



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

Family to Family

Familia-A-Familia Newsletter

August 2013

Trout Project gets Boost from Aurora NW Rotary & Rogers H.S.

Following a visit to the trout project in Guatemala, Frank Walchak, the director of international activities for the Spokane Aurora Northwest Rotary, informed FTF that their Aurora NW Rotary club would be making a donation of \$1,000 in support of the "sustainable" trout project in the mountains of Northern Guatemala. Beyond that, the Interact Club of Rogers High School, would be supplying an additional \$500.

The Interact Club of Rogers HS is sponsored by the Aurora NW Rotary Club. Their \$500 donation demonstrates the success of Aurora NW in educating potential rotarians to the needs of the poor in other countries, and developing a propensity to serve at an early age.

The \$1,500 from Aurora NW Rotary and the Interact Club will be used, as needed, for the acquisition of fish eggs, for salary for the pond workers, and for repair and maintenance of the trout ponds. Many thanks to our local Rotarians for this great support to those in Guatemala.

Coffee Production: A Family Affair for Mayans in Guatemala

Like the early days of pioneer families in our country, many of the life-sustaining projects of families in remote areas of the Highlands involve the whole family. Children frequently help with agricultural work, such as hoeing and weeding crops, and caring for chickens, sheep, and cows. Unfortunately, the priority for help in the fields, sometimes outweighs that of education for some very poor families, and that is one of the reasons FTF has begun an educational support fund. That fund helps provide the tuition and cover costs so that families can better afford to let their children go to school.



Helping children gain an appreciation for work also has a plus side, however. As Pope Francis recently pointed out, society benefits when children are raised in an environment where they learn the value of family responsibility. That is true of the newest FTF project i.e., the production of organic coffee.

The coffee production land is distant from the homes of most of the families on the FTF program. The small "coffee plantation" acreage is in a remote area at about 4,000 ft elevation, whereas the houses of the people tending the land are in the mountains above at the 7,000 ft to 11,000 ft level. So the families involved typically hike into the area and stay for days at a time. In the words of Natalia de Leon, our program manager, " It is interesting to see how dedicated our people [are] they are really involved [with] what they are doing. A group of families and two of our workers are with them at [the] site. Every two days they switch. They built a small house [and] a patio for drying coffee and bought a machine called [a] pulper. Project investment [thus far is] about Q40,000 (i.e., \$5,000).

Hand carrying the heavy bags of coffee beans out of the mountains is no easy task. However, the construction of an on-site drying area has reduced the weight considerably. The beans are taken to a roasting process in a city and packaged as regular, roasted beans, or espresso. Natalia has reported that about 4,000 pounds of coffee have been harvested this year. It is sold locally in Guatemala, but some of the packaged coffee has been hand carried to Spokane and Pasco, and sold for \$10/bag. Proceeds go back into the coffee project.

Volunteers Supply Talent/Help to FTF Operations

Family-To-Family has been generously blessed with the support, talents, and help of hundreds of individuals over its 28 years of operation. The volunteers range from Fr. Arnold Shoffelmeer, deceased pastor of St. Thomas More Parish in Spokane, who helped with the initial organization to the current Board Members, who guide the FTF organization today.

Sr. Barbara Ford, was the first on-site program manager in the Highlands in 1984, during the times of violence in Guatemala. More than 250,000 native people were killed during that civil war. Sr. Barbara helped establish the operational guidelines by selecting the poorest families of the area, establishing individual self-help programs for each family, and limiting their time on the program to a maximum of 3 years. Sr. Barbara championed the native poor, and was later killed. Fr. David Baronti, the Spokane priest assigned to Guatemala (who has helped guide the program) was also a target, but was able to survive the violence. As time passed the Guatemalan operations were taken over by paid staff, chief among them being Adela Tambriz, the current FTF field operations manager, and Natalia de Leon, our program manager and financial officer.

In Spokane, accounting duties are professionally handled by board member Arleen Shrader. Greg Miller and Miriam Devaney recently completed the FTF web site, www.familytofamilyguatemala.com. Other board members are involved in such diverse chores as helping with marketing of Guatemalan coffee (Irene Anderson), representing FTF on the St. Thomas More ministries committee (Brenda Lacey Sholtz), and facilitating the translation of project reports from Guatemala (Jeanne Sweigert). Needless to say, FTF would could not function as it is without the active support of these volunteers and our many sponsors. Many thanks to all involved.

Prayers for a one-of-a-kind Volunteer

A very dedicated volunteer from Spokane who has served the Mayan people in Guatemala for many years has recently been diagnosed with multiple myeloma and is currently on kidney dialysis. Dave Dodroe is truly a Master-Of-All-Trades. He managed construction of a major FTF project, the bakery and training center in Ixtahuacan, as well as a hydro electric station, a school and chapels in the area. Please pray for his recovery.