Whole Planet Foundation (WPF) funds microlending programs through Fundación Paraguaya in Paraguay where Guayakí sources yerba mate for tea which is sold in Whole Foods Market (WFM) stores. WPF is a WFM non-profit whose mission is to alleviate poverty by funding microlending programs where WFM sources products as a way to alleviate poverty and give back to our global communities.

Through the Whole Foods Market Team Member Volunteer Program, WFM gives Team Members the unique opportunity to travel abroad to learn about WPF, see where and how WFM products are grown, provide community service, experience and learn from other cultures, and challenge themselves by exploring exciting countries around the globe.
1. The volunteers arrived in Asunción, the capital of Paraguay to learn about Fundación Paraguaya and meet microcredit clients whose loans were funded by Whole Planet Foundation.

2. The team traveled to Cerrito School, a school for hotel management and agricultural training run by Fundación Paraguaya.

3. The team spent a week in Curuguaty to learn about the yerba mate Guayakí sources for their teas sold in WFM stores. The volunteers helped to build a system to provide fresh clean water for the Aché community.

4. Volunteers finished their program at Iguazú Falls, bordering Argentina and Brazil, together the largest falls in the world.
10 WFM Team Member Volunteers traveled to Asunción to visit Fundación Paraguaya, Whole Planet Foundation’s microlending partner in Paraguay. They met staff members and microcredit clients whose loans were funded by Whole Planet Foundation and learned about Fundación Paraguaya’s poverty alleviation program, the Poverty Stoplight. Traveling to the Cerrito Agricultural School, they met students who were learning agricultural skills and hotel management. The school is supported by Fundación Paraguaya. The team members traveled to Curuguaty where they learned about yerba mate, which Guayakí sources for teas sold in WFM stores. They supported the indigenous Aché community by helping to build systems to provide fresh clean water for the community. The volunteers experienced amazing food in Asunción and meals cooked over an open fire in Curuguaty by local chefs who prepared lunches for the team members and the entire community. Maria, their host and guide, shared the culture, food, traditions, and her love of Paraguay. The trip came to a close at Iguazú Falls, considered the largest group of waterfalls in the world.

TEAM
Annie Rose Hanson, Mid-Atlantic Regional Office
Ashley Gulizia, South Region, Winston Salem Store
Eduardo Arteaga, Northern California Region, Alameda Store
Heather Heiss, Rocky Mountain Region, Frisco Store
Lynn McNamee, North Atlantic Region, Dedham Store
Ryan Garrett, Southwest Region, Gateway Store
Sabina Zima, Midwest Region, Square One Store
Selina Serna, Global Office
Wendy Johnson, Northern California, Walnut Creek Store
Paul Jarvis, Rocky Mountain Regional Office

GROUP COORDINATORS
Katie Landry
Maria del Mar Zavala

PARAGUAY GUIDES
Maria Del Mar Zavala
Discover South America: Vanessa Torres

PROJECT AND COMMUNITY COORDINATORS
Benjamin Hawksbee
Nelson Garay
Guillermo Garay
Vicente Romero

WFM TEAM MEMBER VOLUNTEER PROGRAM MANAGER
Genie Bolduc
Day 1 - Wednesday, September 5 - The team arrived in Asunción. Dinner at El Café de Acá.

Day 2 - Thursday, September 6 - In the morning, TM volunteers participated in tourism and cultural learning in Asunción. For lunch, they attended a cooking class at Pakuri and were joined by Whole Planet Foundation’s John Kloninger. Dinner was a meal with Whole Planet Foundation partner Fundación Paraguaya staff for a Paraguayan asado meal at their head office.

Day 3 - Friday, September 7 - The team went to Escuela Agrícola Cerritor, the Cerrito School of Agriculture. They had lunch at a restaurant of a microcredit client of Fundación Paraguaya, whose loan Whole Planet Foundation has funded. Then they visited the Fundación Paraguaya microfinance office to meet with clients whose loans have been funded by WPF and interacted with Women’s Committee clients. They experienced disbursement and installment repayments, participated in a training session with clients who operate by implementing solidarity microfinance, and met clients that have participated in, or are participating in, a poverty mitigation contest.

