HELP Honduras UPDATE Feb 2012

Following is a brief update following the visit of Rotarians to Honduras.

TEGUCIGALPA

HELP Honduras Team

January 28th, Ron and Elaine Ross from Castlegar Sunrise 2000 RC, plus Heather More from Creston arrived in Tegucigalpa. A meeting with AYO Staff was held on Jan 29th and the three then started, on Jan 30th, to take pictures of the Market Children and youth sponsored by Rotary Clubs, Individuals, Global Grant #25519, plus DSGs from D5080, 5060 and 5020. The pictures were taken on Jan 30, Jan 31 and Feb 1, at a school one block from the AYO Office/Clinic. The usual location in the condemned car park near the markets was considered too dangerous. On Feb 2, the pictures were taken at a community center near the Peri Sur Market. The three were joined by DGND Norm McCarvell from Nelson Rotary on Feb 1.

Taking pictures at Peri Sur was challenging. Someone had stolen the service conductors to the building, presumably to sell as scrap, so there was no power and no lights. AYO ran an extension cord out the building, across the parking area, over a retaining wall and to a store below, where it was plugged into an outlet. They plugged in their computers and one 100watt bulb to light the picture area. The light gave off a dull glow. We set up where light came in the entrance, and it was enough to take pictures.

Feb 3rd and 4th, were taken up by the D4250 sponsored Pilot Project Fair. Bill Feyrer from Victoria Harbourside, Stan Gaskarth from Comox, plus Chris and Burgit Chart, from Nelson, arrived on Feb 2nd, and attended the Project Fair. Norm McCarvell left for Nicaragua on Feb 5th.

On Feb 6th Ron, Elaine, Heather, Bill, Stan, Chris and Burgit went to the Dump School to take pictures there. The photos covered 3 dump communities. They were joined by Real de Minas Rotarians, plus three Rotarians from D5240 in Southern California. The Real de Minas Rotary Club had just built a kitchen at the school, to enable the stuff to prepare hot meals for the children. There is one more classroom under construction as well. A new wash area was almost completed, just in front of the washrooms, that we learned had been funded by Wall Mart.

On Feb 7th, Ron and Elaine left for Canada, but Bill, Stan, Chris and Burgit left for Camayagua to look at unrelated water projects there. Heather stayed in Tegucigalpa to greet Gwen Telling plus 6 others who went to Santa Barbara on Feb 9th.

Children and Youth

The total number of children and youth who had their pictures taken in Tegucigalpa, was approximately 2,000. There were a number, who for various reasons, could not attend and so the total number will be approximately 2,300 when AYO register and take pictures of the rest. Final totals will not be available for about a month. This year a decision was made to slightly reduce the numbers, by attrition, in order to allow for reduction of Future Vision funding in Global Grant #25519, and anticipated reduction in the 2012/13 Global Grant.
**Sustainability**

The Rotary Foundation has interpreted “sustainability” to mean that the program must continue operation after Future Vision Grants are ended. They have suggested that they will gradually reduce the amount of funds given to buy “stuff” like school uniforms, shoes, books and school supplies, as part of each successive Global Grant. The last funds for this purpose could occur as early as the 2012/13 year.

The Foundation, however, has indicated that they will fund any initiative that enhances the sustainability of the overall program. This includes the Mothers Program, and the Graduates Employment Training. The objective of the Mothers Program is to allow the mothers to increase their income by expanding their business, or start a new one and thus be able to pay for part or all of the “stuff” needed for their children to attend school. The objective of the Graduates Program is to enable them to obtain gainful employment and perhaps sponsor younger children, either their siblings or others.

Four steps toward sustainability occurred during this trip as follows:

1) Honduran sponsors came forward.
2) Several students withdrew because they are now better off financially.
3) It was decided to charge all mothers a membership fee.
4) Graduates have continued to sponsor their market children.

As a result of the new emphasis on sustainability and being able to measure outcomes and impact of the program, the AyO staff were challenged to define baselines and indicators that could be measured and reported on. AyO will continue to make monthly reports (in Spanish) on the progress of the program.

**Meetings with AYO Staff**

On Feb 4th, Saturday, all 8 Rotarians met with 4 members of the AYO Staff, Norma (Director), Fredy (Administrator), Emma (Scholarship Coordinator) and Oneida (Mothers Program Coordinator). We briefly reviewed the existing programs, and then asked them to outline any new programs that would help the Market Children and their families.

