



UNITED BY FRIENDSHIP NEWS

Fall/Winter 2006

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Making a Difference

*“How wonderful it is that nobody
need wait a single moment
before starting to improve the
world.”*

Anne Frank

CROSSING BORDERS

United by Friendship is a small nonprofit 501(C)(3) organization composed of volunteers, whose mission is to strengthen communities in Central America by partnering with them on projects related to water, education, health and economic development. UbF visits the communities and with them determines which project to support. Friendships, understanding, trust and goodwill are built as we work together.



New Water Faucet Decorated with Flowers

There are very few of us who, as our end approaches, would wish we had spent more nights or weekends at the office or bought more things. Yet, we are often driven by the things that seem urgent at the time and not the things that are truly important.

At UbF we recognize the urgency of the needs of our Central American neighbors as well as the joy of relating to them as friends and associates in achieving goals that are

both urgent and important. This combination of service and friendship is a power-



ful pairing of human needs that transforms the enterprise from something that could be burdensome into

something that is both joyful and inspiring. It is inspiring because we see first hand what our efforts can achieve when partnered with the efforts and dreams of the communities that we strive to serve.

I am so grateful for the help of a talented board of directors and a diverse group of the friends of UbF that have helped make our work possible.

—Deborah Simon
UbF President

WATER SYSTEM FOR TESORO CHIQUITO

With sweat dripping from their brows, 8 dedicated volunteers from the USA went to the Guatemalan village of Tesoro Chiquito to celebrate the completion of their water project. Getting there was no easy feat. It took 6 hours of travel in the back of pick-ups over a horrendous road. When the road ended, the group either hiked or rode horses for another hour through the hot tropics to reach their remote destination. When they finally arrived they were greeted with open arms by the people of the village. A celebration was in progress. They had invited other villages to a

soccer match. A group of men were happily entertaining the crowd on a marimba they had carried through the jungle paths on their backs. The reason for this party? Until now, the women and children of Tesoro Chiquito had to walk 3 miles several times each day to fetch water which they carried home in pitchers on their heads. Many people had diseases from water borne bacteria. Last year United by Friendship and some Rotary club of New Mexico partnered with Tesoro Chiquito to help them build a water distribution system that would provide chlorin-

ated water to each home. Today, each new water faucet was adorned in fresh flowers and the children got to turn on the taps and experience the piped water running over their hands. It was a privilege to share the day with this “Little Treasure” of a village, whose people delighted in the simple luxury of clean running water.

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MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN EDUCATION



UBF VOLUNTEER WITH STUDENTS



VOLUNTEERS HIKING TO TESORO CHIQUITO



WASHING CLOTHES IN DITCH

In our last newsletter, we reported an initiative by United by Friendship titled "Scholarships, Dreams & Dentistry" where we announced a scholarship program to send a promising young woman from Uspantan to the University to study dentistry. In pursuing this we discovered that despite our best intentions, there were no high school graduates from Uspantan able to pass the University's entrance exam. This is still an important goal but we discovered that we need to take

it in smaller steps. Upon further investigation we learned that the local junior high has 450 students and only 2 usable classrooms, each student only receives 2 hours of education per day.

UbF met with school and city administrators and determined that 5 more classrooms are needed. At \$12,600 per building, the City committed to money for 3 and UbF committed to 1. The City continues to search for funds to pay for 1 more building. Our ultimate goal

is still to provide a scholarship for a promising student to attend University and then return to Uspantan to contribute to the community. Sometimes we have to walk before we can run.

Water Rights for Chijam

Chijam II is a Mayan community of 97 adobe homes scattered over several hillsides in the Guatemalan highlands. Their primary source of water is a ditch that crosses their lands. In it they bathe and do their laundry. For three years the people of Chijam have petitioned United by Friendship for assistance to purchase water rights to a spring located approximately 4 miles away. The cost of the water

rights was \$15,000, a price far too high for the sustenance farmers of Chijam or United by Friendship alone. In April of 2006, a partnership was formed, making it possible for Chijam to reach its goal. United by Friendship offered 50% of the cost, the county government 30% and the village of Chijam 20%. UbF volunteers attended the ceremony to celebrate the signing of the contract.

"We are to take one another by the hand. One on the right, one on the left. No one walks in front and no one walks in back. Together hand in hand we will reach our goal."

Baltazar Santiago at the signing of the water rights agreement for Chijam. Taken from the Popul-Voh, the ancient book of the Maya.

DENTAL EQUIPMENT

The county of Uspantan has no regular dentists. However, it is valiantly attempting to provide dental care to its 45,000 citizens with the services of a dental student from the national university. Uspantan requested assistance from United by Friendship in obtaining some basic dental equipment. Thanks for donations from dentists in the USA, we were able to provide Uspantan dental clinic with some key pieces of dental equipment.

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

United by Friendship depends on the generous gifts of people and organizations who have an interest in its mission to strengthen communities through partnerships and promote goodwill in our neighboring countries in Latin America. We present to you this opportunity to help provide *clean water, health, education and economic development* to help strengthen Central American communities. Please complete and mail in the enclosed donation card and start making a difference today.

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