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Would you like to receive a 3,800% return on your investment?

No, it is not a scam. It is the size of return you receive when you make a donation to Enfoque Ixcán that makes cataract surgery available to patients of the Ixcán. In the U.S. the typical cataract surgery will run somewhere around \$3,700 per eye give or take a few hundred dollars. Visualiza, the EI partner clinic in Guatemala City, provides the cataract surgery for 850 Quetzales or approximately \$105 per eye. And when we think of the impact the new vision has on the person's life the return cannot be calculated. And that is just one of the services your donation enables. Exams, glasses, eye drops, etc., and even hats, are provided because of your donations.

The return realized by your donation is especially rewarding when we

consider the difficult economic time of the past 18 months. The world-wide financial crisis of 2009 heavily impacted most non-profit organizations. With discretionary income down and the financial future cloudy, the impact on non-profit activities was substantial. However, in spite of the financial meltdown, the donors of Enfoque Ixcán contributed 15.8% more to the General Fund in 2009 than 2008. Their generosity and that of the 2008 grant donation has enabled an expansion of services to the people of the Ixcán. If the 2009 contributions were allocated solely to cataract surgeries we would have been able to provide 86 operations or covered travel expenses for 147 patients' trips to Guatemala City or we could have provided 1,794 pairs of glasses. That's how many of

each of those services would be provided if all of the 2009 General Fund contributions were allocated to those purposes.

The \$4,885 generosity of the In-kind contributors in 2009 was also instrumental in advancing the services provided by EI.

So, regardless of what happens in the financial markets, we can rest assured that in 2010 the return on investment will remain strong where donations to Enfoque Ixcán are concerned. The Board of Directors thanks you for your generosity.

DONATE TODAY

ENFOQUE IXCÁN
503.277.9711

EnfoqueIxcán@aol.com
www.EIGuatemala.org



FOCUSING ON THE IXCÁN

EYE CARE AND EYE HEALTH EDUCATION FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE IXCÁN REGION OF GUATEMALA

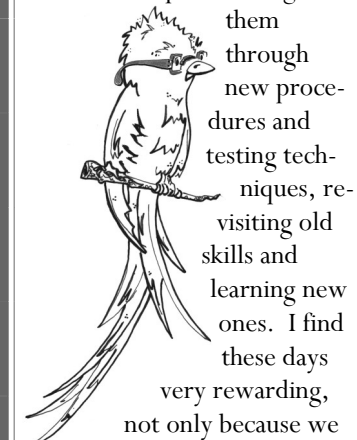
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FEBRUARY 2010 TRIP REPORT

BY SCOTT PIKE

In my mind until about a month ago, the word "hotel" conjured up the image of quiet comfortable room with a warm bath, television, fresh clean towels and most importantly a soft bed with a not-too-firm pillow. But the Ixcán has challenged many of my beliefs over the years.

For the 14th February in a row my wife and I joined the delegation from Needham, MA to visit the Ixcán village of Santa Maria Tzejá, where Enfoque Ixcán's eye health promoters (EHPs), Pedro and Felipe, live. Our usual schedule is to spend 3-4 days with Pedro and Felipe going over testing procedures, restocking the eye glasses, sunglasses and eye drops inventory. We always have a couple of days when we see patients. Ones they have saved just for our visit. Ones they are a little uncertain about, and we use those patients to guide them



through new procedures and testing techniques, revisiting old skills and learning new ones. I find these days very rewarding, not only because we

are able to help our patients, but also because I get to watch the EHPs grow in their abilities. What a joy to see their eyes light up when they catch on and understand.

This year, along with Pedro and Felipe, we made the 3 hour (40 mile) van trip to the village of Mayalan, where our newest EHP, Arnulfo lives. He's just getting started with us, so we wanted to be sure we offer him the same opportunities for education, inventory and moral support that we've been giving the others for all these years. We really like Arnulfo. He has a sincere interest in learning about eye care and having been a health promoter in his village for 23 years, he has a sincere interest in providing his community with another level of health care. In addition, Arnulfo has a great sense of humor and was good company and host for the meals.

