

Living Waters Team Reflections: Past, Present, Future

February 2007 - by Mac Sterrett, Installation Team Leader

Looking for a long-term mission opportunity to build lasting relationships with a foreign church or mission organization? Consider partnering with Shenandoah Presbytery's Living Waters Team on a water purification project to provide pure drinking water to people in less developed countries!

Shenandoah Presbytery's Living Waters Team installed its second water purification system in March 2006 in Guatemala. Partnering with First Presbyterian Church of Waynesboro, the system was installed at the Spring of Hope mission in the town of San Lucas Toliman, Guatemala. Spring of Hope is operated by Promised Land Ministries, a non-denominational Christian ministry based in Guatemala City. The mission operates a feeding program for 150 children, five days each week, and provides a hot meal along with several hours of secular and religious education. The system has been providing pure water for the children and staff since March. Local health department approval has just been granted to allow distribution of pure bottled water to other members of the community.

First Presbyterian Church of Waynesboro has had a 12-year mission partnership with Spring of Hope, and work to install the purification system began in October 2005 when three Living Waters Team members traveled to Guatemala to "survey" the site and negotiate a covenant. Six members of First Presbyterian Church joined a team organized and lead by three Living Waters Team members for the week-long installation trip in March. In January 2007, three Living Waters Team members returned to the site for the first of two annual follow-up visits. The system was found to be functioning properly, and minor operational issues were discussed with the operator and corrected.

During the follow-up trip in January, four other potential water system sites were visited in neighboring towns and villages. Two very promising prospects for future systems were identified and "surveyed." Water samples were collected, potential buildings and building sites were reviewed, measurements taken. Water analyses on the water sources for each village (one source is a lake, the other a river) tested positive for bacterial contamination. Local leaders in each village are excited about the prospects for water purification systems to serve their communities. Each system would be located at a church and would be under the daily operation of church members.