

April 6, 2010

Dear Friends and Family,

It has been two weeks since I returned from another great United by Friendship trip to Guatemala and I am eager to share with you my impressions. This year's team of nine volunteers was composed primarily of newcomers to Guatemala. They relished the opportunity for a cultural exchange, including using their Spanish, trying new foods and staying in the homes of families in Uspantan. Some stayed in homes that had no running water and huddled around the wood stove to stay warm. In the process they made new friends and gained a better perspective on those things the families believe will improve the community.



The goals of the trip were to check on the status of prior project, evaluate potential new projects, and best of all, to celebrate the completion of our latest projects. The United by



Friendship projects for 2009 were to (1) help two villages purchase rights to a spring for a future potable water project (2) repair the roof on a rural clinic and (3) partner with eight villages in the cloud forest in the mountains above Uspantan to construct a computer center.

UbF provided the materials at a cost of \$15,000 and the community provided the labor.

On March 5th we traveled the winding dirt roads to the Ki'che Mayan village of Caracol to celebrate the opening of the new beautiful and colorful computer center. The inauguration was joyous, complete with speeches, folkloric dances by the students, and a special lunch of turkey soup. On the outer front wall of the building were commemorative plaques honoring the individuals who donated \$500 or more toward this project. Additionally, students from the Rotaract service club of Apollo High School of Glendale, Arizona provided each student with a rain poncho, which will be very useful in this region where it rains ten months out of the year.





This computer center has the potential to expand their world, allowing the students a more equitable opportunity to further their education and obtain jobs and for the community to find markets for their produce and crafts - all from their home village.

Each of you contributed in some way toward the success of this project, mostly in the form of donations to United by Friendship. I am very moved by the way in which you have opened your hearts to the people and communities of Guatemala. I hope you will continue to support this effort as we start our new project for 2010, which is to construct a potable water system for the destitute village of Los Regadillos.



Thank you for helping to make a significant difference in this corner of the world.

With Gratitude,

Deborah Simon

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www.unitedbyfriendship.org

Photos by Margie Van Lent, Wolfgang Collins, Olegario Chivalan, Deborah Simon