



Behrhorst

Partners for Development

2411 S. Superior Street, Milwaukee, WI 53207, www.behrhorst.org

September 2009



Letter from the President

Dear Friends of BPD,

For many of us in the U.S. the end of summer generates stories and snapshots of children playing in water. In a community “spray park” children giggled and laughed in ever-changing spurts, streams, and showers of colorful sprinklers and fountains. In backyards and driveways children grabbed hoses, washed cars and sprayed brothers and sisters. And in kitchens and bathrooms children dawdled in ingenious ways while washing hands and brushing teeth with streams of tap water and too-full basins. In the highlands of Guatemala the “water stories” are very different. They are the stories of partnerships—community members, municipal authorities, ABPD staff, and BPD donors—working together to bring running water to communities. They are the stories of improved health and enhanced quality of life that come from access to water. And, they are the stories of children: Access to water makes it possible for children, at least on occasion, to enjoy the simple pleasure of “washing” super balls in basins of clean water.

In this issue of the newsletter we are pleased to share with you a story and snapshots of the complex and challenging water project in Colonia Choatalun. Construction of this project continues, with the end now finally in sight. Completion is expected to improve the lives of families in Colonia Choatalun in numerous ways. And, we expect, make it more likely that children in this community, too, will experience the simple pleasure that comes from a basin of clean water.

In addition to the update on Colonia Choatalun in this issue of the newsletter you’ll also read about two groups of volunteers who worked in partnership with BPD to build latrines and provide dental services. Edwin Alvarez has recently joined the ABPD staff in Chimaltenango as an agricultural technician—you’ll learn more about him on page 5. We’re always pleased when donors are able to visit BPD communities, and you can read the reflections of recent visitors on page 2.

Clearly, recent months have been busy. The need for water and other community development projects continues. As always, thanks for your interest, commitment and generous support that allow the work of BPD to continue.

Narra Smith Cox, BPD Board President

Critical Partnerships Result in Life Changing Moments

BPD recently received the following comments from donors after their visits to Guatemala.

People often say a certain event or activity was a “life changing” moment. This September will be my 30th anniversary as a Rotarian and I have participated in many different fund raisers, activities, conferences and meetings over those years. However, none had the eye-opening, gratitude-filled, heart-felt feeling of appreciation and love for mankind as Elin and I felt when we visited Cojomachaj. Words just cannot describe what we saw in the eyes of those villagers who had so little and felt so blessed that they then had running water and sanitation facilities.

This past year has been a very trying time due to the economy, and I did find some clubs had to scale back from their prior year’s contributions. However, the previous projects’ success, the honesty, integrity and resourcefulness of BPD, and finding more clubs who have heard about the completed projects now wanting to participate have all contributed to another milestone achieved. I only wish I could convince some of the Rotarians to participate in a visit to see the results—they, too, will have a life changing moment.

Rick Lawrence

For the past three years, Rick has led an effort to raise money from several Rotary Clubs to pay for four water projects and hundreds of gray water filters, stoves and latrines.

*life
changing*

We noticed the vision and mission statements on the wall in Manuel’s office, and proceeded on a magical journey seeing and grasping intuitively what wonderful people you have on your staff, and what special people you are working with in San Martin. Doña Rosa, the iron woman, is all and more than words can describe. The 900-foot-deep well, the enormous diesel engine to generate the electricity to run the pump, the additional thousand vertical feet to the two huge storage tanks and the gravity flow delivery to 270 households were breathtaking.

Then, to visit three or four homes and see the benefits of running water, gray water filters and plans for using the filtered gray water for watering some trees for firewood and fruit trees simply completed the picture. Stoves in the kitchens saving significant amounts of fire wood and venting the smoke from the homes simply iced the cake.

The presence of community councils and your staff’s ability to integrate them into your projects virtually ensures the sustainability

of your work. Sustainability is the Achilles’ heel of many of the Rotary water projects that we have visited. Congratulations. Thank you for sharing your wonderful work with us.

Ann and Mike Moore

The Moores are former Peace Corps volunteers who spent two years running the Community Action Agency in Denver followed by several years in various community development organizations.

*a magical
journey*

In 2009, the Himalayan Dental Relief Project (HDRP) and our partner Global Humanitarian Expeditions (GHE) continued a third year of working together with your organization to bring critical dental care to Guatemalan children in need. This partnership between three like-minded, results-oriented charitable organizations increased our joint capacity to reach more children with direct care. We are deeply grateful for this partnership with BPD—for the wonderful staff and on-the-ground support.

Himalayan Dental Relief is dedicated to bringing direct dental care to children, in partnership with GHE which manages volunteer recruitment and logistics. ABPD is deeply rooted in the Mayan Highland communities and has strong relationships with the local communities and schools. Tying these strengths together, ABPD selects appropriate communities and makes on-the-ground decisions on clinic locations and patient schedules. HDRP volunteers arrive and get right to work—maximizing the number of children for whom we can provide critical first-time dental care.

