

In Focus

Mano con Mano Health Reach Newsletter
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Children of Yalu are Eating!!!

On May 15, 2006, 150 children and expectant mothers received a healthy, protein and carbohydrate lunch for the first time in the Yalu feeding center. Although over 400 children are wait-listed for the feeding center, things are starting small enough to work out problems and get the routine going smoothly. So, we started with the 150 most needy. Pregnant mothers are fed in an effort to have fewer infant and maternal deaths, birth defects, and greater brain development prior to birth. This was not “Chateaubriand,” none-the-less, plates were licked clean and smiles were all around. The first of the Yalu food brigade filed down to the metal sink to wash hands, then got weighed (the point of the program is to add weight and height to those underweight and undernourished), and downed their chewable vitamin. A message of God’s love through Jesus Christ was given by Mano con Mano employee and Yalu native, Lorenzo Canel, followed by prayer to bless the food. Six women kitchen workers from Yalu prepared the meal on a large former restaurant stove donated by a Guatemalan church member. The industrial kitchen, donated by the ACH Foundation and several friends, “sang” as the meals were prepared and served. A legion of flies and a few dogs invited themselves, so some “glitches” must be worked out. However, there was not a single complaint about the menu, no threatening to go to McDonalds, and no chants of “pizza, pizza, pizza” were heard. Not only we, but over 150 kids and expectant mothers, and a few widows would like to thank those of you who have given generously and lovingly for making this happen.

When the people of Yalu ask why we are doing this—what is in it for us—we reply that it is the love of Jesus that motivates us. Serving the people of Yalu out of the love of Christ is a concept they do not quite all understand or accept yet. It is our hope in time that they will not only understand divine love, but appropriate it into their own lives. The love of God is a mystery, one that you can only understand until you have experienced it for yourself. Pray that these people who have never been loved “for free” can someday understand. In the meantime, we continue to “love” them three times a week in a nutritious and filling manner.



Children of Yalu “cleaning their plates”



Cooks enjoying new industrial kitchen



Yalu feeding center nearing completion

A feeding WHAT?

What is this “feeding center?” You might remember that in February 2005 we bought a small piece of land that was a former bean field in Yalu, a Mayan village about 25 miles out of Guatemala City down an isolated dirt road. From there, we hired local farmers to level the land, which was basically a hill that sloped into a drainage ditch, and the building began. Pedro España, a young Christian builder, was put in charge of this project, and up went cement block walls. So much of the slope had to be cut away that we ended up with a second story of classrooms underneath the main dining room. A kitchen area was enclosed at one end of the main floor and furnished with used industrial sinks and counters from a local restaurant supply store. A large stove from a restaurant that went out of business was donated by members of the Guatemalan church we attend (you can barbecue steaks on it, but we’re sticking to turkey franks). The main “comedor” (dining room) has fold-up tables and plastic stools for those eating. The building is fairly large (75 feet long and 39 feet wide). Left over land was leveled off and a combination soccer “futbol” and basketball court was poured in concrete. Goals are being made so the children can play. We hope for a chain link fence for security and to keep balls out of the “barranco” (drainage ditch/ravine) next to the court. We talked the restaurant supply store into donating a used “ice table” which was converted into a long hand washing sink for kids. The roof of the feeding center is very large and V-shaped, so we can show movies on the large, painted wall. Over 400 men, women and children watched “The Passion of the Christ” in April in the ministry center. A church meets on Sunday afternoons with about 10 adults and 30-40 children attending regularly. A team of doctors and medical students will be conducting pediatric physicals and a health fair in the center and doing home evaluations in Yalu. We hope to have Christian music concerts, more Christian movies in Spanish (know where we can find more?) and training in sewing with machines, welding and carpentry, AA meetings, Bible studies, reading classes and much more. So—yes, it’s a feeding center, but it will be utilized in many ways. It’s REALLY a “Ministry Center.” It’s quite noticeable in Yalu, where the people have NOTHING like it, and three years ago the only “gringos” around were Greg and Anita Giagnacavo in the mission clinic. Now, as we drive by or work in the center, people smile at us, wave, and treat us like a blessing, not a curse, to their community.



Removing 34-year-old pipe to improve clean water supply

Water Project Completed!!

After months of prayer, village politics, meetings and struggle, the 34-year-old PVC pipes supplying water to Yalu were replaced through a gift given to Mano con Mano. This gift was given in exchange for the community allowing the feeding center to hook up to the water system. Many of you prayed for the water project—and guess what? God pulled off the whole thing—trenches—new pipes—120 men digging—a connection for the center. It was a joyful day to see the pipes go in and the community united to improve their children’s health. We couldn’t do it without YOU (and God, obviously!)



Yalu men taking new, donated pipes to install in the village

How do we keep going?

The feeding center is completely funded by donations at this point. Someday we hope to have Guatemalan partnerships and co-op programs with local farmers to provide food. In order to add more children and mothers to the lunch program, we need more monthly sponsors and one time gifts.

