



## FALL / WINTER 2024 NEWSLETTER

We are excited to bring you our fall newsletter with some highlights from our last several months of work. Founded in 2001 by Juan and Yvonne Negrín, the **Wixarika Research Center** has dedicated more than twenty years to the preservation, digitization, and dissemination of the extensive archive that the Negrins collected over four decades. Thanks to our public support, our small women-run non-profit has continued to successfully meet its mission: 1) Develop a public archive of Wixarika history and culture (beyond the Negrín archives), 2) Provide yearly scholarships to university students, and 3) Support select community ecological and educational projects in Wixarika territory.

We would like to acknowledge that this has been a sobering historical moment, making the pursuit of human and environmental rights evermore pressing. In Mexico, a new presidency has begun under the direction of Claudia Sheinbaum, while new governors and municipal presidents have been sworn in across the country. The electoral map showed a diversity of political party affiliations in Wixarika communities, which also brought in new Wixarika leadership. Sadly, a Wixarika lawyer who had been elected municipal president of Bolaños, **Yuniur Vázquez Rosalío**, disappeared in August of this year and was [found deceased](#) alongside his companion and fellow lawyer, **Antonio Carrillo**. This reality has been replicated throughout Mexico as violence presents itself as a daily threat for Wixarika communities, exposing many to robberies, disappearances, and death. Like what our founder, Juan Negrín, witnessed in the 1970s and 1980s with the incursion of timber interests, the new roads that were constructed to better connect Wixarika communities during the last administration have facilitated the incursion of cartels. As we continue our work supporting public knowledge of Wixarika culture, history, and territory, we extend our solidarity with Wixarika communities as they navigate such unprecedented insecurity. We are hopeful that there can be peaceful days soon to come!

## OUR ONLINE ARCHIVE

As a team, **Yvonne** and **Diana Negrín** have been coordinating closely with **Aukwe Mijarez** to upload content to our bilingual online archive that was so thoughtfully re-designed by [Actual Systems](#) in 2023. We are excited to bring open access material to our global public and, especially, to our growing Wixarika audience! Each week, Aukwe and Diana curate social media posts highlighting material that ranges from art to ecology. Our art section includes yarn paintings with detailed explanations and artist biographies from the six exceptional artists Juan and Yvonne Negrín worked with, and whose art they collected: José Benítez Sánchez, Tutukila Carrillo Sandoval, Guadalupe González Ríos, Lucía Lemus de la Cruz, Juan Ríos Martínez and Pablo Taizán de la Cruz. We also have sections on traditional and sacred art that include weaving, embroidery, and offerings. Our online archive has continued to build its repertoire of historical documents such as news and scholarly articles, manuscripts, and art catalogs from across different historical moments. For example, we are happy to include a link to Carl Lumholtz's *Unknown Mexico*, Volumes I and II, published in 1902, as well as the work of many lesser-known scholars and current news stories. In the spring of 2024, UC Berkeley geography undergraduate, **Antonio Pacheco**, digitized and transcribed several unpublished writings by and interviews with Juan Negrín which we hope to bring to the public soon. One of our goals for the coming months is to expand

our photographic content and provide more student stories profiling our current and past scholarship recipients. If you have not already followed us on Facebook [@Wixarika Research Center](https://www.facebook.com/WixarikaResearchCenter) or Instagram [@wixarika\\_research\\_center](https://www.instagram.com/wixarika_research_center), we invite you to join us there so that you don't miss our weekly content highlights!!

## CURATORIAL COLLABORATIONS

We are always excited to team up with other institutions to make our archive accessible to the public and lend our consulting expertise where needed. After three years of collaboration, **UCLA's Fowler Museum** will be launching its [Vital Matters / Art, Devotion, Practice](#) digital project that includes a significant spotlight on Wixarika art, culture, and territory. Diana Negrín spent time visiting the Fowler's Wixarika collection and subsequently helped create curricular content with the participation of Wixarika colleagues in Tepic, **Tutupika** and **Minerva Carrillo**, and **Mario Muñoz Cayetano**. The star of the Fowler's collection is a round yarn painting by José Benítez Sánchez from 1991, and we were happy to have coordinated the inclusion of many of Benítez's family members to draw a better picture of the artist, the artwork, and the socio-political context that surrounds Wixarika art and territory. We thank Fidencio, Maymi and Neuvy Benítez, as well as Hilaria Chávez Carrillo, widow of José Benítez, for their time and generosity.



