Whole Planet Foundation (WPF) funds microlending programs through Fundación Paraguaya in Paraguay where Guayaki 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 with WPF 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.
The team traveled to Cerritos School, a school for hotel management and agricultural training run by Fundación Paraguaya.

The team finished their program at Iguazú Falls, bordering Argentina and Brazil, together the largest falls in the world.

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.

The team spent almost a week in Curuguaty to learn about the yerba mate Guayaki sources for their teas sold in WFM stores. They helped to build new recycling and waste disposal centers and provided new equipment for repurposing plastic.
11 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. They visited the Fundación Paraguaya supported Cerrito Agricultural School where students learn agricultural skills and hotel management. The team members traveled to Curuguaty where they learned about yerba mate which Guayaki sources for teas sold in WFM stores. They supported the indigenous Aché community by building new waste collection stations and a large composting system, along with a machine funded by Whole Foods Market, which breaks down plastic to monetize recycling efforts in 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
Anna Berman (Global, Global Office)
Michelle Brown (North Atlantic Region, Portland Store)
Jeri Bice (South Region, Braselton Distribution Center)
Todd Wasserman (South Region, Savannah Store)
Tanya Heyn (Southern Pacific Region, Chandler Store)
David Mohrhaus (Rocky Mountain Region, SouthGlenn Store)
Brandon Tupper (Southern Pacific, Queen Store)
Samantha J. Krevalin (Southern Pacific, Kahala Mall Store)
Caesar Escobar (Northern California, Los Altos Store)

GROUP COORDINATORS
Katie Landry
Benjamin Hawksbee
Maria Del Mar Zavala

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

PROJECT AND COMMUNITY COORDINATORS
Guayaki team:
Benjamin Hawksbee
Nelson Garay
Guillermo Garay
Vicente Romero

WFM TEAM MEMBER VOLUNTEER PROGRAM MANAGER
Genie Bolduc

WHOLE PLANET FOUNDATION
Fundación Paraguaya
Discover South America
Guayaki
Whole Foods Market
2019 PARAGUAY ITINERARY
AUGUST 27 - SEPTEMBER 9

ITINERARY - 2 WEEKS

Day 1 - Tuesday, August 27 - The team arrived in Asunción.

Day 2 - Wednesday, August 28 - TM volunteers experienced tourism and cultural learning in Asunción.

Day 3 - Thursday, August 29 - After morning tourism, the team participated in a cooking class at Pakuri and met with Whole Planet Foundation partner Fundación Paraguaya staff for an introductory Paraguayan asado meal at their head office.

Day 4 - Friday, August 30 - The team visited the Fundación Paraguaya’s Luque microfinance office with clients whose loans have been funded by Whole Planet Foundation 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. They had lunch at an FP client’s restaurant in Luque and spent the afternoon visiting local markets.

Day 5 - Saturday, August 31 - TM Volunteers transferred to Escuela Agrícola Cerrito, Fundación Paraguaya’s hotel and agricultural school for an overnight stay with dinner, soccer and a bonfire with students.

Day 6 - Sunday, September 1 - The team departed for Curuguaty where Guayaki sources yerba mate and supports the Ache indigenous community.

Day 7 - Monday, September 2 - After learning about mate, the community service begins for the TMs with a tour of the projects and discussion of the work to come.

Day 8 - Tuesday, September 3 - Team Member Volunteers worked on building a compost system and visited the Food Sovereignty Project.

Day 9 - Wednesday, September 4 - Volunteers worked on waste disposal units and visited a local waterfall with the community.

Day 10 - Thursday, September 5 - The machine for breaking down plastic was installed and training was given to the Ache responsible for operating the machine. In the afternoon the team visited the Montessori school, a yurt that was built by WFM and the community on an earlier Whole Foods Market Team Member Volunteer Program and played sports with the children.

Day 11 - Friday, September 6 - Team Members participated in a clean up day in the community with community members, a training for the Ache on waste disposal in the newly constructed system, a lunch with the entire community and cultural events including bow and arrows, arts and crafts.

Day 12 - Saturday, September 7 - The team departed for Puerto Iguazú, Argentina to see Iguazú Falls.

Day 13 - Sunday, September 8 - They visited Iguazú Falls and spent the rest of the day at leisure.

Day 14 - Monday, September 9 - Team Members arrive home.
This microfinance institution created the “Poverty Stoplight” (outlined in the book Who Owns Poverty) a tool to measure and promote progress out of poverty. The team visited the head office to learn about it and their microlending methodology. They participated in an award ceremony for a field officer who was presented a certificate and cash award by Whole Planet Foundation’s John Kloninger. They attended center meetings and 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 $1,701,000 to support their microlending programs in Paraguay. Fundación Paraguaya has a 95% repayment rate and 69,642 active borrowers with 53,480 whose loans are funded by Whole Planet Foundation.*

*As of 09/31/2019

Team Member Volunteers visited Whole Planet Foundation’s microlending partner in Paraguay, Fundación Paraguaya in Asunción.
Whole Foods Market Team Member Volunteers attended a center meeting and are pictured above with the microcredit clients they met whose loans were funded by Whole Planet Foundation through Fundación Paraguaya.

