

Report No. 7 from Alto Cayma - 10 Feb 08

Serving Alto Cayma

This was an unusual week for key members of our staff. Lidia went to the mountain village where her mother's family is from to attend the funeral of her grandfather and arrange for her grandmother to come to Arequipa to live, while Victor put his family on a bus to go spend some vacation time with his wife Charo's brother in Chile. We missed Lidia greatly, but Mamá Gloria did a good job of caring for and feeding Victor in Charo's absence.

Our Roof Project continues to press forward. We have enough money to replace the "calaminas" (corrugated metal sheets) on the roofs of 60 houses now. We have actually completed 28 houses thus far, and have identified the next 8 which will be done. Meanwhile, the weather has continued to cooperate.

Visitors

Dwight Hartsell arrived just in time to help Victor deliver new calaminas to the home of Elizabeth, Rebeca and Yoselin, the 3 girls whose education Dwight and his wife Susan are sponsoring. Then it was on to starting up the classes in woodturning which he came down here to teach (see below).

Kelly Morris and his group (brother and sister-in-law Charles and Nancy, and their friend Peggy Cherry) had a successful visit. They visited the approximately one dozen "ahihados" (sponsorees) whom they and their relatives and friends are sponsoring in the Acercándonos and Salir Adelante programs. Kelly has been coming here once a year for the past 5 years, and he is one of those people who never tires of trying to involve additional people in our projects. It was especially satisfying to him to have finally gotten his brother to come for a visit.

Finally, a group of 10 people (5 couples) from the Charlotte Rotary Club arrived on Saturday, just in time to participate in the monthly birthday party at the Aldea (see below). They will have a challenging couple of days with us next week, trying to see everything here as first-time visitors, before moving on to Cuzco and Machu Picchu. This is the second year in a row that we've had a large group visit us from the 300-member Charlotte club, and we hope that they will make these annual visits an ongoing tradition.

Creaciones Angel Cardmaking Group

As you've read in past reports, we took 3 new girls into the group in January. One problem we always have with new girls is how can we help them keep food on their tables while they're still learning their craft. The key is to find the earliest possible opportunity for them to participate in making cards for an order so that they can share in the proceeds. We broke the record with this latest group, giving them an opportunity to participate in a payday just 3 weeks after they joined the group, thanks to an opportune rush order for logo cards from Dr. Wayne Centrone, of Health Bridges International.

Adventure in Faith Woodshop

Dwight Hartsell comes here from Charlotte once every 6 months, spending 3 weeks each time teaching woodturning to the young men and women of Alto Cayma. He had hoped to be able to reunite most of his past students this time to move on to more advanced projects, but the turnout during his first week was disappointing. (This is summer vacation time in Peru, and many families travel during the months of January and February.) To take up the slack, he is opening up new beginners' classes for his second and final weeks here. Meanwhile, he's been producing pen and pencil sets with the students he's already got, using beautiful cherry and holly woods which he brought with him from Charlotte.

Acercádonos ("Coming Together") Sponsorship Program

This week we took delivery of approximately 80 sponsor letters which have been translated into Spanish by the faculty members who teach English at the North American-Peruvian Cultural Institute. The letters will be delivered to the ahijados as they visit the Acercádonos office during the course of the coming week. We wish we had letters for all 180 ahijados in the program, but not all sponsors wrote this time.

Salir Adelante ("Getting Ahead") Educational Sponsorships

These weeks continue to be heavy in activity to expand this fledgling program, especially in the area of supporting students' university education. This week we finished the second round of interviews with the top 10 candidates for scholarships. Two of the 10 were already able to obtain scholarships, thanks to generosity of our recent visitors. Peggy Cherry agreed to sponsor Susy Condori to finish her degree in education and then to go on to study English at the Cultural Institute, while Charles and Nancy Morris committed to sponsor Vereniz Silloca to finish her degree in education. Kelly Morris also agreed to renew his support for David Gonzales as David now

transitions from high school to higher studies. David had a novel proposal, which Kelly accepted. He wants to ultimately study Systems Engineering, but his immediate proposal was to study gastronomy for 2 years so that he can then work as a chef to finance his own education, leaving Kelly's resources free to support some other worthy candidate.

Aldea "Sagrada Familia" (The Orphanage)

The monthly birthday party for the kids in the orphanage took place on Saturday, shortly after the visitors from the Charlotte Rotary Club arrived. Taking them to the party was a great way to initiate their contact with the local people, and they enjoyed it thoroughly. Five kids celebrated their birthdays this time, several of whom were new to the orphanage.

Rotary Projects

Late in the week we emptied the Charlotte container, storing the contents inside a nearby building and laying them out in a way which will facilitate inspection by the government. Once the inspection is complete, we can begin to distribute the goods, but Father Alex tells me that we have to positively document where every item goes, because the government can come back at any time and ask to see proof that we didn't sell the stuff and pocket the money.

Late in the week, Carlos Cusirramos, the president of the Arequipa Rotary Club, and I visited with the new General Manager of the water company, SEDAPAR, regarding the Water Project being sponsored by the Charlotte Rotary Club. The company is offering an alternate approach to the one upon which the approved Rotary Foundation grant was based. The alternate approach has many advantages, but we have to sound out The Rotary Foundation to see if it would be possible to redirect the grant funds. We should achieve clarity on this during the current visit of the delegation from Charlotte Rotary, when we visit the water plant on Monday morning and attend the Arequipa Rotary Club meeting Monday evening.

The Water Project is just one of several Rotary highlights coming up this week. On Tuesday there will be a formal inauguration of the Eye Clinic funded by the Charlotte South Park Rotary Club, and an official handover of the Police Vehicle to the local police station. All this was timed to take advantage of the large international Rotary presence afforded by the Charlotte Rotary Club visit.

Book Two for Bogotá

Gloria and I solidified our escape plans for the end of February. We're leaving Alto Cayma on Feb 21, bound for Bogotá, Colombia, where we'll visit family and meet with the local Rotarians concerning a project to form a network of volunteer healthcare providers to serve the poor people in the outlying areas of the city. This is an idea that originated with Dr. Wayne Centrone of Portland, OR, who will serve as a long-distance consultant for the time being, and hopefully will return to Bogotá with us later for an on-site assessment.

So until we pack our bags, we'll continue here in Alto Cayma to

"Love God, Serve Neighbor/Serving Alto Cayma",

Jim