



NEWSLETTER

Serving the Underserved

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Volunteer Fire Rescue Team



Fire Training

"Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our 'God is a consuming fire.'" Hebrews 12:28-29

Guatemala Outreach, Part 3 -

Fire Rescue Training: Team Member Perspectives

(Intro by Michael, II) Fire Rescue service in the town of San Pedro Las Huertas is provided by a group of very dedicated volunteer firefighters, Cuerpo De Bomberos Voluntarios, who give their time and energy to protecting the lives and property of San Pedro and the surrounding communities.

They place their lives on the line with bare minimum training and poor equipment, and they do it for free. We discovered their ideas, concepts, and strategies were based on 1970s and 1980s training, so we decided it would be best to begin with the basics and work our way up. The members were amazed at how much fire behavior has changed over the last 10-15 years with the use of synthetic materials, plastics, and changes in building materials.



"I again was feeling the pull to the missions field, but had no idea how my talents could be used. When Plant Today was started, I suddenly knew. I knew then why I went through all the training and years of hard work. Now I am able to share my knowledge and talents with those less fortunate."

"Went with Michael for the fire training. Approximately 30-35 voluntary firemen there. They were very thirsty for knowledge and training. Very little fire equipment and very old. The camaraderie exists between the firefighters anywhere in the world."

"When I presented the equipment to the firemen [4 helmets, 2 axes, 2 halligans], it was like kids at Christmas. They couldn't believe we were giving them new equipment. They told me they receive some equipment from the U.S., but it is very used and very worn. The helmets they have were sanded and spray-painted. They had axes, but they were well used. The halligans we gave them were a new tool to them."



"The firemen are in desperate need of new bunker gear. The gear they have is too big, 'American Sizes.' They are using work gloves as fire gloves."

"[On the last day], after everyone ate lunch, the Chief stood up and gave a very heartfelt thanks to everyone [who] came to Guatemala. They were extremely grateful for everyone giving of their time, money and energy to come to Guatemala and help. I was then able to shake hands and hand out certificates to all the firemen that attended. The Chief presented me with a certificate of appreciation and department patches. I think the thing that affected me the most was when the youngest volunteer came to me and took a small pin off his uniform and presented



Construction Crew at work



Chiseling out the old cobblestone

In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. (Ephesians 2:21)



Prepping the ground

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it to me in appreciation. The last thing the Chief said to us was, ***‘Please come back again and do not forget about the people of San Pedro Las Huertas.’*** I don’t think we ever could.”

“I feel God has been preparing me all of my life for something like this.”

Construction: Team Member Perspectives

“I thought it was dumb to put speed bumps on cobblestone. But those people drove crazy. We’re putting the speed bumps down to keep the kids safe and to calm the traffic. “

“After morning devotions, prayer and breakfast, the mission team headed to San Pedro for the first day of community work. Work was difficult as we chiseled, by hand, the rocks from the road to prepare for the speed bumps. It took more than half the day to prepare three areas for the new concrete/rock surface bumps. Many people came by thanking us for the work we were doing and also thanking us for coming to their country to help.”



“We only did half of three [speed bumps] today. We basically clear the stone and concrete. The stones are easy, use a chisel and hammer. The concrete, you dig under it and break it with a big hammer or use a huge steel pick and get leverage under it.”

“I found myself skeptical and questioning why are we here. I couldn’t see how we could really make a difference in such a short time in such a depressed area. As I’m writing, I have to remember it is in God’s time and I do not have to finish today. If I’m so focused on finishing that I don’t interact and enjoy the journey I will have missed something. I realize that I will go out today and do a good days work but will try and enjoy the process.”

“Showed up this morning and gave it my best. Today’s process went much easier. Ground was not as hard. We began placing stones after lunch to begin completing additional speed bumps.”

“We planned on doing seven speed bumps. We did five . . . halves. We can’t do any more because the President of Guatemala is coming tomorrow.”

“I didn’t get to write yesterday because I was so tired and my hand was stiff .”

“The construction team was so relentless in their work (and I do mean hard, physical labor). Hand blisters, sweat and the constant flow of auto and motorcycle traffic to be aware of because of the narrow streets they were working on. The human nature of physical labor is to get tired and quiet. This was not the case. The spirit in the team was so obvious, they were having fun. Hard to understand, but not so when the Holy Spirit is working thru you and your actions.”

“Joy, it comes in different forms. First, working side-by-side with the locals quickly developed into a bond that’s special. Even though I didn’t speak Spanish, I felt the appreciation from all. Each day I felt a stronger and stronger bond. For me, I feel God’s love. This must be God’s love for me to put me in a situation like this. I mean with the millions and millions of people he could have selected to serve here this way. I feel special. I feel His love for me.”

To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me. (Colossians 1:29)

To Be Continued . . .