**2012 Components**

The AYO Staff now operate a number of sub-programs that benefit the children and their parents. These include:
1) Parenting Program, that teaches the mothers how to better rear their children. They do not learn this from their parents, and unless they know how to deal with this subject, will not impart this wisdom to their own children.

2) Mothers Program, basic program. This year 200 Mothers will receive instruction, for 3 months on marketing, book keeping, sales, inventory control, to develop their entrepreneurial skills in order that they can expand or improve their business. When successful they will be expected to contribute to, or pay all of the cost of putting their children to school.

3) Mothers Program, advanced program. This year 60 women will be selected after the basic program is completed, to receive an additional 6 to 8 months training on the above subjects that will enable them to start a micro business and qualify for micro credit.

4) Sewing Program. Ten mothers have been taught to sew so that they may establish their own contract sewing business. Micro credit is available. The graduates are now sewing some of the uniforms for the Market Children.

5) Graduates Job Search Program. Graduates are taught how to search for jobs, write resumes, and interview strongly. Rotarians in 3 clubs will be asked to mentor the students and provide job shadowing opportunities.

6) Youth Clubs. The youth develop leadership skills, as well as learning the responsibility expected of them in life. The 4 WAY TEST is taught, as the basis of the program. Youth are taught the dangers of, substance abuse and sexually transmitted disease.

7) Medical Clinic. A Doctor is in attendance 5 days a week, in the morning, and a nurse is available all day for 5 days. Classes which deal with hygiene are taught at the market locations.

8) Counselling for family problems. A psychologist is on staff to deal with emotional problems, child and spousal abuse, which in the social strata of these families is very extensive.

9) Computer classes.

10) Adult Literacy classes.

ITEMS 2, 3 & 4 were funded by Global Grant #25519.

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Proposed Additions

The AyO Staff have proposed that funding be sought to add the following components to the program.

1) Early Childhood Stimulation. This would include a pre-natal component, as well as daycare and a nutritional component.

2) Increased Youth Activities to include, sports, cultural activities, music etc. If space was available a library, chess sets, and a/v equipment could be purchased.

3) Peace and Conflict Resolution. Violence prevention would be appropriate in Honduras, which is currently one of the most violent nations on earth.

4) Environmental Education. This would include family gardens, and workplace safety.
5) Strengthen the Medical Program. This would include a second psychologist, plus a social worker and additional medicine.

6) Prevention of adolescent pregnancy.

7) A program to enable the families to improve their housing. About 60% have dirt floors and only a few have running water and sewage disposal. AYO staff will send pictures to Elaine.

8) Workshops on responsible parenthood.

It was agreed that the staff would provide estimates and look at how best to deliver the programs. This could include the replication of them to the general school population, particularly items 3, 4, 6, and 8.

**FOR GG #3, 2013 TENTATIVE PLANS**

On February 8, Rotarians Kaminsky, Ross, Gaskarth, Chart & Feyrer met to look at a tentative plan for a GG#3 for the calendar year 2013. Subject to costing and numbers of participants, the following outline was proposed:

1) Mothers program be continued with the same numbers with possibly an increase for inflation and consideration of lessons learned in the pilot program (GG #1).

2) Continue employment enhancement program the job specific/vocational students including their scholarships.

3) Initiate a pilot program to prevent violence and conflict together with a program to prevent teenage pregnancies. This would require the hiring of a social worker.

4) Investigate the costs and benefits of an early childhood stimulation pilot program.

5) Support a reduced number of primary school scholarships. Charge the mothers a nominal fee per family to participate in the program to emphasise the value of the program. Charge would be in the order of 10 Hlp/month ($0.50/month).

6) Total value of GG to be similar to GG for 2012 ($110,000) excluding D5080 unmatched club contributions.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

On Feb 1st, while we were taking pictures we were approached by Rene, who is currently in 3rd year medicine at the public university. Rene has been in the program for years, and has always been one of the student leaders. We have seen him every year helping to organize the younger children and helping the AYO staff. He asked us to give his scholarship to another student, because he and his sister had started a dress shop, and were making enough money to support themselves in university. He said that he would continue to volunteer with the program, because he thought it was so important to the children.

