

What's Up at White Dove Santa Clara? Trip Report--Part 1



- More Students
- More Teachers
- Another Grade Level
- Chocolate, pepper, limes, and plantains
- Ongoing and New Needs
- etc.



What's This About?

Most of you know that White Dove School in Santa Clara, Santa Barbara, Honduras holds a special spot in my heart. My first visit to Santa Clara was in 2007, before the school even began, and I have been privileged to visit it at least once a year since then--until March, 2014. My earlier visits typically were just half-day events as a member of mission teams; I was able to pick up only high-spot impressions of the school's progress. I usually left with several unanswered questions.

Recently, after being away for almost two years, I wondered what was happening. So in late January I went back to Santa Clara for a twelve-day visit. I wanted to do an in-depth assessment this time. I wanted to talk with students, teachers, and administrators. I wanted to determine whether those students appear to be getting a good bilingual education. I wanted to discuss Arturo's vision. I wanted to see for myself what I had heard about crops being planted that would help fund White Dove in future years. I wanted to discuss the priorities of financial need.

I was able to do all of those things. It was a very good visit. Was everything perfect? Not by a long shot. But are those students being provided a really good educational opportunity? Definitely yes.

There's far too much for me to report in this newsletter, and I don't want to make it too long. So I will be sending out more newsletters in a series in the next few weeks. Stay tuned.

Meanwhile, let me mention some of the financial needs at White Dove to get you thinking about whether and how you might be able to help.

What are Some of the Needs?

As White Dove builds a reputation as a place where students are provided a better educational opportunity than what they might receive in the public school system, parents from outside of Santa Clara are enrolling their children. Fortunately, most of these parents are able to pay the cost. However, since it began, White Dove has provided scholarships to several students, mostly in

Santa Clara, whose parents simply can't afford the cost of registration, tuition, books, and uniforms. That's where outside donors are needed to help these kids. The two top priorities are to pay for books and for love offerings to the teachers.

The cost of the A BEKA curriculum books for the students on scholarship is about \$8,000 again this year. To date, commitments have been made to cover \$3,500 of this amount.

The teachers are given love offerings depending on their experience and their responsibilities, Several donors have been providing periodic donations to help pay these teachers who are willing to serve--for incredibly low pay. More is needed; you can't over-donate to meet this need!

Another high priority is to complete construction of a teacher's residence across the road from the school. The ballpark cost estimate for this small house is \$4,000, which has already been committed.

The Honduran Ministry of Education has issued a ruling that schools beyond 6th grade must provide bathrooms for students in the upper grade levels, separate from the bathrooms for grades one through six. Arturo estimates that cost to be \$2,500, based on the cost for the original bathrooms.

There's a smaller need also. Of the students who have been at White Dove for several years and have outgrown their uniforms, about 15 can't afford to replace them. So they come to school in the heavily worn, too-small clothing. For about \$75 apiece, you could help the parents of one of these growing students to buy a shirt, pants, shoes, tennis shoes, 2 pair socks, and a sweat suit for P.E.

The list of needs goes on, but this will be enough to mention for now.

What Comes Next?



As I said above, this is just Part 1 of my trip report. In the next few weeks I plan to issue additional parts to describe what I observed at the school. I'll cover the makeup of this year's student body, aides, and teachers. I'll talk about the added grade level this year (seventh grade). I'll describe the various cash-producing (we hope!) crops being planted and cared for that are promised to provide funding for White Dove operation in another two to three years. I'll describe this year's plans for food for the students. I'll review what I know about the level of donations coming in for what purposes. I'll even tell you about the white rocks in the yard. And I'll try to keep you all informed about the bits of evidence showing that the students of White Dove are truly experiencing a life-transforming infusion of hope and promise.

If you might be interested in seeing a more complete view of the entire White Dove campus, let me know and I can send you a link to an iPad video tour of the buildings.

How Can You Help?

If you believe something good is going on at White Dove in Santa Clara, and if you are able to provide financial support to help it continue, write a check to **Honduras Agape Foundation**

Send your check to
Friends of White Dove
P.O. Box 5483
Aiken, SC 29804-5483

On your check, designate the donation as
"Support for White Dove Santa Clara"

[I'm working on a new way to donate that doesn't go through the Honduras Agape Foundation, but I haven't yet firmed up that process. More info later.]

For more information, contact . . .

By phone:

Suyapa Perdomo, in Honduras [011-504-2625-1300]

Allen Blancett, in the U.S. [803-295-7395]

By email:

whitedovesantaclara@yahoo.com

WDFriends@gforcecable.com



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