

Village Updates October/November 2008



The Bridge to Somewhere - Raising Up Age Old Foundations

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

Linaca is an educational paradise compared to the communities where we are working in Apali in the Jamastran Valley. The villages of Crusitas, Campo, Guasimo, Corales, and La Lima are remote and untouched by outside aid.

Some children there are so poor that they cannot afford an 8 cent notebook or a pencil or eraser. They are allowed to go to school but unable to do any of their homework! Those whose pencils still have erasers are the fortunate ones. They can erase their old work and start over until the pages become so thin they shred or the eraser vanishes completely.

In Apali all the teens have dreams of what they would like to be when they grow up, but they have zero opportunities to get ahead. A child whose parent cannot afford an 8 cent notebook has no thought of higher education.

Directed to the Apali area by the District Head of the Public School system, we are the first outsiders to go in there to help.

On our first trip to Guasimo the children came running because none had ever seen a Gringo in their lives. Last trip the children of Campo were telling me how they love to yell, "Hola Gringos!!!" every time our teachers pass by in their truck. While our teachers are all Honduran, the children reasoned that anyone who has a car automatically qualifies as a Gringo.

After a while of dispelling that notion we came to an agreement that it was far better to shout, "Hola Amigos!!!" when our team passes by. After a few rehearsals the children were much happier to think of us as their friends rather than untouchable strangers, or rich Gringos.

In the villages of the region of Apali most of the teens are not in school but, they are faithful attenders of the programs we offer them each week. (pictured above in the light cap is Franklin leading a group discussion with the teen boys of Campo about values and leadership - next to that is the future)

In Linaca, we provide scholarships to all teens who volunteer at our center that want to go to High School (if their families cannot afford to send them).

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In the last several months weather conditions have provided us with a sad metaphor of the situations our teens in Apali face.

Just like in the days of devastating Hurricane Mitch, rains and flooding have been so severe that entire sections of roads and bridges are being washed away.

People are trapped, going nowhere, in some cases lives are endangered until a bridge can be built or alternate route opened. That is how we look at the teen population in most of Honduras, certainly in the areas we serve. Most are cut off – there is no bridge to anywhere.

This situation is not getting better – in fact it is getting worse by the day. There are no jobs, no hope of a future, drug cartels have taken over entire regions, and illegal alien gang members are being deported in droves from the United States replete with tactics to enlist desperate teens into a life of crime.

But for very little money we can do something to stem the tide of all this.

In Linaca, not one teen girl who has remained an active part in our center has gotten pregnant. This is one of the most remarkable statistics we have to date. It simply astounds us.

Not one of our teens has done drugs – another astounding statistic. Not one of our teens has been involved in gang activity, but many have been recruited, as they have been recruited to take drugs and have sex.

The younger children see the examples of these teens and cannot wait until they are old enough to be leaders in the center.

This is our goal. To train teen leaders and send them out two by two into neighboring villages. The clock is ticking. We have hundreds of teens who would like to be in our numbers instead of the statistics of those lost to teen pregnancy, drugs, and gangs.

The Bridge to Somewhere is our name for a scholarship fund to target the teens in all the communities where we are now working. *Our goal before the end of the year is to raise 50 scholarships at \$50 a month.*

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NEEDS, HOPES, DREAMS



1. FIFTEEN THOUSAND DOLLAR MATCHING GRANT FOR TRANSPORTATION NEEDS TO FIVE NEW VILLAGES

We had a pressing need for transportation to reach the new villages where we work with the children in the five villages of Apali. Some of their precious faces are pictured above.

Very generous partners offered a matching grant for the \$15,000 needed to purchase the truck.

UPDATE: In the end the perfect truck cost us closer to \$19,000. Prices in the U.S. are a bit cheaper than the much coveted 4x4 trucks in Honduras. We made the entire matching grant and some extra came in so that we were able to purchase a Nissan Frontier last month! Thank you to all who made this possible. It has truly helped us expand the work!

2. FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLAR MATCHING GRANT FOR OUR CHILDREN'S WORK IN LINACA, DANLI, APALI, LA JAGUA

The same generous partners who offered the matching grant for the truck fund have set up a \$50,000 matching grant for the Linaca Children's Center, La Jagua, and the new work in Apali.

