

From Monte

Thursday, February 11, 2010, 7:25 PM

My time here is coming to an end. We hit the road running Friday (February 5), which is the way I like but not normal as you know. We are constructing a new bathroom at Casa del Niño (just to the left of La Democracia Market on the map), which is most definitely needed. That was planned last year but not done, so maybe you are aware of that. We are also working with the Department of Education here to get an accredited pre-school. I think Ted will get it pulled off, but nothing is ever easy here or like we would expect. It is needed because the mothers are removing the older kids and sending to pre-schools that can offer a certificate. We have purchased a DVD player and a cold and hot water dispenser for purified water for CDN. We have also purchased an amp and CD player for an old folks home. We visited it several years ago on the west edge of town. I do not remember if you were with us then or not. Ted has received permission to have the garbage cans that we furnished for the parks cleaned and painted where needed. We are planning to partner with the local Red Cross for a dental clinic in one of the rooms at CDN. We have had several meetings with them and it is looking good. Yesterday we went to Momostenango. A plan was started last year to construct a concrete laundry facility in one of the small remote villages. When we went to confirm the details, they said that latrines, toilets,

were a greater need. Right now they are using the woods. The latrines that they are constructing have two sides and a system to collect the urine. Then one side is full, it is left to dry for four months. Then removed and mixed with leaves to compost. I suspect a lot of the vegetables you eat have been fertilized with this compost. The urine is bottled and put around the fruit trees. We agreed with them that this was a greater need and took the funds slated for the laundry and used for 25 toilets.

Persons are asking about you and sending their greetings. Dana said hi and I did remember to give your gift to her.

See you next Wednesday,

Monte

From Ted

February 19, 2010

Well you know it is rather cool at this time of the year here in Xela. It is usually around 56 degrees in the mornings at 7a.m. and in my room it is around 60 degrees at 7a.m. and cooler at about 3 a.m.

We asked the community leader in Momostenango if they wanted stoves and an 8 position laundry facilities and she hesitated and then I asked her what was her greatest need and she said latrines. She showed us an example of what she was wanting for her community and it was a special designed concrete stool with a small bowl in front with a hose leading outside the latrine and a large hole behind for the excrement. Each time the stool is used with excrement they had a cup of lime. The latrines are built on a high rise of a slope and have stairs leading up to it and there are two toilets to each latrine. The solids drop to about a 5 feet space below and when it is filled then they move over to the other toilet and leave the solids in the first toilet there for four months and



then they shovel this out and put it in a pile with leaves and wait another month with it being covered with plastic. The urine is placed in bottles and this is used to fertilize the fruit trees and the solids are used for fertilizer for both the vegetable and fruit trees. The only cost they have for the fertilizer is the little lime they use so their fertilizer is very cheap and when the consumer goes to the market to buy their fruits and vegetables they select them on their size and nice looks and don't question how they were fertilized.

We gave 25 families a latrine each with the double toilets and this will benefit over one hundred people and the fruits and vegetables with benefit over a thousand more and our donation will last them for many years to come.

This week we are doing maintenance on the playground equipment, which has to be done every year. The new bathroom is currently being held up awaiting the plumbers to return to complete it. Our maximum capacity now is 75 kids and 12 employees for our current facilities.

This week we are also preparing a small room for a psychologist who helps us with problem children. We hired a carpenter for \$1.40 an hour. At present he is sanding six bunk beds to get them ready to varnish for the 2 year olds.

We have been conducting meetings with a university that trains dentists and hope to make a deal with them where they will rent a room from us here at the day care center and provide low cost service for our children at the day care center and also those that are too poor to afford to get their teeth fixed. The local Red Cross has agreed to supply two dental chairs for the dental clinic at no cost. This service will add to our medical service for women and also our psychology service. We discussed with an official at a local university here and he said he thought they could supply free of charge architects to do further planning and a futurist building that would be able to handle approximately 300 kids along with rental rooms to support the facility when finished. Still a dream, but we are making moves now that could become a reality later.



We are also helping an elderly home of women that is operated by nuns. The place consists of nice rooms and walls and they are fed well and when Monte was here we gave them a spiritual lift and even had some of the old ladies spinning around when we gave them a new CD, MP3, and DVD player with a hundred watt amplifier. The women sleep in metal cots four to a room and similar to some of the places I was stationed in the Air Force. Ha! Ha! I told the Nun about a book I read called LIFE WORTH LIVING, which was a new way of handling, elderly people at institutions and the results caused a lowering of drug use and the patients lived longer. I told the nun I thought the place would be happier if they had a petting dog to roam freely among the patients and be tall enough that wheel chair patients could pet it, I also suggested they put mirrors on the walls so the patients could see what they look like so they could make improvements on their looks if they want to. I also suggested they put in live plants, birdcages and fish aquariums and last I suggested they have visits from other elderly care facilities that have men. I suggested that they have grade school kids come to clean the cages, feed the fish and water the plants, so they can have interaction with young kids again. I have another suggestion that they put a divider between each two beds so that each woman can have a shelf to put their things on and also a small mirror and a drawer for their personal things along with a cork surface to put up pictures and mementos, etc.

Well, at this stage, I don't know how much of these ideas she is going to buy, but she sounded interested and hopefully they help improve the lives of those in their care. She is a new Sister of only one month, so she hopes to make a change to the better, but she has to be careful to not rock the boat should her donors or supporters object.

Monte and I went to the coastal area where it is nice and warm as here it is 7,600 feet and the coastal area is only a few hundred feet. Here we helped a poor family with a donation from an individual from near Altamont who has been helping a girl since she was 10 years old through a Catholic Charities program and she is now 16 years old and ran off with a boy and got married. We visited her family of eight children and we asked what we could do to improve her life. The funds were given from a private donation and he asked us to help the girl. She said she would like to learn to be a seamstress, so we bought a sewing machine for her and paid two months of an 8-month sewing course for her.

We took pictures of the girl and her teacher and will give these to the private donor.

We had to cancel our meeting with the university official today and set it for next Tuesday at 11A.M. as Dr. Ingrid, who is the treasurer and acting president could not be present for today's meeting. As soon as we can come to an agreement then we will start to get things moving. We need to agree on the dental charges, screening of patients to see if their poverty level warrants them to receive low cost dental service, etc. This project will be of benefit to our children here at the day care center and many more people in the community that without this service they would do as many do now, they wait till their teeth hurt and then they pull them out as they feel they can't afford to pay regular fees for dental care.

Regarding my health, the more I walk the better my breathing becomes and the less tired I get. I forgot my Nitro pills, and so far haven't been able to find any here in case I should need a pill or two, but right now I feel fine.

I will try to write to you in a couple of weeks to fill you in on what we have been doing here. Have a nice day.

TED