

Canadian Peacemakers nternational

Newsletter

July 2020



Aerial photograph of CPI's main school, shown in the foreground, in Santa Cruz de Yojoa. The school, which opened in 2016, replaced a rented bungalow.

The Effects of COVID-19 on CAL in Honduras

As of June 30, the number of reported cases of COVID-19 in Honduras was nearly 20,000. The government imposed a national lockdown in mid-March, forcing the CAL program in Honduras to be suspended indefinitely. Many organizations in Honduras have laid off their employees without compensation of any kind. Although the pandemic threatens CPI's Canadian donor base, we do not want to follow the lead of other organizations regarding staff treatment. We are pleased that the staff of CPI's affiliate in Honduras, Asociación Confraternidad Honduras (ACH) has agreed to a salary cutback to 60% of their regular wages until normal CAL operations resume.

The Director of Computer-Assisted Learning for ACH, Yeni Cristabel Lopez Tovar, participates in frequent, virtual meetings with the municipal Director of Education to learn about and then

implement different activities with the students. She reports weekly to the Secretary of Education.

Ms. Lopez Tovar and her staff at the main school in Santa Cruz de Yojoa, along with the coordinators and facilitators of the satellite schools have had to change the way in which the CAL program is delivered so that students can complete the school year by working at home. Students who do not have access to a cell phone, television, or internet are lent computers and Chromebooks. Depending on their circumstances, students are monitored by phone, visit their schools if they live nearby, or are visited by staff members if they reside in the more remote villages and find it difficult to travel. Staff review the students' assignments and give them worksheets to be done at home. They are always careful to take appropriate safety precautions.



Junior Adonay Claros Benitez, a facilitator at the Centro de San Nicolas satellite school in Copan, checking the work of two students.



Supplies and spiritual support may also be provided.

Students have also been encouraged to undertake various activities, such as:

making crafts using recycled materials,



making crafts for Mother's Day,



planting ornamental flowers, and



planting vegetables using tools, materials, and seeds they have available in their homes.



Baergens in Honduras

On March 2, CPI Board members and Learning Tour leaders Gordon and Wendy Baergen travelled to Honduras to help in several projects. Their first task was to organize and lead a team of workers to install eavestroughing and piping on the houses in Plan Grande so that rainwater can be captured and stored in concrete basins (pilas) for domestic use. After a few days of hard work, the pilas were full once again.



During this time, the Baergens learned that 16 nearby homes had no water supply. Although a storage tank was available, the spring that had previously provided water for the tank had dried up. The residents had already dug a 200-meter trench to an alternate water source, but could not afford the pipe to make the connection. When they were asked when the pipe could be installed if it were available, "tomorrow" was the immediate response. A generous Edmonton-area CPI supporter offered to pay for the pipe and the next morning a local hardware store delivered the materials. By the end of the day, the pipe was installed, the tank was filled, and there were 16 very thankful and happy families! It was rewarding to witness the difference that can be made in the lives of people in the developing world with minimal cost and effort by those who are so much more fortunate.



Other items on Gordon and Wendy's agenda were a review of the CAL program at CPI's main school in Santa Cruz and a meeting with the mayor of Santa Cruz. The discussion with the mayor included such topics as the logistics of importing a shipping container that CPI is planning to send to Santa Cruz, expanding the CAL program in the town, and a local housing project.



Gordon and Wendy Baergen with the Mayor of Santa Cruz de Yojoa, Marlon Javier Pineda Leiva (second from right), and the town engineer, Angel Antonio Valle Zanches.

Just before their planned departure from Honduras, the Baergens were forced into isolation for a week in Santa Cruz de Yojoa because of travel restrictions and a lockdown imposed by the Honduran government. Finally, after spending another week in the city of San Pedro Sula waiting for a flight back to Canada, they were able to return to Edmonton.

CAL in Africa

A designated donation of nearly \$30,000 by the Westside Community Church in Morden, Manitoba will enable CPI to initiate a CAL program for Grades 7-9 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The first school is to be established in Kikwit, a city of about 400,000 people in the southwestern part of the country, by Theo and Gloria Fumana of Edmonton, Alberta. An orientation trip to the DRC by the Furmanas was scheduled for March, but had to be postponed because of the pandemic.

Water Tanks and Computers

CPI is grateful to Dr. Laurence Olfert of the Drumheller Associated Physicians medical clinic for his donation of 40 used computers. These machines will be included in the shipping container that is to be sent to Honduras, as described in the December, 2019 Newsletter.

CAL Video

A video about CAL in Honduras is now at the stage of final editing. The video is being produced by videographer Grant Hoepfner and Prof. David Balzer of Canadian Mennonite University who obtained the film footage when they visited Honduras in November, 2019.

2020 CPI Annual General Meeting

CPI's 2020 AGM, which was to have taken place in June, has been rescheduled for September 13 because of the pandemic. Further details, including time and format (live group or on-line) will be e-mailed to supporters and posted on our web site.

Founding Board Member Retires

Frieda Claassen, one of CPI's founding members, has retired from the Board of Directors after 23 years.

Donations* are gratefully accepted and may be made by:

1. Sending a cheque payable to: Canadian Peacemakers International
P.O. Box 42123 Millbourne
Edmonton, AB
Canada T6K 4C4
2. Making an automatic monthly withdrawal of \$____ from your bank account (Please attach a void check).
3. Donating at atbcares.benevity.org (no fees and possible matching gift).
4. Giving monthly at www.canadahelps.org.

* All donations will be used in Honduras. The Board and the Executive Director serve in volunteer capacities and receive no remuneration. Tax receipts will be issued for donations over \$10 (CRA Charitable # 868063090RR0001).