Neuvy, Maymi, Eligio, and Fidencio Benítez at the family home workshop in Colonia Zitakua (Left)/  
Diana Negrín at the Fowler Museum (Right)

In Guadalajara, we were invited by a new art space, **Plataforma**, to participate in their current fall 2024 exhibit, [Transmisión Ancestral](#), curated by Agustín Pérez Rubio. For this show, we lent the gallery two yarn paintings created by Xitaima Lucia Lemus de la Cruz, and one vintage wool kutsuri, or woven bag. The exhibit opened on October 27 and closes January 12, 2025.

Finally, people interested in purchasing a Wixarika yarn painting have a great opportunity to do so while also supporting our general fund. We are selling a beautiful 24 x 24-inch vintage yarn painting created by Juan Ríos Martínez that was donated to WRC by Yvonne Negrín. **To send an inquiry or request to view the painting, please email us at [inquiries@wixarika.org](mailto:inquiries@wixarika.org).**

## WIXARIKA SCHOLARSHIP FUND

This fall marks our seventh year running our **Wixarika Scholarship Fund**, bringing the total number of supported students since 2018 to 61. Since 2018, 31 of our students have graduated and moved onto meaningful jobs and community opportunities. Our students come from across all Wixarika communities, and they hold a spectrum of career interests, although the fields of education and medicine remain favorites because of their applicability to community needs. We continue to receive a yearly donation from the **International Friendship Fund** of Puerto Vallarta that covers between six to nine of the twenty students we support each year. We thank the **Volcanes Kids Education Program, A.C.** for their continued support facilitating the transfer of funds that the IFC raises each year from US and Canadian residents living in Puerto Vallarta. The remaining money comes from donations from our supporters, and we encourage people to sign up to make monthly **donations** for us to better project the scholarship fund's budget.

We would also like to thank **Irene Cohn** (retired), **Manuel López Delgado** (Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez) and **Jimena Márquez** (Project Development Officer-Indigenous Student Support, Quebec) for their advice and voluntary participation in the yearly process of reviewing and selecting our scholarship recipients.



We now would like to spotlight a couple of our students and invite you to visit the [Our Projects](#) section of our website to learn more about the scholarship program and our past and present [students](#). This fall **Haïmara Alma Rocío Robles Carrillo**, left, will be graduating with a degree in Applied linguistics from the Autonomous University of Nayarit. From the community of Mesa del Tirador, Haïmara has been a WRC scholarship recipient since the fall of 2023. She utilized her scholarship to save up for a new laptop, saving the first two installments, along with other savings, to be able to eventually make the purchase. Having a laptop that is up to

par has greatly facilitated her ability to turn in her digital homework and research. Below is Haïmara's message to the scholarship supporters:

*I am profoundly grateful for the support [the donors] provide because without knowing it they are saving a part of each student's life. Because with that support many students in different situational contexts can use the money for the objective that they need. Please do not stop supporting students from Indigenous communities. Pampariyutsi nemuwara hiawe xame xeyunaiti Wixarika Research Center xemayaú ne iyari wa'ikawa puyutemawie pampariyutsi. Thank you very much to everyone who is part of Wixarika Research Center for the support given to all my wixarika brothers and sisters that brings a lot to each of us. Scholarships should continue to be promoted for more people. (translated by student)*



**Tzeriekame Bernardo Carrillo**, right, is from the community of Tateikié and is studying Nutrition and Food Sciences at the ITESO Jesuit university in Guadalajara. He became a scholarship recipient in the Fall of 2023 and has used the funds to cover his monthly tuition at this private school. We were happy to learn that Tzeriekame was able to participate in an educational exchange program in Ecuador in the spring of this year and that he is looking for ways to conduct his student research in his community. ‘Tzerie’ had the following to say to our donors: *“First, I would like to sincerely thank you for your support. Thanks to you all, we can get closer to our dreams and goals. I hope that you all continue to have a generous heart that will permit young Wixaritari to move forward. Sometimes dreams seem unreachable but with help we can achieve big things.*



Lastly, **Tania Lisvet Bailón Jimenes**, is a nursing student completing her degree at the Universidad Tecnológica de la Sierra, located in the community of Mesa del Nayar, established in 2009. Tania is from the community of Brasiles in Durango and used the scholarship to cover transportation costs to school, school supplies, and to support some necessities for her daughter. Tania has been a recipient with WRC since fall 2023 and will be graduating in the spring of 2025. This fall, her younger brother, Juan became a new scholarship recipient. He is studying Forestry Engineering at the Universidad de Juárez in Durango. Here are some of Tania’s words to our donors: *“The scholarship fund for Wixaritari helps me continue to study because I am a low-income person and having a scholarship has been of great help to continue to study and finish my degree and not abandon it as I am also a single mother which implies studying and caring for my daughter at once. Thanks to this scholarship I have been able to continue to do both without a problem.”*

