



News from Caminando Por la Paz March 2020, Guatemala City

Hello to all of the friends of Caminando Por la Paz,

I am Sr. Sandy Atha. I thought I might give Ron a break and write this news letter to you. I am writing from Houston, but I have visited the project and have great interest in seeing it successfully moving forward. I am one of the "old people" in that I am 73 years old, and have spent a substantial amount of my life working as a missionary in nearby Nicaragua.

I am not easily impressed when it comes to missionary projects. However, Caminando Por la Paz is different. So often well meaning missionaries or people of good faith, start projects to help the poor. The missionary presents his vision and goes to work in attaining the objectives of the project with very little input from those intended to benefit from the project. Caminando Por la Paz is very different. When Father Tom started the project he listened to the people. He asked them to tell him what was most important to them. They told him that they were concerned about the violence in the streets that was affecting their young people. They were concerned that the younger children weren't getting an education. He heard how they were so poor, it was hard to keep food on the table. In this

way Father Tom saw Jesus in the faces those he was trying to help and working to bring the reality of Christ in their presence.

Father Tom also realized that anyone benefiting from the project must invest their time and effort into the project. No one in this project receives a pay check. Volunteers are those who benefit most from the project.

The students who are in college tutor the younger students who have never been to school. They live in the project house. Just like any home there is work to be done keeping the house clean. They plan special projects and when needed they help our neighbors by checking on the elderly and bringing bread that is donated by a convent nearby. Our students learn to be good neighbors. They are always on the outlook for new students.

You might wonder how many children are receiving benefits from the project. At last count we are paying tuition, books, school supplies for about twenty five children in primary school. These students come in the afternoon for tutoring sessions and usually a noon meal and evening meal.

That is just the beginning. Another 35–40 or more students show up in the afternoon for tutoring. These students for mostly economic reasons, have most often never attended school. Along with the college students in the house we have volunteer teachers and volunteer cooks.

So often when people think of projects like this they think of skinny, poorly clothed and starving children. The above picture was taken in November of 2019, when a mission group visited. These are very happy children who enjoy learning. There is never a complaint about the food and you know the main staple dish is usually rice and beans with a little bread. When Ron cooks it is usually



something with pasta in it. (Yes, everyone works.)

This projects welcomes visitors. When the corona virus has left us and people are allowed to come into the country again, we will be happy to have visitors again. At present, because of the virus, visitors cannot enter the country. However, with the internet, life is going along as usual at the mission.



I have been working on this newsletter for sometime, but just when I believe it is ready to print, circumstances change. Though the corona-virus has had great affect on us here in the U.S., Guatemala is using preventive measures in hopes to keep it out of the country.

I am asking you to look at the happy faces of the children in the picture. Help us to continue this project with any donations you have. I know that many of you are worried about tomorrow as we are in difficult time. Most of the children you see in the pictures eat the only meals they get at our House— in reality your house, as we would not be able to help these 70-80 children without your help. For those who have sent donations, remember your donations are tax deductible. Please also remember us in your prayers.

Finally, on behalf of everyone at Caminando Por la Paz, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts and pray for you daily.

Sr. Sandy