Another student, that we did not meet, because he was starting classes, did the same thing, so with his, Rene’s and Rene’s sister’s scholarship, that was 3 more youth that could be helped.
The youth leaders were on site helping to entertain and occupy the young children while they waited for their pictures to be taken. Don Kaminsky asked one of the girls to give us a presentation that they were making to the children at the schools. Without any review or time to prepare she gave us a 10 minute presentation on “The 4 Way Test” and how it should be applied.

Two of our favourite young staff members, Sylvia and Samaria, had both had babies, so were no longer working for AYO. Samaria brought her baby to the school so we could see him. Sylvia had a little girl. Both Sylvia and Samaria are married.

**District 4250 Pilot Project Fair**

Because D4250 is a Pilot District, they decided to hold a separate Project Fair, Feb 2, 3 and 4, rather than attend the earlier regular Project Fair in Costa Rica. The primary focus was Micro Credit and Water, but there was interest in Education and Literacy as well. A display booth was rented by HELP Honduras, and manned by several of the Rotarians, from Canada who attended the Fair. The objective was to show the CRCID Flag and hopefully meet some Rotarians who will support the HELP Honduras Programs, in the future.

From left to right, in the photo are; Dr. Don Kaminsky from Tegucigalpa Rotary and the originator of the Tegucigalpa Market Children Program, Elaine Ross, from Castlegar Sunrise 2000, who takes the pictures and prepares the Sponsorship Certificates, and Bill Feyrer, D5020 CRCID Representative and Monitor. Not shown are Ron Ross, Norm McCarvell, Chris and Brigit Chart, Heather More, and Stan Gaskarth, who were in Tegucigalpa, attending the Fair and visiting the Market and Dump Children Program.

Pictures of the various components of the HELP Honduras Program were displayed, and some decorative burlap bags sewn by the ladies taking the sewing classes were sold to attendees as well.

Three Rotarians, who visited the booth, from 2 clubs in D5240, Simi Sunrise and Westlake Village Sunrise visited the school near the Dump where pictures were being taken on the following Monday.

While at the Fair, the HELP Honduras Rotarians also met with representatives of RAGM and World Vision to investigate possible future co operation

**HONDURAN SPONSORS**

Last year there were two Rotarian Sponsors, Don Kaminsky and Raul Sanchez, the President of San Miguel de Heredia. We presented Raul’s certificate at the club meeting on Jan 31st, and one member, Francisco Duron said he would get more.
While we were at the Dump School on Feb 6th, DGN Carmen Villalta sponsored one student in the name of her son, Julio Caesar Villalta. Then the President of Real de Minas, Mario Hung sponsored one and his girlfriend Maria Schonenberg said she would find more. She sent out a message on her Blackberry and got 5 more before the afternoon was over. This is a picture of Mario and Maria with their student.

Don Kaminsky sponsored a child in the name of his grand daughter.

Two AYO Staff members, Norma and Edgardo sponsored a secondary student.

Not to be outdone, Chris and Birgit Chart, from Nelson decided to sponsor additional students in the name of their Selkirk Veterinary Clinic.

DISTRICT 5240 ROTARIANS

On Feb 6th, three Rotarians from 2 clubs in D5240, in Southern California, who were in Tegucigalpa for the Project Fair, came with Carmen Villalta, to watch and help. Earnest Gilbert, President of Simi Sunrise and Heather Frankle decided to sponsor a secondary student in his club’s name, and Nick Frankle decided to sponsor a primary student in the name of Westlake Village Sunrise. Heather Frankle said that they would go home and get more sponsors.

Santa Barbara

At the time of writing of this update, eight Creston Rotarians and friends are still in Santa Barbara. This is Gwen Telling, Richard McMahon, Heather More, Christine Miller, Ed & Marion Rivas, John & Jean Partington. Gwen Telling has sent pictures and email to advise that they opened the new secondary school at Quebrada, and have taken pictures of some of the kids attending school in Santa Barbara. The new school has been named “Republica de Canada” in their honour. There are 70 students attending, that would otherwise have finished school after grade 6,
since there was no secondary school until Gwen and her family and friends decided to build it.

Danli

London Rotary are finalising plans to visit Danli in April. Discussions are underway to determine whether the program can be expanded to include components similar to those in Tegucigalpa. The Danli Rotarians are going ahead with registering children.