Day 4 - Saturday, September 8 - This was a day of tourism in, and around the Paraguayan capital, visiting the Cathedral, the National “Panteón” and the old train station, one of the first in South America. Then off to visit the more modern area of Luque, part of the Gran Asunción metropolitan area, and the city of Areguá, the capital of Central Department that is known for its ceramic arts and also as the “city of strawberries”. The team stopped for lunch at El Café Francés. After lunch, a tour of San Bernadino on the shores of Ypacarai Lake in the Cordillera Department.

Day 5 - Sunday, September 9 - The first stop will be the city of Itá, the Capital of Ceramics. They traveled on to Sapucuai where they visited an old factory and railway station. The afternoon was free time to shop or wander the city of Asunción.

Day 6 - Monday, September 10 - The volunteers left for Curuguaty where Guayaki sources mate that is sold in Whole Foods Market stores.

Day 7 - Tuesday, September 11 - The volunteers worked on the clean water project and the food security project in the Aché community.

Day 8 - Wednesday, September 12 - Volunteers worked on the clean water project, had lunch with the Aché community, and visited with the children at the Montessori school, which Whole Foods Market helped Guayaki to fund and build the previous year.

Day 9 - Thursday, September 13 - The team helped local children build a school garden and then headed into the forest to plant yerba mate, learning about the Aché people’s distinction as the people of the forest. They were treated to songs of the forest by a very popular Argentine folk singer, Charo Bogarin.

Day 10 - Friday, September 14 - The team started on the school playground project, had lunch with the entire community, and replanted yerba mate in the nursery.

Day 11 - Saturday, September 15 - The team helped to build a school playground and had lunch with the Aché community. They exchanged cultural gifts and learned to shoot bows and arrows and had their hands and faces decorated in traditional fashion.

Day 12 - Sunday, September 16 - The team departed for Puerto Iguazú, crossing to Argentina on the ferry to see Iguazú Falls.

Day 13 - Monday, September 17 - This was a day to remember, with a visit to Iguazú Falls, one of the biggest waterfalls in the world!

Day 14 - Tuesday, September 18 - The time came to depart to head back home or onward for personal travel.
This microfinance institution created the Poverty Stoplight, a tool to measure and promote progress out of poverty. The team visited the head office to learn about Fundación Paraguaya’s microlending methodology. A field officer was presented a certificate for exemplary service, and cash award by Whole Planet Foundation’s Program Director for the Americas and the Caribbean, John Kloninger. The team attended center meetings, met individual microcredit clients, and had lunch at the restaurant of a Fundación Paraguaya client whose loan was funded by Whole Planet Foundation.

Whole Planet Foundation has supported Fundación Paraguaya since 2011, funding $1,501,000 to support their microlending programs in Paraguay. Fundación Paraguaya has a 97% repayment rate and 68,910 active borrowers with 51,341 whose loans are funded by Whole Planet Foundation.*

*As of 12/31/2018
Whole Foods Market Team Member Volunteers attended a center meeting to see staff and clients in action, disbursing and repaying loans. They saw the structure of center meetings, one of the pillars of the success of the group lending methodology that Whole Planet Foundation funds around the globe where Whole Foods Market sources products. They had lunch at the restaurant of a client of Fundación Paraguay whose loan was funded by Whole Planet Foundation. She shared her experience of getting a microloan and the challenges and successes of running her restaurant.
GUAYAKÍ HAS DONATED $78,323 TO ALLEVIATE POVERTY THROUGH WHOLE PLANET FOUNDATION

Guayakí pledged $10,000 in 2019 as a supplier partner to Whole Planet Foundation in empowering entrepreneurs through microcredit. Guayakí sources yerba mate in Paraguay. As of December 31, 2019 Guayakí has given $78,323 to fund 2,149 microloans to create 11,863 opportunities. Guayakí shares: “Our vision holds that yerba mate culture will power our Market Driven Regeneration™ business model to regenerate ecosystems and create vibrant communities.” To learn more about Guayakí, their products, and their positive impact visit their website at https://guayaki.com.

GUAYAKÍ IN CURUGUATY

Guayakí sources yerba mate in Paraguay for tea, which is sold in Whole Foods Market stores. WFM Team Member Volunteers traveled to Curuguaty where they learned about the cultivation, harvesting and processing of yerba mate. They learned about the relationship between Guayakí and the Aché community and how they are working together to preserve the Aché culture and way of life, while improving their community through various initiatives. Through the Whole Foods Market Team Member Volunteer Program, Whole Foods Market has contributed to these initiatives with Guayakí, through funding and community service. Below are photos of the team in their morning wake up meetings to drink mate and plan the day, the Guayakí team and a famous Argentine singer, Charo Bogarin shared traditional folk songs with the team in the forest.
2017: MONTESSORI SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY CENTER

Whole Foods Market Team Members built a yurt Montessori school and community center, funded by Whole Foods Market and Guayaki. This year, the team visited the school to see it in session and to meet the teachers and their students.