Monthly Maintenance Needs

- 100 sponsors at \$25/month for food and supplies
- Lorenzo and Maria Juana’s monthly support
- Cooks salaries x 6 (\$60/month per cook)

If you would like to help with a one time gift or monthly support of the feeding center, please respond on the enclosed response form.



Yalu Feeding Center land before construction-February 2005

Construction becomes employment, training center and outreach

For most of the last 15 months between 8 and 14 men have been employed fulltime to build the feeding center in Yalu. As part of each day they received a devotional lesson and prayer time. Farmers were taught how to prepare land for building and pouring foundations instead of planting a crop. Those that can read were taught to use a measuring tape and perform basic math to calculate height, width and construction materials. Five of the farmers were taught to lay block and now can help build their own homes and seek better employment. During this time frame, at least six men gave their hearts to Christ as a result of the constant fellowship and exposure to God's word. Please pray for their new lives, both spiritually and professionally. The building is much more than block and mortar as we build for better lives now and for eternity.



Mike and Laurie Branstetter visit construction January 2006



Feeding center view from across the Yalu valley February 2006



Anita with Hannah

Lety and Rosario

Clinic Update

The **Hands of Hope clinic in El Arado** continues to see patients twice each week staffed by a combination of Guatemalans, Mayans and missionary volunteers from several countries. Anita Giagnacavo founded the clinic in 2002 with the help of Lety Amezcua, who now serves as administrator, and Rosario Chajon, receptionist. We recently added, Dr. Efrain Teleguario, a Kaqchikel-Guatemalan doctor, Yoka Zeller, a nurse-midwife from Holland, Tere de Guillen, a nurse from Spain, and Terri Tjaden, a nurse from Minnesota. Dr. Jim Hines, from Texas, and Susan Jones, a family nurse practitioner, continue to provide clinical leadership and alternate coverage while the other is in the US raising funds. Anita Giagnacavo has returned to the US for a much needed furlough after founding the clinic ministry, building the clinic and caring for patients for nearly eight years. God continues to provide medicines, supplies and donations to keep the clinic affordable to Mayans from three extremely poor villages. Please pray for Anita and the entire clinic staff as we face transitions and seek God's will for the future health of Santa Marta, El Arado and Yalu.

Special Needs Patients

Many of you remember Sara Victoria Canel Guamuch, the little baby girl born with cleft lip and palate. She has done remarkably well after her lip repair and is now nearly ready for her palate repair. In April, another little girl, Juana Griselda, was born with cleft palate and lip as well. She is awaiting closure of her lip within the next month. Funds are needed for both of these surgeries. Please pray for Sarita and Juanita and their parents. We continue to teach about the need for prenatal care and vitamins to help prevent birth defects.



Joyful Sara Victoria after lip repair, and Juana Griselda awaiting her surgery.

Teams, Teams, Teams



Heart Lake Baptist Team -- a week of painting and love in Yalu

February 2006 brought two teams to Yalu. A wonderful surprise came in the form of a team from **Heart Lake Baptist Church in Ontario, Canada**. Originally scheduled to work in the El Arado clinic, with short notice the team switched gears and came to paint the basement and dining room of the feeding center. They played with the children, decorated the walls with colorful flowers and children's handprints, and blessed the villages with hundreds of blankets, baby clothes, soap, shampoo and toothbrushes. The team was joyful and served humbly alongside Mayan workers and students from CAG who came during their annual Servant Days.



CAG students pouring concrete athletic court/patio

While the Canadians painted the CAG students poured half the basketball/soccer court **and** dug the foundation for a wall **and** a villager's house **AND** put on a children's program. At lunch the Canadian team, CAG students and Mayans shared testimonies in three languages. The power of God's love was demonstrated boldly and creatively by these two teams.



June 18-27, 2006 we are blessed to have 24 volunteers from **UC Davis School of Medicine/Christian Medical Fellowship** come to perform pediatric physicals, house calls, specialty consults, sponsor a movie night and generally bless the people of Yalu.



Susan and Memo Jones with very special girls

Jones Report from Guatemala

We have been in Guatemala since August of 2003 with only short trips to the United States to visit family, work and raise support for the ministry in Guatemala. In that time, Memo taught school for three years at Christian Academy of Guatemala, while Susan worked in the Hands of Hope clinic in El Arado. The last two years have been dedicated to improving the health, nutrition, prenatal care and spiritual life of three highland villages. This included building the feeding center, recruiting and training over 25 employees and helping to plant a church. This year we were faced with the reality that we are not as young and resilient as we would like to think. This will mean more trips to the United States for rest and care, time spent in reflection, using resources like doctors, counselors and friends to help us maintain a healthy balance and perspective. Both by calling and by choice, we serve some of the neediest people on earth. Because of this, we hope to return to the US for a two week intensive retreat for missionaries and pastors designed to renew us physically, emotionally and spiritually. We will also spend five weeks visiting family, friends and churches. God has provided a new Guatemalan doctor for the clinic and strong leadership for the feeding center in Yalu. We ask for your prayers as we seek to honor the Lord with our time, energy and resources. Please pray for strength, wisdom and provision for the feeding center and clinic staff in our absence.



Joyfully serving in Yalu, with lots of helpers!!

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