



W. 505 St. Thomas More Way
Spokane, WA 99208

Family to Family

Third Quarter - July, 2015

Rainy Season Visit to Guatemala

Roger and Miriam Devaney, FTF Directors, traveled to Ixtahuacan in late May to meet with Adela Tambriz, Operations Manager, and Natalia DeLeon, Program Coordinator. The quick four day trip happened to fall right in the middle of the “rainy season” in Guatemala. The rainy season, which typically lasts from May through October, is caused by warm moist air flowing off the Pacific Ocean, getting trapped by the mountains of Guatemala and unleashing by large scale rain storms. It was quite the experience to witness torrential rains for 12-14 hours per day, starting in the afternoon and tapering off in the early morning hours. One can see why roads get washed away, mudslides occur, and construction projects must wait until the drier season. Guatemalans go about their business, rain or shine, and this is true even in the Highlands.

Several FTF sponsored families invited their U.S. visitors inside their small one room houses. When asked in Spanish, “How are you?” The response often heard was ‘Estoy contento” or “I am content.” This is the nature of the native peoples we serve through our partnership in *Family-To-Family*. To be poor is not a pitiable condition in the eyes of the Mayans. To the contrary, the native people exude great pride in family connections and a sense of “community” that is enviable. The Devaneys had the unique opportunity to visit their adopted “family” in Neuvo Xetinamit. The young family, Francisco and Catarina Guarchiac and their 11 month old son, Pedro, live in typical home in the Highlands; a dirt floor, wood plank siding and a galvanized metal roof. Daylight could be seen through the siding and the cold wind was blowing. Little Pedro was sound asleep strapped to Caterina’s back and wrapped up in handwoven blankets. Caterina explained that Francisco was out for the afternoon searching for firewood. Caterina expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to participate in FTF training programs.

Another stop was made in Chikix, Nahuala, to the home of Domingo Peruchu and Maria Ixquier. This family was already participating in the sheep breeding program and were proud to show off their animals.



Family-To-Family Welcomes New Bookkeeper

Cathy DeHart, CPA, M.Ed., has graciously agreed to volunteer her time and talent to our organization’s bookkeeping duties. Cathy graduated from Gonzaga University in 1986 with a major in accounting. After working in accounting in the Seattle area for several years, Cathy earned her teaching certificate. She taught accounting and other business classes at Highline High School (near Seattle) before moving to Spokane in 1999. After staying home with her three children for a few years, Cathy accepted a teaching position at SFCC where she taught computer applications and business writing. She earned her Master of Education degree while continuing to teach at SFCC and in 2013, Cathy accepted a full-time faculty position at Gonzaga University, teaching accounting and writing. She loves teaching, especially with **Dr. Eddy Birrer**, who is also on the FTF Board. **Arleen Shrader**, our longtime bookkeeper and member of the Board, retired from her many years of devoted service in keeping our books in order. We wish to sincerely thank Arlene for her dedication and commitment to *Family-to-Family* over the years! If you wish to contact Cathy DeHart with billing questions, call 509-599-6391 or email at: dehart@gonzaga.edu.

Cost Cutting Administrative Details

In order to save money on postage and other administrative expenses, the Board has approved transitioning to a quarterly billing system rather than bi-monthly. As a result, statements will now be mailed out on a quarterly basis (July, October, January and April). If you are mailing in payments on a monthly or bi-monthly basis, **please feel free to continue**. This change is merely to reduce annual administrative costs. Tax letters will be mailed out in January as usual.

As many of you know, *Family-To-Family* is an outreach ministry under the tax umbrella of St. Thomas More Parish and as a result, donations are mailed to the parish address. However, *Family-To-Family* has a **separate** accounting and banking system from St. Thomas More Parish. Therefore, it would be most helpful if all checks for the benefit of FTF families and projects are written to **"Family-To-Family"** as opposed to **"St. Thomas More."** Otherwise it is difficult to determine intent of the donor and further investigation is necessary by St. Thomas More's bookkeeper. In addition, many parishioners are using the gold-colored envelopes marked "Guatemala" for their regular parish contributions. If you are a parishioner at St. Thomas More and want to make a donation or payment for your family using the gold-colored envelopes, please remember to make your check payable to: **Family-To-Family**. Regular parish donations can go in the white envelopes provided by St. Thomas More. Thank you ahead of time for your assistance in this regard!

Newly proposed Community Animal-Raising Program

Adela and her staff are exploring the possibility of purchasing land near the Ixtahuacan fish hatchery to be used as a common area for the raising of livestock such as goats, sheep and cattle. This would serve the dual purpose of training families to raise their own livestock as well as providing much needed meat for nutrition. Familia-A-Familia Guatemala already owns about two cuerdas (one cuerda is equivalent to 1/8 acre) in this area, but looking to buy 4-5 additional cuerdas to make the project feasible. We will keep you updated as this project moves ahead.

Economic/Political Challenges in Guatemala

With the current rise of the Quetzal (currency in Guatemala) to the U.S. dollar (now 7.5 Q's to the US dollar vs. 8 Q's to the US dollar two years ago) and the increase in the minimum wage, it is becoming more expensive to purchase food, construction materials and other goods for our families. There is a growing movement by the people of Guatemala to demand accountability from elected officials, after the recent resignation of the Vice President of Guatemala amid corruption charges. Thousands have attended peaceful demonstrations in Guatemala City to protest rampant corruption.

Results Are In For Long Term Impact of FTF Programs

In 2014, a sample was conducted by volunteer David Dodroe, with the goal of assessing the long term impact of the FTF family sponsorship and skills training programs provided to the neediest of families. A random sampling procedure was used to select 45 families from the 457 that completed the FTF program during the years 2000 through 2010. On-site interviews were conducted in Quiche or Spanish and participants were asked questions relating to their income, health, housing, education and work activities before entering the FTF programs and afterward. A summary of the sampling is included with all the statements billed this month. Copies of the summary or more detailed study analysis can be provided upon request by contacting Miriam Devaney at 466-0740 or ftfguatemala@gmail.com.



Participants in Study are interviewed by Dave Dodroe