

## **Trip Report- Roxanne Ward**

**May 29-June 5, 2022**

**Our trip was very productive and exciting! As we drove up to the SewHope Campus, it was even grander than expected. The pictures do not really do it justice. You can really observe a sense of pride in everyone who is on the team in Guatemala. Kathleen Mick did a wonderful job of translating for me. I also used Google Translate but it wasn't always the best...some crazy translations came up!**

**Here are bullet points of the highlights of the trip!**

- **Met the amazing team we have**
- **Tried to take pictures of all the students and as many events as possible**
- **Saw the tilapia ponds, chickens, gardens, outdoor kitchen, all the buildings**
- **Observation of classrooms and students**
  - **Computers, snack time, teaching, independent work, games, arrival, and dismissal**
- **Played games that Kathleen Mick brought from MVCDS with students. Games involved no equipment, students also taught us games, videotaped most games**
- **Made bracelets with all 2-6th graders, the students loved making the bracelets and many wore them all week**
- **Had students take supplies over to the new school so they could be a part of the new supplies and deliver them to the new classrooms**
- **Students were very excited to see the new classrooms, especially the older kids who had many oohs and ahhs**
- **Classrooms look great with the new teacher desks and chairs**
- **Bookcases were built and new books were put into them**
- **175 new books were brought that were purchased by MVCDS students and many others**
- **Math Manipulatives-pattern blocks, base ten blocks, clocks, measuring tapes, math wrap games, blocks, counter, etc were also donated by Bowling Green Public Schools**
- **Visited several homes of students with Seiner, Elder, and Kathleen**
- **The student and his family met with Seiner, student doesn't want to continue in school, got a prayer square that Maumee United Methodist Church donated, we prayed with the family and tied a knot on the quilt symbolizing the prayer and**

**gave it to the family, they were very appreciative, I was very tearful even though I couldn't understand a thing that was said!**

- **Total math manipulatives and books weighed 150#**
- **The group had a meeting with two people who saw our sign and stopped in and have two “dormitory” type schools in Guatemala and have experience with licensure and getting funding (\$800,000 this year) from the Guatemalan government, they are funded by the organization The Guatemalan Tomorrow, <https://thegtfund.org/> the founder is from South Florida, we spoke with him during the meeting by phone**
- **Met with Tita and Luckey on Friday and then had lunch with them on Saturday**
- **Swept out classrooms in preparation for the dedication ceremony**
- **Cleaned windows in preparation for the dedication ceremony**
- **Went to town with Tim to go to hardware stores and the car happened to swing into McDonald's for a Coke ZERO!!! So refreshing!**
  - **Observations from the van... horse-drawn wagon with people in the wagon, tuk-tuk, motorcycles with many people on one vehicle, trucks, vans, cars, PIGS, dogs in the middle of the road, chickens, electric polls in the middle of the road with no protection, many carryout stores, many speed bumps**
- **After going into town, I could see we are definitely the cream of the crop in facilities**
- **Everyone tested negative for COVID and Myra got us official papers... testing sites were closed on the weekend so we used the tests that Anne brought and Myra used her connections to get the official papers!**
- **You could feel the love in the air...so many times a day I was circled with hugging children or just one at a time!**

**For the school dedication:**

- **Observed 10 truck loads of stone being delivered and spread, we were going to be charged to spread stone but when they saw the good we are doing they decided only to charge us for the stone**
- **Seiner's friend who is a 20-year teaching veteran donated the flags that he made, sashes the students wore when carrying the flags, the backdrop for the program, the letters SEWHOPE and the logo that he made**
- **Seiner made six LARGE floral arrangements for the dedication, these were what we would see at a funeral. They had ferns, roses, and gladiolus**
- **Observed the cooking on the outdoor wood fire of lots and lots of corn that was mashed and then distributed to six families to make 2,000 tortillas, staff stayed way into the night and came back at 4:30 am to continue to prepare food**

- Helped start rice for cooking for the meal
- Observed the cow being cooked in several huge kettles on open fire...bones and all!!! The man who donated the cow has lived in the United States and has two children in our program. He was so proud to donate the cow.
- Watermelons grown on the property were pureed into a drink for the event
- 8 tents and 500 chairs were placed under the tents
- People started arriving at 2:00 and the presentation started at about 3:00
- Myra's husband was the master of ceremonies
- Myra's Pastor gave a very compelling sermon concentrating on the importance of family and the school and family working together
- An Evangelical Mariachi band serenaded the event
- Three students who wore sashes corresponding to the flag they carried and white gloves were selected to carry each flag from Guatemala, SewHope, Petan, and the United States as well as the prayer quilt donated by my church, Maumee United Methodist Church
- The national anthem or a song was played as each flag entered and exited the dedication
- All the people who worked on the school were recognized by Anne with their names announced and they were given a gift
- All SewHope employees were recognized and given a certificate
- All staff had matching shirts with the SewHope Logo on them
- Anne and Luckey both spoke
- I present the quilt to the school with the help of Kathleen translating, also very emotional!
- After the dedication, a patient that Anne has seen before who has a liver problem and who has a child in our program and we visited on our home visits, was given a prayer square, Tita translate a prayer from me to her and we tied a knot on the prayer square. There were tears running down her cheeks as we were praying...very emotional for all
- The staff and many of the parents helped to deliver the food to the guests who stayed seated after the dedication. Each person received a meal ticket, it was collected and a plate of several tortillas, meat, and rice was distributed as well as a beverage for each person. Many families took their food home with them. They used HUGE trays that were rented.
- Parents were able to get up and say something after the dedication. The dad of the boy who was thinking of leaving school had him come to the "stage" and talked for quite a while, another woman also spoke. She later asked me if we were going to charge for tuition. (Translated by Tita)

- **The families were so appreciative of all that SewHope provides for them. We saw many happy faces and heard many thank yous.**

**I enjoyed my trip with Anne, Chetti, Tim, and Kathleen**

**Submitted by: Roxanne Ward**

So much was done on this trip! Sometimes I looked around and couldn't believe all the things we have accomplished and all the lives that have been impacted. I cannot find the words to thank all of you for stepping out in faith for this effort!

It was personally a challenging trip for me for a bunch of reasons - not the least of which was the number of near cancer patients that I had to treat every day...

But it was a super special group....Tim, who has given countless hours to this effort (both here and there), Roxanne (who has selflessly donated so, so many hours to helping these children), Kathleen ( who stepped out in trust and was such a blessing!!!) and Chetti (who of course has been at the core of our cervical cancer prevention project!)

So thank you Roxanne for putting together such a descriptive trip report!

At the end of the day, all I can say was that I came to tears many times during the school dedication...mostly because we live in such a hate-filled world and that day seemed to be such a day of love. The moment that the small Guatemalan children carried the American flag was so emotional for me.

- Dr. Anne Ruch