



Serving the UNDERSERVED

NEWSLETTER

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Volunteers from the local church work at the retaining wall of the feeding center, creating a way to divert water from the seasonal flash floods.



Constructing the feeding center's retaining wall.



Volunteers begin the top floor of the center.

From Mike -

Good morning friends - what incredible months of April and May! This period has been a real "roller coaster" ride. When God called me and Diane to both commit full-time to the ministry of Plant Today, He did not promise it would be an easy road. Many times over these last two months we had to remind ourselves that the road for Jesus' disciples was not an easy one. In fact, according to church tradition, all but one of those disciples became martyrs.

No, we certainly were not martyred physically, but we felt the devil threw so much at us that he was trying to destroy us and this ministry. However, as the Scriptures tell us, "What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31 NIV) God and His plan for us did prevail in a mighty way!

We are dedicating this newsletter to thanking God for financial provision when it looked so bleak in the natural and for the ministry of Plant Today, in both the riding program and Guatemala. He used many of you to provide the much needed prayer and financial support. He also provided us with many testimonies of the fruit of the ministry of Plant Today. Because of you, the following have taken place:





Retaining wall and beginning of the center's feeding rooms.



Overview of the center's rooms & beginning of the upper floor kitchen.



Feeding center, with its lower level retaining wall, middle level feeding rooms, and upper level kitchen.



Some of the children in the feeding program, as they participate in the Bible study program portion.

In Guatemala:

* The volunteer fire department had no hoses for its only truck, a 1974 model, which the volunteers are refurbishing (see above photo). Your efforts made it possible for Plant Today to donate and ship down 15 sections (almost 400 feet) of fire hose. Chief Carlos was ecstatic when he received these, immediately sending an email relating, "We are happy and grateful for your support, God, the foundation team and fire departments who made this support. Thank you, thank you all for making this project a reality day by day."

* An American missionary who is involved in the feeding program (that you are supporting) at the church in the ghetto (that you helped plant) wrote, "You will be in complete awe at all the changes in the (ghetto) church and to the San Cristobal El Bajo area where the feeding center is." The above photo shows just some of the children you are reaching. The photos to the left show construction of the center, for which you provided part of the cost.



In the Riding Ministry:

* One parent wrote in a letter regarding her nine-year-old autistic son, "One of the most important things I learned was to find activities that promoted using right brained/left brained techniques. It is what a baby does naturally when he crawls. Crawling helps the brain form pathways and new connections." However, her son never crawled, and activities that have this effect are limited. With riding, "just the motion of the horse is enough to promote new connections and neural pathways." Six months into riding, her child "began making new strides.



Language became easier. He can put five sentences together and have three



Volunteer firefighters on their newly refurbished truck, the first for the department. No more driving more than five miles away to borrow from the Antigua fire department!



Riding program volunteers assist Sarah.



Volunteers with Joshua.

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exchanges in conversation.” She wrote, “I am so excited to see what happens next and so grateful to God that he is using Plant Today as His vessel for children with autism.”

* Several parents have been struggling with their special needs children facing obstacles in such areas as learning and peer pressure. They are telling us stories of how the riding helps their children refocus mentally and gives them a safe environment where they feel totally accepted. Riding helps the children with their attitudes for days afterward, making the 24/7 stress of parenting much more tolerable.

* Parents are telling us the program is strengthening their families as they volunteer with us and help others, or spend time discussing problems, or interact with the other families in the same situation. We are receiving reports of them recommitting to their faith in God.

* Parents are stepping up to offer monthly financial support, though many struggle because of the financial demands that are part of having a special needs child. They are also volunteering in the day-to-day physical aspect of the ministry, which is an enormous help.



* We added six new riders and, for the first time, will be able to take on more this summer as a direct result of Diane being with the Foundation full time.

Thank you for believing in this ministry and thank you for supporting it financially. Most of all, thank you for your prayers. We know that “in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.” (Romans 8:37 NIV)

Sincerely,

Mike

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