The joint staff is also gaining strength, because HDRP, GHE and ABPD staff know the steps and work together as an effective team. We are particularly grateful to Marily Girón for her skill as a coordinator, handling logistics and communication. She is an invaluable asset to the clinic—bridging cultural gaps, dealing with language barriers and handling most any issue that arises. We are also grateful to the rest of the BPD staff who seem to be able to repair any machine that breaks, explain complex dental issues to teachers and families and pitch in anywhere that is needed—all with good humor and friendship that make each clinic a very special place to work.

Many thanks for our partnership,

Laurie Mathews & Kim Troggio

Laurie is the Project Director for Himalayan Dental Relief and Kim is the Director of Global Humanitarian Expeditions. They have hosted seven dental camps with BPD since 2007, treating 3,090 children with a value of \$814,100 in dental care. Volunteers over the three years include 34 dentists, 12 hygienists and 59 non-medical volunteers.

*dental care
partnership*

Bridge Builders volunteers help the parents of these children build latrines in the village of Xetzitzi.



Our team of ten traveled from Seattle to the community of Xetzitzi, Guatemala. Several on the team were making their first trip while others were returning for a second time. We arrived in Xetzitzi to a warm welcome with lots of clapping, speeches and collective anticipation for the days to come. Everyone was full of smiles and pure happiness. After the ceremony ended we got started building latrines with our designated local "project manager." What a joy to work together as a team to bring a basic necessity to the community. Not only were we able to provide better sanitation to improve the health of the community but we were able to bring some dignity to the lives of those living in Xetzitzi. The simple things we used to take for granted will no longer be viewed in quite the same light. At the end of our 3 days, we felt a sense of accomplishment but more important, we made some powerful human connections and changed the lives of those living in Xetzitzi. It just doesn't

get any better than that! A big "thank you" to BPD for being so organized and prepared for our arrival. Materials were purchased in advance and awaiting our arrival. Project leaders were ready to help when we arrived. Lunch was a special meal each day. We look forward to continuing to build a relationship with BPD and the people of Guatemala.

Sheryl Hudson

Bridge Builders is an international community development organization that connects volunteers with people in need. They coordinate short-term missions, concentrating on good development principles that make the greatest impact and have a long-term influence on the countries and communities. Sheryl Hudson is a Project Leader.



For the third year, volunteer dental teams provided free care for children living in rural villages.

Construction of a parallel feeding line increased the water flow to 4.2 liters per second, enough to provide water for the village.

Slow Sedimentation Sand Filter Water Project for Colonia Choatalum

by Natanael Jochola, Program Director



A filtering system eliminates most of the turbidity from the river water.

Thanks to funding from the Rotary Clubs of Menlo Park, California and Guatemala de la Asunción and Rotary International, the people in Colonia Choatalum soon will have clean running water in their homes. The original system that provided water to the village was built in 1978. The water source is the Las Carretas River. When the system was built, there was no environmental contamination so the water was fit for human consumption. However, as the population living close the river increased, the river became contaminated because cattle grazing nearby increased the amount of fecal matter washing into the river; the use of agricultural fertilizers that leached into the river became more common; and deforestation weakened the natural water filtering system. The dirty water greatly affected the health of the villagers causing gastrointestinal diseases and skin problems.

According to San Martín Jilotepeque Health Center testing, the water consumed by the villagers was contaminated. In 2006, Rotarians Mark Campbell and Dan Matthews visited the village and tested some water samples, confirming extensive contamination. Based on the results of the water analysis and as a follow up to this visit, ABPD worked with the municipality and the Rotary Clubs to plan the construction of a slow sedimentation sand filter. This system is relatively expensive and takes time to construct, but it was the best alternative considering the high level of turbidity and contamination of the river water.

Construction of the sand filter was first started in March 2008 and construction is complete. Unfortunately, the system is still not in use because there were some problems with the design of the filter's capacity, which is lower than that required by the village. To solve this problem, we are building a parallel feeding line to increase the water flow to an acceptable 4.2 liters per second. The sand filter will eliminate turbidity and some parasites and a chlorination system will be installed to make the water drinkable. We hope to have this project completed in the near future so that residents will finally have access to potable water.

Introducing New Staff

My name is Edwin Adolfo Alvarez. I'm from Patzicia, Chimaltenango. I am 24 years old. I started to work for ABPD on July 16, 2009. I feel very fortunate to work for ABPD as an agriculture technician. My wish is to ensure that all the families attending the Strong Family Centers have a garden at their homes to grow nutritious vegetables. I also visit villages to monitor the macadamia nut project and provide help when needed. My goal is to have productive crops at the villages where we are working so that families have sufficient nutritious food.



Asociacion BPD staff model their new uniforms. Bottom row, left to right: Silvia Rodriguez and Elma Tzaj, family health educators; Angela Tomas, housekeeper; Edwin Alvarez, agricultural technician. Back row: Marily Giron, administrator, Natanael Jochola, program director; Manuel Samayoa, interim executive director; Melvyn Xicay, gray water filter and latrine technician; and Cesar Alonzo, accountant

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Behrhorst Partners for Development
2411 S. Superior St.
Milwaukee, WI 53207