**Blog # 1 2/27/17**

We arrived without incident early afternoon the 25th and were greeted, first by Brittany, who had flown in from San Francisco to join us, and then by our Rotary  driver.  The trip to Copan Ruinas took 4 hours!!  over at times a lot of pot holes and at times behind many trucks.......many of which were loaded with sugar cane.  We had our welcome dinner with the local Rotarians Saturday night and got many questions answered.  On Sunday we walked to the ruins that are located just out of town.  I say walk but a few of us "less hardy" took the local transportation......one driver and a seat for 2 or 3 in a three wheel "taxi".  Any location in town is $1.00.

Today, Monday was our first work day.  The local Rotary is very active and there are an average of about 1 Rotaract Club per Rotary Club.  This means that there are lots of hands-on projects and much being done in the name of Rotary.  The local club is involved with a water purification system to be installed in a community just North of where we  are.  Our job was to construct the building for it and our contribution was to be $3000....which was wired down before we left.  Unfortunately, during the prior week there were disagreements concerning the project and it was put on "hold".  We are involved in another one of their projects.

About 20 minutes North of us is a Mayan village.  There are about 200 people living there......all of Mayan descent.  They are living in poverty status and the Rotary goal is to provide bath and shower capabilities for each of the 74 homes.  Forty-five have been done and our goal is to do 8 more.....leaving 21 to be completed.  The goal of 8 was selected because our funding of $3000 covers the construction of 8.  Our work project is to physically build (cement blocks) as many of the bath/shower facilities that we can in 5 days.

Just a comment on the project.  On most of our trips, what we accomplished would not have taken place had we not been there to do it.  We staffed remote clinics in Brazil and funded the cameras for eye examinations; we built a culture and therapy center in Costa Rica,  we replaced an old (unhealthy) ceiling in an elementary school in El Salvador and we renovated an elementary school in Belize.  While our project here is needed, we are actually accelerating an effort that would take place eventually.  I don't want to diminish its importance but the distinction is there.

Today, we started on building #1 (for us) and got 6 or 7 levels of cement blocks before we had to quit.  To go higher requires either a ladder or staging and they had neither.  Tomorrow we will break into two groups so we can accomplish more (only so many at a time can do the construction at one site).  I don't think we'll get all of our 8 done this week but at least we'll make a significant dent in the goal.

Now it is time for a shower and maybe even a short nap before supper!

*Dick Manelis*

*office:*[*508/875-7000*](tel:(508)%20875-7000)

*fax:*[*888/856-4963*](tel:(888)%20856-4963)