



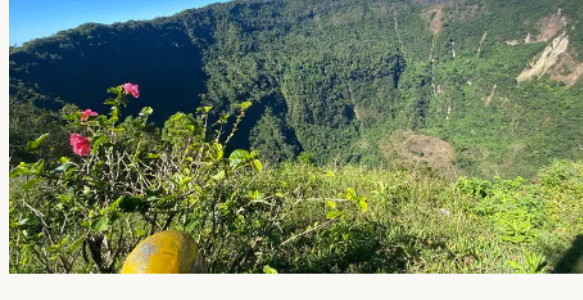
2023 MASCP travelers with the amazing Llorot mural at St Romero's home

Dear Friends of MASCP,

The 2024 MASCP trip to El Salvador is scheduled for June 9-16, 2024 and you are invited to join us! We sponsor these trips for three reasons: 1- Offering the opportunity to people in Madison to experience our sister city for themselves, 2- Renewing our friendship with the people of Arcatao and be witness to the joys and challenges of their lives 3- Bringing current personal stories from Arcatao and El Salvador to the Madison community and to Wisconsin's representatives in Congress.

The theme this year is water quality, water rights, and how sugar cane production affects water and environmental quality in El Salvador. To explore these areas, we'll be talking with social justice activists in San Salvador, visiting the organized southern community of Las Anonas where sugar cane is produced, and renewing friendships in Arcatao where our sister city is fighting to retain control of their water and avoid privatization.

We'll be exploring El Salvador, too. Some options are hiking El Boqueron, the volcano outside San Salvador, visiting Shicali Cerámica, a pottery workshop in El Salvador, and exploring St Romero's home, chapel, and meditation garden. Join the group now and help plan our itinerary!



El Boqueron



Shicali Cerámica

As usual, we'll be traveling with US El Salvador Sister City (USESSC) staff member, Zulma Tobar, who will be making all our travel, housing and activity arrangements in El Salvador. Depending on air fare, the total cost should be under \$2000. This amount includes all meals, transportation, visits and home stays as well as a payment to USESSC for the organizing, guiding and interpreting. Last year the total cost was around \$1700.

Interested? Have questions? Want more information?

Come to our annual informal gatherings/reunions!
Where: Finca Salvadoran Cafe, 2500 Rimrock Rd #105
Dates: February 17, March 16
Time: 10 AM-12 PM

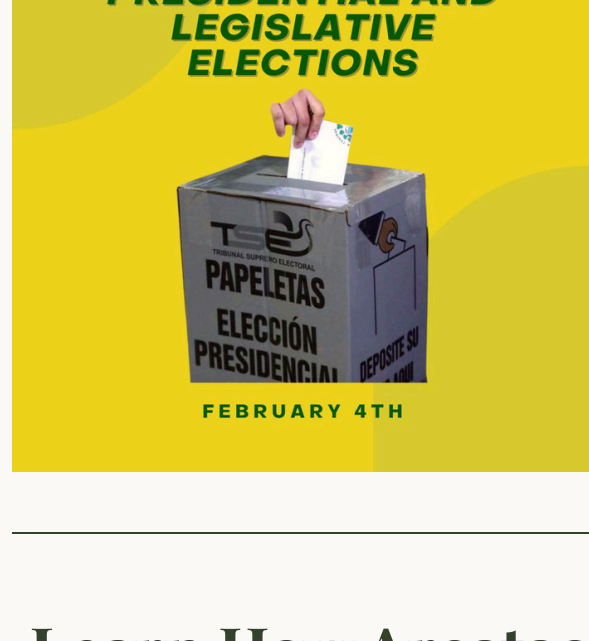
Or you can text Joan at 608 556-0717

Friends of MASCP, past travelers to El Salvador, curious about MASCP, lovers of great coffee and pupusas?

You are all invited to these gatherings! See you there!

Salvadoran Presidential and Legislative Elections, February 4, 2024

Presidential and legislative elections that took place in El Salvador on Sunday, February 4 were characterized by many irregularities. Our sistering partners from The Committee for the Development of El Salvador (CRIPDES) point out that "the rupture of democracy, irregularities and fraud in the electoral process (has) occurred since 2020". Please see a complete update [here](#).



US El Salvador Sister Cities writes "Community leaders (in El Salvador) are convinced that we need to continue the struggle to defend human rights and to organize ourselves." They ask the international community to continue observing and accompanying them as they struggle for democracy and social justice.

Learn How Arcatao and Madison Became Sister Cities During Wartime

Bombs were falling on Arcatao, El Salvador when Madison's Common Council voted to make it Madison's first sister city on April 1, 1986. Seven activists recount the events leading up to this moment in a new oral history published in the online "Living History Project" sponsored by the Madison Public Library (MPL).

Over 6 months in late 2022-23, we collected the interviews, photographs, documents, and bibliographic material that tell this little-known story. Dr. Molly Todd provided the extensive bibliography and MPL staff, Martin Alvarado and Neeyati Shah, did a terrific job guiding our work and managing the massive technical side of getting the material up on the "Living History" site.

"I have to tell you, this is invaluable stuff for me and my family. Thank you so very much!" - Antonio Portillo



Mr. Portillo, who now lives in Canada with his family

Interviewees in this collection include Antonio Portillo who was in sanctuary with his family in Madison in 1983-4; leaders in the sanctuary movement, Jenny Beatty and Bob Skloot; community activists, Marc Rosenthal and Mary Kay Baum; and Common Council alders, Billy Feitlinger, and Joe Szwaja.



" This was an issue that was a moral imperative...part of the purpose of the resolution was to raise public awareness that it was a very bad thing that the American government was involved financially and militarily in El Salvador."
- Billy Feitlinger, Madison Alder 1982

The stories in this collection illuminate a unique period of history and will be of special interest to anyone interested in the history of Madison, the history of El Salvador, and community involvement in the struggle for social justice in Central America.

Listen and view the collection [here](#).

"This is great! What a resource for us all, to learn more about the history of MASCP."

- Wisconsin Network for Peace and Justice

Arcatao is Requesting our Help



Youth workers outside their new office

Every year, the Arcatao Community Board of Directors prioritizes the projects that need attention in the community and requests our help buying materials for one of them. Last year, we helped buy materials to build an office for the youth workers. The year before, we bought the materials to put a new roof on the childcare center.

This year the Community Board of Directors is asking for our help buying the materials to rebuild a retaining wall that was destroyed during a flood last year. Our goal is to raise \$1000. As always, workers in Arcatao will provide the labor.

With the retaining wall gone, rainwater floods the lower level of the community cafeteria where food is stored and workers rent lodging at an affordable price. The cafeteria provides low-cost meals for many people every day and the rent provides another source of income for community projects. The retaining wall desperately needs to be repaired so this lower level can once again be usable.

If everyone receiving this newsletter donated \$30, we'd reach our goal and help make this project a reality! Please be as generous as you can. The Board of Directors in Arcatao has already expressed their deep gratitude in advance for all your help and generosity.

Donate \$30 (or any amount) today!

