Guatemala Bottle School Completed!

A project that was started in December 2011 was brought full circle in June. An inauguration ceremony was held two weeks ago for the 4-room, second story addition to the school in Chapajijá. The new space was constructed with more than 16,000 plastic bottles and provides additional classrooms for 200 students.

The bottle school project showcases one of MPI's strongest assets—community relationships. MPI's strong community ties allowed the MPI-Guatemala team to identify a need and opportunity, bring the community together, plan a course of action, fundraise, and construct the addition to the school. A special thanks to all of you who helped make this project a reality! Read more about the Bottle School Project celebration here.

Microfinance Success and Expansion in Ecuador

In January the Ecuador team distributed loans ranging from $100 to $400 USD to five agricultural entrepreneurs in Jatumpungo. Almost instantly the team saw the loans put to use. One recipient was able to construct a greenhouse in the first week after the loans were given out. Four months later, the loans had been paid back in full and all participants were debt free.

The program's success has led to expansion during a second round of loans. The MPI-Ecuador team hopes to give out eight to nine loans this round. Additionally, weekly business classes are offered to anyone in the community who is interested.

The community of La Chureca went through major changes in early 2013. Central America's largest trash dump was closed, a recycling plant opened and families were moved out of La Chureca to new homes in a community named Villa Guadalupe. Read this blog post for more about the move.

The MPI-Nicaragua team recently conducted a survey to see what affects the move has had on families. While living conditions have improved drastically, families now face living expenses they never incurred before, and insufficient income is one of the biggest problems families have faced since the move.

The women's cooperative has helped alleviate this burden for some of the families. Thanks to the hard work of the women and the MPI-N team, the cooperative has earned over $10K since August 2012 and increased salaries for the women to $75-$100 USD a month. More importantly, through the cooperative the women have developed an entrepreneurial drive, a sense of independence and the confidence to know they can succeed.

Find out more about the cooperative on their Facebook page or shop online at Etsy.com.

Guatemala

Ecuador

Nicaragua

The Perfect Ending to an Unforgettable Trip

Summer intern Kathryn's final week in Guatemala.

Big changes in the community of La Chureca in Nicaragua

2nd Annual Manna 5K

Read about Ecuador's second annual 5K to promote health.

8 Weeks in Nicaragua

Summer intern Juan reflects after 8 weeks of work in Nicaragua.