The "hotel" where we spent the night may have been Arnulfo's sense of humor coming out, but more likely it was the only hotel in Mayalan to choose from. The 4 of us stayed in a room with a high ceiling divided into 3 sections, separated by 7 foot walls made from planks. Privacy and quiet, we had none. We were serenaded by each

other's snoring and the creaking of the beds as we turned from side to side throughout the night. I can't speak for the others, but my tossing and turning was the result of the unpadded wooden planks we were sleeping on. Forget the TV, forget the fresh towels, forget the bath, too. The 4 of us, along with the other hotel guests and hotel owners, shared a latrine out back by the tree the pig was tied to. You don't want to know any more about that.

In spite of one night's bad sleep the trip was a great success. Our 3 EHPs work well together and will make a fine team as we offer eye care to a greater geographical area. Felipe is becoming comfortable with his motorcycle and is now able to take eye care to other villages which before were very inconvenient to get to.

Continued on page 5

Also, see page 3 for the 2009 EHP's Report.



EI's EHPs (from left) Pedro, Arnulfo, Scott and Felipe

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SPOTLIGHT: United Church of Christ of Needham, Massachusetts



2007 Needham Delegation



Ali Durbin translating during 2010 trip



Joene and Scott Pike with Ixcán partner family

There are some great things going on in the Ixcán....besides Enfoque Ixcán, that is. One organization, a church, has had a terrific impact on the educational, health and social welfare of the community of Santa Maria Tzejá (SMT). And, without the Congregational Church of Needham, Massachusetts, Enfoque Ixcán would never have come into being, so it's important to tell you a little about how they have impacted the Ixcán region.

In 1987 this church formed a partnership with the village of Santa Maria Tzejá (SMT). This was a few years before there was even a road to the village and the last 6 miles were on a jungle trail on foot or by burro. The country was nearing the end of its long civil war and SMT, and the rest of the Ixcán, was under military control. Half of the people of the village had fled to Mexico to escape the harsh treatment of the military. They wouldn't start returning until 1993.

From the beginning, the Needham delegations' trips to SMT (two per year) understood that the most important thing they had to offer was their friendship. They demonstrated with their regular presence, caring and small monetary gifts that there were others in the world who thought about these desperate people and supported their desires to improve themselves.

Families in SMT were

joined with partner families in Needham and each delegation from Needham delivers letters to keep these families in touch with each other. From the personal experience of my wife and me, I can tell you that through these letters lasting bonds are formed, lives are shared and borders are erased.

Over the years Needham has placed an emphasis on education and has helped with teachers' salaries and scholarships so that students could go on to high school and even college. The students, families and community have taken on serious responsibility for these gifts. You understand this when you see 14 year olds, boys and girls, leaving home to live in another part of the country in order to attend high school, often living with other students their age and managing a household and keeping up with their studies. These students grow up fast and take the opportunity of an education very seriously.

As I travel to other communities in the Ixcán, I am able to see a big difference in community development, educational opportunity and motivation to change. SMT is far ahead of most villages and Needham plays a big role in that difference. With the help of scholarships, there are now students graduating from college with degrees in law, medicine, journalism and education, just to name a few. This new generation will lead

SMT and other Ixcán communities to improve their quality of living.

Another area where Needham has had an important influence is in health care in the village. They have supported the village health promoters with encouragement, training, salary supplements and supplies. When Enfoque Ixcán was just an idea, the Needham church offered assistance by allowing me to be a part of their delegations. They provided language translation and helped with learning and understanding the history and culture of Guatemala and the Ixcán. They have nurtured, supported and advised EI and brought it to its present, stand alone, organization.

Our 2010 February trip to SMT was my 14th as a member of a Needham delegation. I've always been impressed by the model of partnership and cooperation they have forged with SMT, encouraging one-on-one relationships between the village and Needham, MA and witnessing for social justice in a land where human rights and justice are sorely neglected. Their complete history as a partner to Santa Maria Tzejá is rich in accomplishments and life changing events, affecting lives in Massachusetts, Guatemala and at least a couple on my block here in Portland.

~by Scott Pike

To read more about the Needham UCC's history go to:
<http://needhamucc.org/dru/?q=node/19>.

