

WIXARIKA

Research Center

Spring 2023 Newsletter

Dear Friends and Supporters,

With all the rain we had here in California, it has been a truly glorious spring. We hope that everyone, wherever you are, is in good health and spirits and enjoying an equally spectacular springtime.

In 2002, one year after the founding of the Wixárika Research Center, we moved into our office at 863 Leo Way in Oakland, in a home Juan and I rented. We remained settled there for the last 21 years, but the time came to finally relocate. November and December of 2022 were spent packing and moving. After so many years in one place and Juan no longer with us, it was challenging and time-consuming. We completed our move in late December, and we are currently working remotely from our homes. Much of our office furniture and many of the archives are in storage nearby where we have easy access to them when needed. All of us are comfortable working from our homes, and working remotely appears to be the best option for the Wixárika woman who will be building out the historical documents section of the website. You will find our new mailing address and phone number at the bottom of this page.

Wixarika communities have also been on the move with the ceremonial centers making their yearly pilgrimage to Wirikuta, returning to the sierras to hunt the deer, visiting Te'ekata, and arriving back at their ceremonial centers to prepare for Hikuri Neixa and other important ceremonies. It is time to plant their corn, beans, and amaranth and to wait for the rain to return.

In this newsletter, we would like to update our supporters and the public on our three core areas of work: 1) Agroecological projects in Wixarika territory, 2) Scholarships for Wixarika undergraduates, and 3) Archival work on and offline and continued website development. Please consider [donating](#) to support this valuable work.



School Children in Wirikuta, Photograph by Juan Negrín, 1977

Agroecological Projects in Wixarika Territory

In 2013/2014 Juan Negrín was able to lay the base for another solar wood drying oven as part of the first stone of the future autonomous community high school in Nueva Colonia, Santa Catarina Cuexcomatitlán (Tuapurie). This was made possible thanks to a Lush Charity Pot Grant and over the course of the ensuing decade the community has worked diligently for the Tamatsi Paaristika community high school campus project to materialize. We are happy to share that this coming July, the new campus will be inaugurated, and students will finally be able to move out of the temporary location at the old weaving workshop building that our predecessor foundation, ADESMO had built in the late 1980's and which we hope to help reintegrate as a functioning community weaving workshop for the production of wool and cotton manta, both of which are necessary for making their fine embroidery and woven bags and belts for their traditional garments and high quality crafts.

As many of you are aware from previous newsletters, the sacred pilgrimage site of Wirikuta has remained a hot spot for our work given the unprecedented expansion of land use changes and accompanying privatizations that bring about local small farmer displacement and changes in the landscape, as well as in the endemic flora and fauna. As a reminder of the earlier defense work we have been involved in, we would like to re-share the [article](#) for the Spanish Issue of Newsweek that Juan and Diana Negrín co-authored in 2011, providing cultural and ecological context for the region. We also invite you to visit our website and read other recent articles that we have posted from [The Esperanza Project and Nexos](#).

Following two years of successful free summer workshops, we are gearing up for our third annual gathering in Wirikuta during the second week of July. Along with our budding sister organization in Mexico, AIRE, the Wixarika Research Center is directing this summer's workshops and gathering to the collaborative design of a detailed multi-phase proposal for the *Ethnobotanical Garden of Wirikuta*, alongside ongoing hands-on training for mesquite production, women's empowerment, local solidarity economies and beekeeping.

You can learn more about last year's activities by reading the [illustrated report](#) from October 2022. At the heart of this project is a commitment to defend this sacred land from further destruction through leveraging and regenerating the traditional ecological resources and associated skills that exist in this region and provide opportunities for local and Wixarika youth to then take this theoretical and practical knowledge to their respective communities while strengthening the seeds of collaborative intercultural work in Wirikuta.

We have just launched a crowdfunding campaign for this year's summer gathering on Go Fund Me: <https://gofund.me/6856a590> Please take a moment to learn more about our project and share the above link with your friends and networks.

