendly and not to share overly private details.

Suggested Topics to include in your letter:

- School - Ask about their favorite subject or topic, let them know what you enjoyed studying when you were their age.
- Hobbies and work - You could ask about what they do for a living, what they like to do in their free time, questions about what kind of activities they like outside of school (sports, friends, books, hobbies).
- Family and friends - It can be fun to share information about your family and friends (how many people are in your family, what you like to do together, etc.).
- Culture - Exchanging information about local traditions, food, and holiday celebrations is an excellent way to learn about local customs and share information about your own culture.

We kindly ask that you keep topics like these out of your letters:

- Overly personal questions (discussing illnesses or difficult family situations).
- Highlighting differences in living conditions such as income comparisons.
- Using your last name or information such as your home address or asking for theirs.
- Sentiments of love or affection (especially when first writing to a student).
- Questions or comments about religion.
- Asking what the student's needs are.

Please also keep in mind that there is often a delay in your student receiving your letter as they only receive letters at three set times during the year. We thank you for your patience and understanding!

If you wish to further contribute to the well being and livelihood of your sponsored student and family, you can visit our [Strengthening Communities page](#) to find a list of all available options.

If you have any questions at all, please reach out to studentletters@mayanfamilies.org.