

Report No. 8 from Alto Cayma – 27 Jul 08

Happy Independence Day

We're enjoying a nice, long, quiet Independence Day weekend here in Alto Cayma. Peruvian Independence Day is Monday, July 28, but Tuesday the 29th is a holiday as well. We did go out to buy a flag and staff to put on our roof, but other than that I'm using the opportunity to stay home and recover from a cold. That's a pretty rare thing for either of us anymore. Usually we both enjoy perfect health when we're here, now that we've built up immunity to all the more common local bugs. I even stayed home from church this morning so I wouldn't contaminate all the people who mob us after the service. It's hard (spelled "impossible") to keep a distance from these people, once they spot you.

Serving Alto Cayma

This week we visited Miguel Angel, the boy with the cochlear implant, in his home as he continues recovering from the operation prior to traveling to Lima for rehab. One of the things that came with the implant is a diary in which he can enter his observations as he goes through this thrill of a lifetime experience. The book is full of inspiring quotes and practical tips about how to use his new apparatus, but it's all in English, so Gloria spent close to 10 hours translating, cutting and pasting to put it all into Spanish. It was a real labor of love. We delivered the book to Miguel Angel during this visit, and we'll look forward to reading the things he records in it over the course of the coming year.

The youth group met yesterday, with just Victor and Oscar. They carried out some leadership development activities, and identified approximately 12 emerging leaders from within the group. Suggestions for a name for the group were also taken from the group members.

Our house has lately become a work refuge and training center for members of the Serving Alto Cayma staff. Victor and Lidia hide out here a couple of evenings every week to catch up on the bookkeeping, and Lidia is teaching computing to Tulita and Giuliana on Saturday mornings. So many people come looking for them in Primero de Junio and in the Acercádonos office that they need a hideout in order to concentrate on a project for any length of time.

A couple of years ago, Robert Bugg, a Rotarian from Charlotte, donated a good laptop computer for Victor to use in the Acercádonos office. That computer has now been used so much, by Victor and others, that it finally

broke this week. We desperately need a replacement for Victor, plus a second computer for use by other members of the staff. If anyone has a laptop they could donate, please contact David Hodgkins of the Charlotte Dilworth Rotary Club (dhodgkins@carolina.rr.com), who is headed for Peru on Aug 15. Ideally, we need computers which are about 3 years old, and which have Microsoft Office and a wireless internet card already installed.

Visitors

Last week saw a couple of visitors come and go. Laura Rosenbach is Assistant Principal at Mallard Creek High School in Charlotte, where our Rotary Club is sponsoring an Interact Club. She and her cousin, Meghan O'Brien, who is a teacher from Minneapolis, travel to exotic locations every summer, and this year they were coming to Peru. On the advice of Todd Porter, a member of our club who is on the faculty at Mallard Creek, they decided to include in their itinerary a couple of days with us here in Alto Cayma. It took two full days just to give them even a superficial understanding of all the things that go on here. We gave them an orientation on what this place and its people are all about, including a round table with women from the cardshop, the knitting shop, and Salir Adelante sharing their stories. They got to see with their own eyes all the projects I write about in these reports. (They left carrying cards from the cardshop, of course.) They got to visit some of Father Alex' projects as well, such as the Policlínico and going on the food distribution run from the community kitchen. They also got to visit Father Frank's Aldea and meet some of the kids who live there. At the end of the first day, they announced that they would each like to sponsor a child in Acercándonos, so we chose a boy and a girl for them and arranged to visit those children in their homes on the second day. Meghan, in particular, after visiting her little girl, said that for her, that experience was the highlight of their entire trip to Peru.

Creaciones Angel Cardmaking Group

The "chicas" (girls) are working hard to make several suitcases full of cards for the Dilworth Rotarians to take back to the States with them in late August. However, they voted to take Independence Day (Monday the 28th) completely off, and work in their houses rather than in the shop on Tuesday the 29th, so we won't see most of them again until Wednesday. I'm going to go into "chica withdrawal"!

Aldea "Sagrada Familia" (The Orphanage)

On Thursday the 24th we joined the staff and the kids at the Aldea in a celebration of Father Frank's 64th birthday. It was a very festive affair.

Music was provided by Professor Dante, a music teacher who teaches as a volunteer in the Aldea, and his Mariachi band. Serving Alto Cayma provided the cakes. It normally takes 2 cakes to feed all the kids in the Aldea at our monthly birthday parties, but this affair was a “three-caker”, to take care of the extra visitors who came as well as the kids from the daycare center. Gloria, of course, dragged poor Father Frank out to dance, an experience he said he had successfully avoided all his life up to that point.

Rotary Projects

The Charlotte Rotary Club’s Water Project is in it’s last days of life or death. It seems that SEDAPAR had some technical issues with the vendor’s proposal as submitted, but those seem to have been ironed out. We still need to get everything nailed down in writing and into the hands of The Rotary Foundation by Thursday, July 31, or the grant will be revoked. The fact that Monday and Tuesday are holidays isn’t going to help. Tune in next week to see if we made it or not.

I have a new project to announce this week. The Concord Rotary Club (NC, USA) has offered to generate a \$10,000 project to provide dental care and eye care to the people in Alto Cayma through Father Alex’ Policlínico, which now houses both those specialties. A person can get a considerable amount of dental work done in that clinic for around \$100. An eye exam, and glasses purchased at a special outlet downtown, runs around \$50. At prices like these, \$10,000 will go a long ways. Thank you, Concord Rotary!

Bon Voyage

Father Alex is leaving Arequipa tomorrow for a 10-week trip out of the country. We won’t see him again during this stay, because he is returning from Lima to Arequipa just as we are leaving from Arequipa to Lima on our way back to the States. Bon Voyage, Padre.

“Love God, Serve Neighbor/Serving Alto Cayma”,

Jim