



Serving the UNDERSERVED

NEWSLETTER

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The mud-filled main street of San Pedro Las Huertas, shortly after Tropical Storm Agatha hit.



The San Pedro main street, showing the depth the mud reached.

From Mike -

Tropical Storm Agatha hit Guatemala three weeks after a Plant Today missions team returned from a six day outreach to San Pedro Las Huertas and some of the surrounding area. We had a great trip, helping 120 people receive much improved eye sight by providing them glasses, and assisting a school for 47 special needs children by providing a fresh coat of paint on the outside and in several of the classrooms.



Little did we realize that shortly after our return home, a tropical storm would pass over Guatemala and dump more than three feet of rain on the mountainside area around San Pedro. The torrential rains brought mud-slides that ran several feet deep down the mountainside, killing more than 10 people locally and leaving hundreds homeless, and an already failing economy completely devastated by closing streets with the massive flow of mud.

At the end of May I sent you our last newsletter reporting on the just completed outreach. I stated that we would complete the report in the next newsletter in approximately two weeks. With the impact of Tropical Storm Agatha, we changed our plans and instead I sent you some reports about the devastation and how Plant Today could get involved in their recovery. Thanks to many of you we have been able to be a part of the local church reaching out to the community and providing clothing to many of those who lost everything except the clothes on their backs. We have been able to provide some temporary shelters for the homeless. We have provided some feeding programs. And, we have helped to provide roofing material for some of those who lost their roofs from the gale force winds.





One of many mud-filled homes.



Children eating breakfast at the San Cristobel ghetto area church, provided by Plant Today's feeding assistance. Note the mud (right) from the storm that was left in the open-air room.



Remains of a destroyed home.

Now, more than six weeks later, mud is still being removed from the main streets in San Pedro and surrounding villages. These small villages do not have access to the heavy equipment that we use here. Most of the work is done by shovel and homemade wheelbarrows. All the while it continues to rain, keeping the mud wet and heavy.

Chief Carlos of the area volunteer fire department that we have been assisting with training and hand tools sent an email thanking us for all we have done, and expressing how much those tools and training have helped them during this disaster. He also shared that due to the devastation of so many, his volunteer department had not wanted to ask these people for donations as the department does each month in order to pay for necessary expenses such as buying gas for the emergency vehicles. He asked if there was any way Plant Today might be able to help, so I shared this with two firefighters with the City of West Palm Beach who have sons in Plant Today's riding program. These men accepted the challenge of raising \$2000 for Chief Carlos and the San Pedro firefighters. Our sincere appreciation goes out to these two men and all the fire rescue workers with the City of West Palm Beach!!



The clean-up process will take months. Please keep the people in your prayers. And, as long as designated donations continue, Plant Today will send those funds for their recovery aid. On behalf of the victims of Tropical Storm Agatha, thank you!

Mike

P.S. We are planning a late October outreach trip to the area. If you are interested in going with us, please contact me for more information.

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