EI REACHES A WIDER AUDIENCE

BY SCOTT PIKE

As Enfoque Ixcán matures, it is becoming more visible to a sometimes unexpected audience. Quite by chance, in 2009, we had individuals get in touch with us to either find out more about what we do and how we do it, or to see if we can help them with eye health problems.

In one case, friends here in Beaverton, Oregon, called because the man who does their yard work, originally from Guatemala, needed help for his father, who still lives in Guatemala. We were able to refer him to the clinic, Visualiza, which we work with in Guatemala City, for an evaluation and possibly for cataract surgery. Visualiza has a great social service clinic for the poor, which was able to help this man.

In another instance, someone named Patrick e-mailed me (he couldn't remember how he stumbled onto our web site) because of a problem his on-line, Guatemalan, Spanish teacher was having. Her daughter, Saray, had serious eye problems and a doctor they went to wanted to do Lasik surgery to correct her vision. The mother was scared because the doctor

told her, without the surgery Saray would most likely end up blind. She wanted a second opinion. Again, I suggested they visit Visualiza which is about an hour's drive from their home. The result was that the surgery which had been recommended could have been disastrous and probably would have caused the girl to have required a cornea transplant. At Visualiza, they fit her with Gas Permeable contact lenses and she is seeing well now. In addition, while at Visualiza, the doctors discovered that the mother and Saray's brother had glaucoma and are now receiving treatment.

A van full of men traveling to a workshop in a northern Guatemalan city was sprayed with bullets last fall. One man was hit in the eye. The human rights organization, Rights Action, got in touch with me to find out where they could find help for this man's injury. He had to have his damaged eye removed and is now waiting to receive a prosthetic eye to replace it. It's gratifying to know that we can be of help and that our reputation allows us to serve as consultants to others.

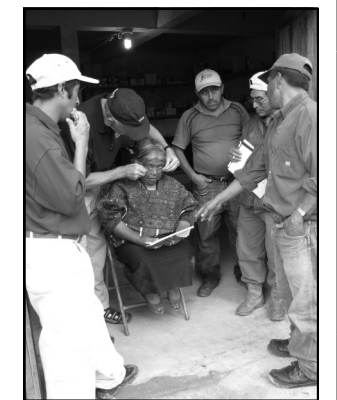
Not only are we reaching a wider area of Guatemala than the Ixcán, but in November, in conjunction with a non-profit organization called Pacific Islands Medical Aid (www.pacificislandsaid.org), we made a trip to the Line Islands, 1100 miles south of Hawaii. The medical team, including my wife and I, visited 3 islands, Christmas, Fanning and Washington, where we checked over 400 people, dispensed nearly that many eye glasses and identified over 60 people needing cataract surgeries. We were assisted by a local nurse who I had trained in eye care in 2008. It was very rewarding work, especially when one considers the beauty of these tropical islands, the gratitude of the people, and the adventure of living 10 days on a small cargo sailing ship, the Sailing Vessel Kwai (www.svkwai.com). You can see some photos of the trip on my Facebook home page.

So, while our main work is and will stay in the Ixcán, we are building a reputation, in consultation, which serves a larger area. Thanks for supporting EI and helping us spread eye health care to new friends and neighbors.



The cargo sailing ship - Kwai

"THE RESULT WAS THAT THE SURGERY WHICH HAD BEEN RECOMMENDED COULD HAVE BEEN DISASTROUS AND PROBABLY WOULD HAVE CAUSED THE GIRL TO HAVE REQUIRED A CORNEA TRANSPLANT."



A teaching moment

FEBRUARY TRIP REPORT...CONTINUED

The doctor from the Ixcán's Ministry of Health office put us in touch with another village which was preparing for a medical delegation of doctors from the United States. They will be bringing eye glasses, but have no one to

test eyes and dispense the glasses, so Pedro and Felipe will be providing that service. This is going to be a great experience for them and a chance to spread the word about the services of Enfoque Ixcán.

Another February comes and goes and another successful trip to the Ixcán is completed, and once again I return home most appreciative of a soft bed and flush toilet.