

# Review: *Saving the Weavers*

Deb Brandon

Endangered Threads Documentaries (ETD) has released *Saving the Weavers: Small Assistance Programs for Maya Women in Highland Guatemala*, a 34-minute documentary focusing on ten dedicated people and their assistance programs. Guatemala's 36-year Civil War (1960-1996) decimated the indigenous Maya population of that country. Many of those who survived were widows with no means of support for themselves or their children. This documentary focuses on ten extraordinary people who saw the desperate need and dedicated years of their lives to establish small assistance programs and find markets for products made by Maya weavers.

Italian-Guatemalan-American Brenda Rosenbaum and her late husband Fred formed Mayan Hands in Guatemala City. American weaving expert and teacher Deborah Chandler subsequently joined the organization as the in-country manager. The late Jane Mintz of San Francisco founded Maya Traditions in Panajachel, and enlisted help from American Martha Lynd. Vey Smithers, an American from the east coast, opened the store Colibrí in Antigua. Maya leader Alida Pérez founded a large artisans guild in San Antonio Aguas Calientes, and opened a Maya textile museum and store in Antigua. Candis Krummel left a job on Capi-

tol Hill in Washington, DC, and headed to Santiago Atitlán, where she co-founded the Cojolya Association. María Concepción Cuc, a Maya working as a community organizer in Guatemala, moved with her husband, American Felipe Gonzales, to Washington State, where they run Moonflower Enterprises and other Internet businesses. And Pedro Marroquín, a young Maya born and raised in the Ixil Triangle, worked his way up to direct Codearteco, an assistance program for widows and orphans of the Civil War in San Juan Cotzal.

The documentary includes interviews with program founders and staff, and scenes of beneficiaries in highland Guatemala. It also provides background information on the devastating Civil War and how the war affected Maya women and their children.

As in all ETD documentaries, the camera work is superb, bringing the stories to life, and the interviews are extremely informative. The interviews concisely and clearly answer questions that viewers may have, giving us a taste of what's involved in the ongoing work of the groups represented in this documentary. The documentary acts as a teaser, leaving us curious for more information and wishing to participate in these programs to help save the weavers in any way possible.

*Saving the Weavers: Small Assistance Programs for Maya Women in Highland Guatemala* features a number of WARP members and is produced by WARP member Kathleen Vitale. It can be ordered from Endangered Threads Documentaries for \$20, plus shipping, at <http://www.endangeredthreads.org/>

## Mark Your Calendars Now

WARP 2011 Annual Meeting  
May 6-8, 2011  
YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly  
Black Mountain, NC

Black Mountain is 20 minutes from the Asheville Airport. For more information, see:  
<http://www.blueridgeassembly.org/>

We will have more information soon about program content, transportation options and registration details.