El Pital / Las Tablas Rotary Project
Household water for two Communities in El Salvador

Dearest supporters of this project,

Early in January, we took another trip to El Salvador to meet with the Rotary Club of Maquilishuat and then with the communities of El Pital / Las Tablas. It was a busy trip with several meetings and work sessions, along with a service project to help with the community school.

Don Alvaro – one of the community leaders said to me, asking me to pass on his message. Tears came to his eyes as he said:



> *"I express deep gratitude from myself, my family, community, and the future generations to all the people who with great generosity have contributed to this wonderful project."*

I could not have said it better myself!

We accomplished a lot during this trip. Here are a few of the highlights…

Caritas: We met with Caritas, an NGO that focuses on water projects in El Salvador, and offered their assistance in navigating the legalities around the project. They were pleased with the approach that we have taken regarding the legal documents. We will follow up with them (however, they don't provide financial assistance).

Japanese Embassy: We met Rafael Matamuros and Napoléon Sandoval of the Japanese Embassy, who both fully support the project. (The Japanese Embassy is providing the funding for the water tank.) After first expressing some questions regarding the organization of the project, we walked through the Water Board agreement that had been drawn up and is pending signature. The Rams Without Borders members also explained the approach to ensuring that the water system would function for years. At the end of the discussion, they indicated that they will expedite the application approval, to start their work as soon as possible. They were very happy with the organization of the project and how the long-term sustainability was being addressed.

Over the summer since the last time we were there (March, 2023), there have been some challenges with their current water supply from the spring, with some dry spells over the summer where there was not enough water for everybody. This has further increased the importance (and urgency) of this project.



Where we stayed in El Pital/Las Tablas



Service project at the community school: Annie, in a parallel effort outside of the Global Grant project, raised $2374 specifically for the school, to help with cleaning and maintenance supplies, books, and educational activities for the younger students. She has been working with the head of the school, Professor Oscarito. Together, they organized a service project where we and several young members of the community helped with the school grounds (cleaning up, fixing desks and tables, and painting).



A Community General Assembly: On the last day there, there was a General Assembly in the community. The overall sentiment was even more supportive of the project, with fewer concerns being raised. After the challenges over the summer, very few people doubt the need for the project. In fact, one gentleman from the community (who is 92 years old) spoke up, heavy with emotion, stating to all "This project isn't for me… It is for my children -- and for my children's children."

Quick Project Update: We made significant progress on several key deliverables for the project (some of which are required by Rotary International to approve the grant request):

- The legal document creating the water board, and unifying the two communities.
    - Our partners Oscar (host club) and Leticia (host club president) have moved this forward, and this document should be signed very soon.
- Legal document(s) ceding the land for the well, transmission line, and tank to the joint community water board.
    - Elliot and Saori (Rams Without Borders students); confirmed locations for the well and the storage tank, and assessed alternate routes for the transmission line (where the water will be pumped up from the well to the tank).
- Discussions with the drillers, since drilling the well is the first major activity that will be undertaken as soon as possible.
    - We learned that the prices of the drilling, the pump, and the PVC piping has increased, and that we'll be facing a price increase of between 10-30%.

A huge Rotary ***Thanks*** to ***all*** of you who are supporting this project!!!

(If you know of anyone who would like to be added to – or removed from – the distribution list for this newsletter, please let me know – JoeGMcCarthy@yahoo.com)