

The Greater the Challenge, The Greater the Reward

The first thing that comes to mind when I think back on our Living Waters for the World trip to El Xab, Guatemala is “The Greater the Challenge, the Greater the Reward”. A LWW team from Mississippi had agreed to install a filtration system at the village of El Xab. Because their team was unable to install the system for another year they asked if we would do the installation and health



and spiritual education for them. We agreed and headed to El Xab in mid-May. As we had to complete the installation and education in 4 days we went directly from the airport to the village to access the site. That is when the challenge began. When we arrived we discovered there were no materials on site. There were no water tanks, no PVC pipe, no mounting board etc. and the community had no money to pay the 50% of

costs that had been part of the Covenant with Mississippi. There was a very nice water house but it had no electricity and the well, which was the water source, had a pump that did not work. We were unable to get in the school so had no opportunity to see the teaching facilities. We left for our hotel rather dejected but determined to find a way.



When we arrived at the site the next morning we started from scratch. The water team put together a shopping list and our driver and friend Israel headed back to town to shop. As the water team did what they could with the supplies we had brought, the Education team learned they would be working with 4 teachers in a very small office space. Fortunately there was a large common area for some of the



activities. We had about 1 and a half to 2 hours to teach and with the help of our interpreter, Pablo we got started. The first day was a challenge as we had not had time to unpack supplies or organize for the day. The teachers didn't seem to mind and

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were enthusiastic, engaging, ask very good questions and were ready to add their ideas. Following our lesson the teachers presented it to a group of 25 students that had been selected from each grade, kindergarten thru 6th. Their presentation of the materials was terrific. They taught with enthusiasm, humor and

knowledge and had the students fully engaged. We presented 3 days of lessons to the teachers and they then presented to the students.



Meanwhile, back at the water house things were looking up. Israel had arrived with materials. Around 3:00 things began to come together. During this difficult first day we all asked for Gods help with this mission and he answered by sending us Edy. Edy was a respected member of the community who could do it all. He spoke English, got electricity to the water house, hooked up the new pump we had purchased, and helped where he was needed. His family brought us lunch and invited us to their homes. Our team helped the

leaders of the community set up a Water Board and Edy was selected to be the president. The community support for the water system was evident as each day there would be an audience watching our team build the system and work with those selected to run the system when we left. This was a community in need of “agua pura” and we were glad we were the ones that could give it to them. At the end of our 4 days not only had the water system come together but also the community.



On our last day we planned to celebrate the addition of pure water to the community. When we arrived at the school the common area was decorated and the celebration was planned. Our water team



scrambled to finalize the water system and make pure water to be shared at the celebration. There were certificates presented, the children sang water songs and acted out Jesus crossing the Red Sea and then everyone drank the water. The afternoon was spent doing final training of the operators who would take over running the filtration system. As we headed to Comalapa to revisit a

system we had installed in 2013 and to renew friendships there, we felt that since we had given our money, energy and hearts to this mission in El Xab, we would also want to revisit these people, the filtration system we installed, and the community we had grown to love. We hoped the Mississippi team would turn this project over to us and they did. Thanks be to God!

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