The team was treated to dinner with Fundación Paraguaya staff. The team traveled to El Cerrito, a school funded by Fundación Paraguaya that teaches agriculture and hotel management where they met students who shared their studies. They played a game of soccer with the students.
GUAYAKI HAS DONATED $424,477 TO ALLEVIATE POVERTY THROUGH WHOLE PLANET FOUNDATION

Guayaki pledged $10,000 in 2019 as a supplier partner to Whole Planet Foundation in empowering entrepreneurs through microcredit. Guayaki sources yerba mate in Paraguay. As of December 31, 2019 Guayaki has given $78,323 to fund 2,149 microloans to create 11,863 opportunities. Guayaki 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 Guayaki, their products and their positive impact visit their website at https://guayaki.com.

GUAYAKI IN CURUGUATY

Guayaki sources Yerba mate in Paraguay for their 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 for shipment to Guayaki. They learned about the relationship between Guayaki 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 with Guayaki through funding and community service.
SERVICE PROJECTS IN THE ACHÉ COMMUNITY OVER THE YEARS

2017: MONTESSORI SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY CENTER

Whole Foods Market Team Members built a yurt to house a Montessori school and community center, funded by Whole Foods Market and Guayaki.

2018: ACCESS TO CLEAN WATER

Whole Foods Market helped fund a water tower and water system with Guayaki to provide clean water for the Aché community.

2019: WASTE MANAGEMENT - THE ISSUE

The previous way of dealing with waste in the community has been to burn it. This includes plastics and other recyclables. The Aché had recycling bins but they were small and not widely used. Whole Foods Market assisted Guayaki, in their commitment to support the community by funding 5 recycling units, 2 large composting bins and a plastic recycling machine that breaks down plastic and melts it to create baskets that can be used or sold.
WASTE MANAGEMENT - RECYCLING BINS

One of the waste management projects was to build recycling stations that are convenient to the community and plentiful enough to use with ease. Whole Foods Market funded, and Team Member Volunteers and the community helped build 5 recycling stations in the Aché community.
Whole Foods Market funded and Team Member Volunteers helped community members to build 2 large composting units for the Ache.
WASTE MANAGEMENT - CLEAN UP DAY

WFM Team Member Volunteers cleaned up trash with the children of the community to help promote recycling and composting for the future.
Whole Foods Market funded installation of a machine that breaks down plastics to recycle it into useful objects like baskets which can be used or sold.

Team Members carried yerba mate plants into the forest to plant them under the existing canopy, hoping to create their own future mate forest.
The WFM Team Member Volunteers learned some Ache traditions like how to shoot an arrow, and respect for their home, the forest.
JERI
“All my passions collided in this company-sponsored trip. I worked for a company I believe in, who sends me to a country and a people I've always dreamed of visiting, to eat the most delicious food imaginable and make friends with a genuine group of people. I will be grateful for the experience for a lifetime.”

CAESAR
“It is life changing.”

ANNA
“The TM Volunteer program is the opportunity of a lifetime. I began by packing for a trip with fellow team members and ended my trip hugging tribal leaders in tears next to lifelong friends. I left respecting the work of our foundation and returned home having experienced first hand the lives that desperately need our attention. I know names and faces of the women entrepreneurs and held hands with the children whose lives are changed by the hard work of Whole Planet Foundation. I will forever be humbled and treasure the lessons and memories made on this trip. I will never forget how far human compassion travels and what mankind can accomplish if we band together.”

SAMANTHA
“I have wanted to go on one of these trips since my first day at Whole Foods Market. This trip reinvigorated my passion for Whole Foods Market and our ability to affect people worldwide through our core values. It has given me a new appreciation in my role as Associate Store Team Leader, where I can promote and educate our team members on my experience.”

DAVE
“The yerba mate is grown right in the forest and there is no clearing of forest to grow the product.”

“Meeting the microcredit clients was truly amazing.”

“It is truly rewarding to help the community with building projects. We completed building 2 compost bins and 5 recycling centers. It means a lot to leave something behind that will be used by the community for years.”

TANYA
“For being my first time out of the country, it greatly exceeded my expectations. I felt extremely safe the entire time. I truly never wanted to leave! Life-changing!”

MICHELLE
“I learned how Guayaki Yerba mate is grown and harvested in a natural tropical forest, partnering with the Aché community who prepares the harvested mate leaves and sends them to Guayaki. Guayaki then creates products that are attractive in our culture so that we can enjoy mate ourselves. Guayaki also helps the Aché community through education, crop development, waste management, and funding community projects. I was impressed with the partnership between the Aché community and Guayaki. Both parties benefit. The Aché are able to maintain their community values while Guayaki is able to not only sell a product, but show the world that profit can include more than just making money.”

TODD
“First off, i was honored to be selected. I am proud to be an ambassador for the program, but on a daily basis to be able to share how WFM and WPF work to improve our communities.”
2019 WFM TM VOLUNTEER PROGRAM IMPACT PARAGUAY

11 TEAM MEMBERS TRAVELED TO PARAGUAY

XXX MICROCREDIT CLIENTS MET

5 WASTE DISPOSAL UNITS BUILT

2 LARGE COMMUNITY COMPOST BINS BUILT

100 KILOS OF TRASH COLLECTED

30 CHILDREN ENGAGED IN COMMUNITY CLEAN UP

150 MATE PLANTS PLANTED

1 FIELD OFFICER AWARD GIVEN

WHOLE PLANET FOUNDATION