2018: PROVIDING ACCESS TO CLEAN WATER FOR THE COMMUNITY

Whole Foods Market helped fund a water tower and water system with Guayaki to provide clean water for the Aché community.
The volunteers helped to build a playground for the Montessori school that was built for the community by Guayaki and Whole Foods Market in 2017.
Guayaki sources mate from this community which is then sold in Whole Foods Market stores. The team learned about cultivating and planting mate.
PLANTING MATE
The team and community members carried yerba mate plants into the forest to plant under the existing tree canopy, to create a future mate forest.
Pictured above: cooking class with Pakuri. Pictured below: lunches in the Aché community made by chefs who camped out there to cook for the team.
The WFM Team Member Volunteers learned some Aché traditions like how to shoot an arrow, and traditional body and face painting.
**SABINA**

“A trip of a lifetime. This trip has changed my life in a way that is hard to describe. I came back with such a warm feeling inside and it is still with me. To know about all the lives that we touch with our giving is amazing. I have always been a person who believes that giving back is the way to live life to its fullest. I constantly find myself reminiscing about the trip and it’s hard for me to pick a few things that stand out, the whole trip and its ideals were life changing and I am truly blessed to have been a part of it. The WFM TM Volunteer Program is a truly great program that is both insightful, heartwarming and full of education and friendship.”

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**SELINA**

“I will most treasure having had the opportunity to see the work of Whole Planet Foundation in action and meeting the clients who are benefiting from the funding provided by WFM team members and customers.”

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**EDUARDO**

“The most impact for me was connecting with the MFI Fundación Paraguaya and learning so much from them, talks with branch managers, meeting with recipients in their weekly meeting, seeing the community, eating at a microloan recipient's restaurant, etc. The greatest thing was just seeing the happiness and positivity from the clients. They live very humbly but have a great sense of pride in the work that they are doing.

I loved everything we learned about Guayakí. They are the most amazing partner, really similar to WFM in having a higher purpose and doing positive things that impact so many people. It was great to see how much we, Guayakí and WFM, have done for the community. It was endearing to see how well received and loved the Guayakí team was in the community. This trip allowed me to actually see firsthand the difference that my contribution to WPF has helped to make in people’s lives.”

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**LYNN**

“Paraguay was a fantastic experience. I wrote my essay application with the theme of connecting with the people we would meet in Paraguay. I didn’t realize the best connection would end up being the people I traveled with from Whole Foods Market. It was wonderful learning firsthand how the microcredit clients are able to use the funding to help raise themselves and their families out of poverty. It is hard to explain in a few sentences the difference of hearing and reading about this compared to physically meeting them. We visited a group and toured their community and homes. They were so very proud to share their lives with us and how they are working to make them even better. The microcredit staff members are some of the most dedicated and caring people I have met. These people truly care about their clients and are fully engaged in their path to success. I am honored to be a member of a company who embraces our global community. Being awarded the opportunity to experience this global vision first hand has empowered me to share our impact and show the difference we can all make.”

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**SELINA**

“As a long-time team member, this experience was a reminder that Whole Foods Market’s mission and core values remain at work to give back to some of our most important stakeholders.”

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**ASHLEY**

“Best trip of my life. To be welcomed into the local communities was really a treat, really understanding how communities interact with each other and how they are using the microcredit loans is really exciting to see hands on! We need to keep our values alive and this is a great way to do this!”

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**ANNIE**

“The entire trip was a life changing experience. The program provided us with a once in a lifetime opportunity to experience a new culture, see the power of microcredit loans and community in action, while meeting new friends along the way.”
2018 WFM TM VOLUNTEER PROGRAM IMPACT PARAGUAY

10 TEAM MEMBERS TRAVELED TO PARAGUAY
22 MICROCREDIT CLIENTS MET
1 FIELD OFFICER AWARD GIVEN
1 COMMUNITY WATER SYSTEM INSTALLED
1 SCHOOL PLAYGROUND BUILT
1 SCHOOL GARDEN BUILT AND PLANTED
MANY MATE PLANTS PLANTED