One hundred percent – yes, 100% - of your donation will go to the field for teachers, teen scholarships, supplies needed for our centers, nutrition, medical care, and other needs associated with the children's work.

To date almost \$20,000 has come in! We are hoping to raise the remaining \$30,000 before the end of December.

Please make your check out to World Resources Group and designate *Children's Work Honduras* on the memo line.

3. FUNDING FOR TEEN GIRLS' HOUSE IN DANLI

After their wedding Nidia, Franklin, and Alexa moved into a small house with three bedrooms in Danli. They had no money for furniture or appliances. (The July newsletter has the wedding story.)

The couple took out a small loan to purchase goods for the home, but just as they were ready to buy Franklin's mother's kitchen walls and floor collapsed. All the money for the newlyweds' home had to go to help Franklin's mother. The couple was forced to increase their debt to buy the very basics needed to live.

Beginning in February of next year, Franklin and Nidia will take four or five of our teen leader girls to live in their home. These girls are extremely poor and have difficult home situations. The training these girls will receive in life skills and marriage will

be invaluable. The girls will attend High School in Danli in the mornings and bus to Linaca in the afternoon to volunteer at our children's center.

All the teen leaders will be welcome in the home weekdays and for special events on weekends.

We would like to get this house stocked with everything needed to run the girls' house. To date we have received \$550 toward the house. All donations will be used for setting up and running the house.

Everything over and above what is needed to furnish the house will be applied to the ongoing needs of running the house in the future.

Please make your check out to World Resources Group and designate *Girls' House* on the memo line.

HOW YOUR DONATIONS WORK

Did you know that 100% of your specified giving to WRG goes to the cause you designate? WRG is one of the few charitable organizations that takes 0% of designated donations for administration.

Any undesignated giving will go to the general fund to be used where needed as decided by the WRG board of directors.

This year we have gone to a whole new level in operations. Expanding into 5 new towns at the request of the Public School District has given us immediate credibility in the area and resources that otherwise may have taken years to cultivate.

Thank you for partnering with us in this exciting time and growing endeavor!

IMPORTANT NOTE TO SPONSORS

For our faithful monthly partners this newsletter and statement will serve as a reminder for October and November pledges. *There will be no statements or newsletter updates again until December.*

Many of our sponsors have scheduled payments on-line to be automatically sent from their banks at the beginning of each month eliminating the need for invoices and reminders.

If this is an option that would work for you, please talk to your bank about setting up automatic payments to World Resources Group.

Thanks to all our faithful sponsors that helped us lay the groundwork for all we have accomplished in Linaca and beyond.

IN MEMORY OF BARBARA NELL PETTIT

“Muvver”

This is the first newsletter written without the first-editing cuts by my mother, who flew off to her “new adventure” on August 31st. Muvver was my mentor and my very best friend in this world. This picture of her, at the age of 81, was taken in December of last year.

Muvver was such a significant part of this team that we have placed a tribute to her from the memorial service on our website at www.wrgnews.com. Barbara truly was an interesting and inspiring human being. She is greatly missed.

Over the years Muvver contributed a lot to World Resources Group – some in ways that will never be known outside of her family. In her memory we have set up The Barbara Pettit Memorial Fund. Any gifts given to this fund will be used for health, the environment, and education such as The Bridge – three of her major priorities in helping the poor.

If you would like to make a donation to help us with any of the above indicate Barbara Pettit Memorial Fund on the memo line of your checks. All funds will be put into our matching grant donations, something that would make the ever-frugal Muvver very happy indeed! So far we have raised and matched \$700 for this fund!



WEB UPDATES

Please take the time to check out our website at www.wrgnews.com. There are slide shows, videos, past newsletters, and other articles that depict everyday life in the places we live and work in Honduras.

We are looking to update our email records - please send us your updated information. If you prefer to get your newsletters by email, please let us know. Many of our best friends in this work have come through our partners forwarding our newsletters via email. Please pass on the link to the web or this newsletter which is available as a PDF file.