## TAMAATSI PÁRITSIKA COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL

In August 2024, the Wixarika Research Center (WRC) supported the **Tamaatsi Páritsika Community High School** with the purchase and installation of a broadband internet system to help improve the opportunities and quality of education for its Wixarika students. We are particularly excited for the opportunities that better connectivity will provide for Wixarika youth to access and contribute to our online archive. This donation was made thanks to the [Indigenous Reciprocity Initiative](#), a small grant program coordinated by the **Chacruna Institute for Psychedelic Plant Medicine**. In years past, IRI has provided support for our agroecological workshops in Wirikuta (see past [newsletters](#)).



Tamaatsi Páritsika students build a stone wall around their new campus 2024

Tamaatsi Páritsika is an autonomous school in the community of Tuapurie (Santa Catarina Cuexcomatitlán) founded in 2009 by young professionals with the support of traditional authorities and community members. During its first 15 years of operation, classes were held in a building constructed in the 1980s for the weaving workshop which was set up under the direction of WRC co-founder Juan Negrín with the community of Tuapurie. The high school curriculum has been intentionally designed to bring together Wixarika knowledge with the standard subjects found in other Mexican schools, thus preparing students to graduate with complementary knowledge and be able to access a university if they so wish or remain in their community equipped with practical skills like agroforestry and carpentry. In 2017, Tamaatsi Páritsika obtained land to build a campus under ecologically sustainable and culturally appropriate models. In 2023 the campus was inaugurated.

From the beginning, the WRC has been committed to supporting the community high school project that the young people of Tuapurie founded. In 2015, we obtained a grant from the Canadian makeup company, LUSH, for the design and construction of a new solar oven for drying wood. This was the first structure on the land donated by the community, thus initiating a program of agroforestry and sustainable carpentry that is still in development. We would like to give a special mention to **Carlos Carrillo** who was an early graduate of the high school and who now directs their ecological and forestry education. Carrillo is also an alumnus of our scholarship program and has remained integral to our agroecological workshops in Wirikuta. He obtained his degree in Education with a focus on Natural Sciences from the Autonomous University of Nayarit in 2021.

We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to our supporters and volunteers. As a small 501(c)3 family-run non-profit foundation, we rely on donations from our public and encourage people to sign up for [our monthly donation](#) option. During the coming year, our priority continues to be that of strengthening our living material and digital archive. We are confident that we can go a long way with many small donations. During this time, we need to build up our general fund which covers all our operating costs and three salaries (one full-time and two part-time). Our website will be undergoing another round of security updating that will cost \$3,000 USD and our archival assistant and our social media coordinator, Aukwe Mijarez, needs a new laptop. We believe that now that we have created the material foundation for the online archives, adding more hands will greatly support this effort.

For more than two decades, WRC has built its relationship with the **Autonomous University of Nayarit** (UAN for its Spanish acronym). This university is based in Tepic and has catered to a growing Wixarika student population. **Juan Aurelio Carrillo Ríos** has overseen Indigenous student programming since he himself graduated from the UAN in 2010. An ally of our scholarship program, Carrillo has helped direct the early stages of a new “professional practice” program that will provide UAN students of Wixarika descent an opportunity to meet their service and professional practice hours working with our foundation. Stay tuned for more in 2025!

Beyond our prospects with UAN university interns, we would like to bring a young Wixarika colleague and past scholarship recipient to our archive in Berkeley to participate in furthering this archival work. With our public’s support we believe that we will reach our goal of consolidating an exceptional online archive accessible to a global public and instrumental for Wixaritari. If you have any digital materials relating to Wixarika art, history, or culture that you would like to make accessible to the public via our website, please contact us at [inquiries@wixarika.org](mailto:inquiries@wixarika.org).

If you would like to make a donation, please visit our secure donations page [here](#) and let us know if you are donating to our general fund or to the scholarship program by leaving us a note. See “Add special instructions to the seller”. We are a 501(c)3 nonprofit foundation and all donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. We thank you for your support.

***PAMPARIYUTSI***



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