

Friends of Honduras Society

President's Report for 2019

FOH began 2019 with continuing to supply food for a daily meal for the students and also overseeing the continued construction on the new medical clinic. By April much of the construction work on the clinic was completed, furniture for the clinic was ordered and the grand opening of the new clinic was scheduled for early July. A trip to Honduras for the grand opening was proposed and planning for that trip was begun. In June the faithful supporters of FOH at DFH Real Estate held a bake sale and \$3800 was raised through the sale of donated baked goods and monetary donations. In mid-June Iris Bos left for Honduras to help with the preparations for the opening of the medical clinic. While in Honduras Iris also arranged for the purchase of backpacks, schools supplies and medical supplies. Bob Philps and myself left for Honduras on July 2nd, carrying more cloth bags and "care bears" that were lovingly made and donated by the Ladies Missionary group at Central Baptist Church, arriving July 3rd into a whirlwind of activity.....organizing and filling the backpacks, visiting the school and clinic for a quick tour & meeting with Leda & Rigo Chang to finalize all the details. On July 4th we attended the grand opening of the medical clinic. The folks in Honduras had put a lot of work into organizing the ceremony and it was attended by lots of local dignitaries....the Dean of the University Medical School, the local health nurse (Brenda), the Mayor of Retiro, 4 members of the local police force and the local Priest. Many encouraging speeches were made, I read a speech in Spanish that seemed to be well received (!), the school children put on a play & did a Honduran cultural dance, and then we all went to the clinic for the ribbon cutting ceremony. Lots of the local people plus students and their parents were there and everyone seemed quite pleased with the way the clinic had turned out. Following the opening of the clinic there was a fiesta held at the school for all the attendees. The next morning we loaded up all the backpacks filled with school supplies, the Care Bears, handmade knitted bears supplied by Heather Philps, the cloth bags & other goodies into the back up a pickup truck and went to the school. The kindergarten & Grade One students received a small bag with one of Heathers bears and a backpack, while the rest of the grades got a backpack c/w school supplies & a Care Bear. The teachers were given a small gift of appreciation. There were lots of hugs and hand-made cards given to us by the students. We then went to the school in Macuelizo and were able to give each student there a cloth bag with school supplies and a Care Bear. The local health nurse also attended our visit to Macuelizo, telling the teachers, students & parents about the dangers of getting Dengue Fever from mosquitos and how to protect themselves from it. The police officers who had been at Retiro also came to Macuelizo to interact with the students, teachers & parents. The police assured us that they would be looking after the schools and would be patrolling regularly around both neighborhoods. While in Tegucigalpa we were able to talk to Leda & Rigo's son-in-law Juan (he works for a furniture supply company) and he was able to supply FOH with 14 new student desks plus a teacher's desk and chair for a very reasonable price. Juan was also able to arrange for a number of the old chairs at the school to be refurbished at no cost to FOH. We also discussed the possibility of supplying the student's families with food bags at Christmastime. Rigo indicated that he could get food bags that contained a variety of food items (enough to feed a family of 4 for a week) for \$20CAN per bag. We returned from Honduras on July 8th

with the sense that a lot of good had been accomplished in our short visit to the schools. We received word in August that the clinic was open and being staffed by student doctors and nurses from the Catholic University Hospital in Tegucigalpa, for which we are very thankful. In September the decision was made to try to raise enough money to supply food bags to each student's family at Christmastime. A fundraising target of \$5000 was set with the intention of supplying 250 food bags to student's families, and information on the fundraising effort was posted on the FOH website and FaceBook page, with an end date of November 20th. In November work was started on drainage infrastructure at the school in Retiro with the intention of controlling and re-directing the rainwater on the school grounds. Also in November we received information and photos on a project started by two of the teachers at Retiro....they were teaching the students how to be gardeners! The photos showed the students and their instructors happily getting their hands dirty caring for their new plants. By November 30th the fundraising goal was met and over \$5000 was raised. The food bags were prepared and distributed just before Christmas and by all accounts this project was a huge success. Thanks to many faithful donors funds have continued to come in and FOH now has the money on hand to purchase food for the students for the new school term, new school books and other supplies and perhaps some more new desks for the classrooms and other maintenance items needed for the school.

None of what has been accomplished this past year would have been possible without the continued monetary support that has been provided to FOH from a wide variety of sources. Many thanks to all the donors who have contributed to FOH in this manner. A big thank you as well to all the FOH board members who continue to so selflessly volunteer their time and energy to this project. Thanks to Leda & Rigo Chang in Honduras, you are loved and appreciated and you are the sole reason that FOH is able to get things accomplished at the school. Many thanks to Iris Bos for her language & translation skills and for acting as our liaison with Leda & Rigo. Thanks as well to Cathy Stone for so ably looking after the books & finances of the Society, to Jillian Polso for faithfully recording and distributing the FOH meeting minutes and to the Directors At Large, Bob & Heather Philps, Greg Stone, and to Member At Large Graham Philps for your continued support.

Respectfully submitted January 27, 2020.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dave Philps', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Dave Philps