*Loose the chains of injustice.
Set the oppressed free.
Share your food with the hungry.
Provide the poor wanderer with shelter.
When you see the naked, clothe him.
Spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry.
Satisfy the needs of the oppressed.
Rebuild the ancient ruins.
Raise up age-old foundations.
Then you will call
And the Lord will answer;
You will cry for help,
And He will say
Here am I.*

Selected verses from Isaiah 58



THE ONE

In every village there is at least one. One who grabs hold of your mind and heart. One that just won't let go.

In Crusitas, that one, is Jose Daniel. The first day I laid eyes on him, he was hunched over his desk with his face about an inch from the paper an assistant was helping him read. One leg was bent under his body. Archaic wooden crutches lay across the table in front of him.

As I passed his desk, my camera raised to take a picture of the new pre-kinder class that we are sponsoring, all the children giggled. Jose Daniel peered up with his hand over his face – sneaking a quick look at me through the small opening between his fingers.

“Hola, mi amigo,” I whispered as started to walk past him. From behind his hand, the corners of his mouth emerged in a little smile. Captivated by this adorable, shy child I asked his name. Jose Daniel the assistant told me. “Well Mr. Handsome, how about a picture?” I inquired.

Jose Daniel leapt up from his chair. It was then I saw that the leg bent under him when he was seated was curved at nearly a 90 degree angle. One eye was permanently closed, shriveled under the lid. The other eye was slightly crossed. He flashed me a big grin and I was all his – completely under his spell.

Asking him if he wanted to be my new best friend, he nodded shyly and quickly threw his hand over his face, peering at me through his fingers again.

The rest of the time we were in Crusitas, Jose Daniel took every opportunity to show off and be noticed. He was a master mover on those crutches, running as fast as he could and then planting one crutch and spinning around in the air.

Watching Jose Daniel in the pre-kinder class was marvelous. The method of instruction uses a lot of movement to keep the children entertained and engaged while learning the concepts presented.

When the class all knelt to jump like frogs, Jose



*Jose Daniel, pictured here and above
at his pre-kinder class
in Crusitas, Apali Valley.*

Daniel would not be left behind. Lowering himself on his one good leg with his crutches splayed out in front of him a couple of feet off the ground, he stayed in the game.

This little guy simply amazed us all with his character and determination to be a part of the group at every turn.

On the second trip to Crusitas Jose Daniel took a bad spill on his crutches, landing with his forefinger pinned to the ground under the crutch and the weight of his body.

Making some pretty dramatic faces, he squirmed a lot and shook his finger. Then he hoisted himself up and sat in a chair. When I asked to see his finger it was a bloody mess, but he never once cried.

The third time I saw Jose Daniel was a few weeks later. I asked how his finger was doing and he proudly displayed his wound. The fingernail had completely fallen off.

Jose Daniel is a unique character. A fighter all the way. His family says, “We will never say about him, ‘What a pity.’” His life is a testament to joy and overcoming all obstacles.

Our goal is to get Jose Daniel in for evaluation to see if anything can be done to fix his leg and help his eyesight.

Building a bridge that can help children like Jose Daniel cross from a life going nowhere to a whole new path of possibilities is what we do.

While Jose Daniel is an immediate and glaring need, there is a whole country of children, brimming with talent. All are standing at the edge of an abyss and we have many more bridges to build.

The Bridge continued from page 1

With 50 scholarships pledged we can start our leadership training program in December with our new teen leaders from the villages of the Apali region.

We do not offer anyone a free ride. All recipients are expected to train with us and do community based work as well as mentor the youth in their villages.

If you would like to give to The Bridge simply note that on the memo line of your check. Donations for The Bridge are part of our matching grant donations – we are \$30,000 short of that matching grant goal. Any additional funding will go to the children's work in general with 100% being applied to the children.

While we are well aware that these financial times are more than precarious we dare to ask for your generosity knowing that God will bless your efforts, as our most faithful donors attest.

The Bridge to Somewhere is a great beginning to raising up the age-old foundations that have given way, collapsing in the wake of greed and corruption.

Thank you for partnering with us!