Wixárika Scholarship Fund



Eusebio de la Cruz and family at his graduation

We are overjoyed to share that several students that are part of our scholarship program have graduated or are in the process of graduating: Gabino Valdez García, Xitlatli Ríos Sandoval and Xochitl Chanes Aguilar earned their degrees in Nursing, Dagoberto Robles González in Applied Linguistics, Eusebio de la Cruz in Business Administration, Zulema de la Cruz in Architecture, María Fernanda Ramírez Gamboa in Biomedical Engineering, Beatriz Ramírez Gamboa in Psychology, and Mario de la Cruz finished his degree in Mathematics.

Brian McDougall, who helps administer the scholarship program with Diana Negrín, wrote a wonderful [newsletter](#) for anyone who would like to hear from our students and learn more about how the scholarship fund works. Also, we invite you to watch our Spring 2023 fundraisers on our YouTube channel. In February, alumni [Tanima Enríquez](#) discussed Wixárika territorial defense, and in March [Juan Aurelio Carrillo](#) and two of our current scholars discussed the state of Wixarika higher education. Most rewarding is seeing these students graduate and give back to their communities. We have already launched our new call for applications for the 2023-2024 academic year and look forward to sharing more with you all about these inspiring young scholars.



Nursing student, Gabino Valdez, marching for fair scholarships for nursing students, 2023

Rebuilding the Website and Online Archive

Slowly but surely the rebuilding of our website and online archive is getting wrapped up. Since it had to be built from scratch and is bilingual, the number of postings that had to be transferred was an enormous job and it has taken a bit more than a year to transfer all the data

and rebuild exhibits. Currently the web pages are being fine-tuned and styled and some new material is being added. We expect to launch the new website in time for the summer and will send out a notification once we do. In the meantime, we continue to post important events and news items to our existing website to keep our readers current. In the coming months we are excited to bring onboard a social media and content creator to help us build the historical and contemporary news and scholarship archives, as well as manage our social media pages on Facebook and Instagram. With a degree in Communications from the ITESO University in Guadalajara, our candidate hails from Tateikié and has prior experience running Wixarika media pages and working in radio. Having interned with us previously, we know that she will be an important support for the growing amount of material that we would like to share with the public. To be able to make this and one more part-time hire possible, we rely on your one-time or monthly donations to our general fund; we are currently seeking to raise \$12,000 USD for a 12-month period.

Closing Reflections on Five Decades of Work in the Field

To those of you who are new to our foundation and work, this spring marks the 52nd anniversary of Juan Negrín and me meeting the Wixaritari and marks 50 years of giving service to the people, their communities, and defending their land and resources. During this time, we witnessed the very first roads being built to penetrate the Wixárika sierras, the illegal exploitation of their forests, invasions of their land by cattle ranchers, and most recently the threats to Haramara and Wirikuta, two of their sacred pilgrimage destinations. During those 50 years, the file cabinets in Juan's office filled up with letters, documents, newspaper clippings, and magazine articles that recorded the history taking place during that time. Hundreds of cassettes were taped and thousands of photographs documenting artworks, landscapes, people, ceremonies, and sacred places were taken. When the Wixárika Research Center was founded, the primary purpose was to create an online digital archive to preserve these materials, and to continue to do service to the Wixárika people and their communities. We continue to closely follow and record information on current events that can and will affect their communities and sacred sites, and we post news items and articles of interest to keep the archive current. Most importantly, Juan Negrín's archives are available to the Wixárika people and scholars, but also to all those who are interested in reading and learning more about their history and incredibly rich culture. Access to the archives and exhibits will always be open and free to all.

As we continue to expand our three areas of programming, I want to ask you all to consider making a tax-deductible donation to support our work and our new staffing needs. If you are able, here is a secure [link](#) to make a one time or monthly donation.



Pampariyutsi,

Yvonne Negrín
Executive Director

The Wixárika Research Center is a 501(c) 3 non-profit foundation. All donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

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