



New School

Introduction

It is 6 months since our last report to you all and thanks to your help and generosity our Foundation continues to support the education of the children in Guatemala. This year sees our most ambitious project as we try to increase the numbers at our school and improve the standard of education.

French NGO Suivi du Report

In the autumn of last year, " Suivi du project" a French NGO carried out an evaluation of Nino Obrero, the school we were supporting. It was a far reaching report which highly praised the efforts of the principals of the school. In addition however, it highlighted several areas in which improvements could be made, subject to funding. The report made observations as follows:-

1. Size of School

Nino Obrero was situated in a very small building on the outskirts of Antigua Guatemala. The school had between 85-90 children but the overcrowding was not conducive to good education. The dilemma was therefore, if the school remained at Nino Obrero we should consider reducing the class numbers or continue with overcrowding.

2. Further Education

Nino Obrero is effectively a primary education school. No provision had been made to fund places in secondary education for children graduating at the end of primary 6.

3. Medical Attention

Nino Obrero, due to lack of resources, did little if anything to cater for the medical needs of the children.

4. Psychological Attention

Many of our children in Guatemala come from difficult backgrounds. Most of the families live in poverty and in areas of social deprivation. Although not in all cases, you can imagine that these conditions can cause serious psychological problems.

We have thought long and hard about the report. Funding is always the problem and whilst we wished to take action in all of the above areas, we did not want to jeopardise the longevity and stability of the project by promising too much. As in all things in life we had to prioritise issues until we can afford to commit to the others.



Nancy a Little Ray of Sunshine

Changes For 2005

School Building

Reflecting on the 2004 report, it became clear to us that the size of the school was inhibiting our ambitions. We, therefore, gave first priority to funding a bigger building which could a) take more children and b) educate them in an atmosphere conducive to learning.

In early December 2004, we found a large empty unit in the centre of Jocotenango which is a poor area adjoining Antigua. The unit consisted of 1 extremely large room, 1 large room and 4 standard size rooms. There was also two sets of bathrooms, a small kitchen and a small play area. Most importantly it was a self contained unit with security.

Although the unit costs were a lot higher than Nino Obrero at \$1000 per month, we took it. We have divided the large room into three classrooms and created two more classrooms at the end of the extremely large room. One of the standard rooms is used for the principals/teachers office and one for storage, with the other two used for classrooms. We now, for the first time have a spacious classroom for each of our seven classes. (Our classes are from pre-school to year six).



Do you want to be in our gang?

School Numbers

Given our new building we were able to increase the numbers of children we could take. It is sad to say that we could have taken hundreds but we must be happy with the fact that we have increased numbers from 85 to 153 for year 2005. Given the increase in numbers we also needed to take on 2 more teachers. We now have 7 qualified teachers, one for each year, in addition to the school principal who also teaches, a full time administrator and a cook. Class sizes range from 14 (year 6) to 37 (year 1).

Materials

New desks were purchased for all children + teachers. We pleaded poverty with our supplier and managed to obtain all 159 for less than £1500.

In past years text books were provided only for the teachers and the children had to copy. For the first time all children have been given text books, work books and pens etc. The excitement and pride in the eyes of the children was a joy to see.

Until now there have been no computers for both teachers and students. We have contacted a non-profit making organisation called "Computer Aid." They collect old computers from large corporations who are upgrading their IT. They wipe clean the hard drives remove the hardware and install basic software. The computers are then sold to charitable organizations for cost price plus postage. We have purchased 32 and they are currently en route to Guatemala. Each class will have I.T. classes each week.

Food

Many of the children receive little food at home. We have increased the food budget threefold and now provide a nutritious vitamin enhanced mid morning snack at 10.00 and a two course lunch including meat, veg, and fruit at 12.30.



Smile for the Camera

Further Education

We took on board the issue of further education referred to in the French NGO report. From last year 15 children have graduated from year 6 to be able to proceed to secondary education. It is worth explaining that in Guatemala you do not proceed to the

next year of education until you receive a certificate for the previous year. You can only receive the certificate if you have a minimum attendance record and have achieved pass marks in all subjects.

Cost for the year for each child is approx £150.00. This provides uniform, books and cost of project materials. As you can imagine, our budget is being stretched by our plans so we instituted a scholarship sponsorship programme. Each of our 15 children has been sponsored for the 6 years of secondary school by individual sponsors. Our sincere thanks go to



Cindy is one of the children currently receiving a scholarship

Alex Brown
Alex Chamberlain
Graham Chamberlain
Hobsons Nursery School
Jack Webster
Jane Newton
Jason Campbell
Kalgarth Grange Nursery School
Karen Webster
Mark Braisby

Matt Denman
Ron Wood
The Stables Nursery School
The Willows Nursery School
Tony Matthews

Each week the scholarship recipients come to our school with their workbooks to show how they are progressing and to inform the school of their immediate plans. Funding is agreed and given as and when required and monitored against their individual budget.

The children will regularly write to their sponsors to tell them how they are proceeding and send photographs. It is hoped that a regular exchange of letters will take place.

It is our intention to provide all children from year 6 each year who graduate, the opportunity to proceed to secondary education. It is hoped that we can do this by sponsorship.





Christmas gifts received from the Stables Nursery



Lining up for Class

Medical + Psychological Support

We have provided a basic medical kit for the school. We would like to arrange regular checkups but have yet to find a suitable partner or sponsor. We shall endeavor to do this during 2005.

We would also like to employ a qualified psychologist but we are limited by funds. – One for the future we hope.

Budget

Given all of the above and our offer to fund the entire project rather than just support it, as you will realize, our budget has soared. For 2005 our estimate of costs is circa £55,000.00. You will remember that we had earmarked a large part of our resources as a down payment for the purchase or building of our own school. We have released that sum back into our normal budget, given the priority to provide a bigger school immediately.

At the end of 2004, we had circa £90,000.00 on deposit. With the strength of sterling, we have transferred the bulk of this years expenses to Guatemala and we now have circa £40,000.00 on deposit in the UK.

Now that we have raised the standards at the school, it would be so disappointing if we had to cut back. We feel an enormous responsibility to ensure that our project has the necessary longevity and as usual this will depend on our ability to continue to raise funds here in the UK. Your generosity to date has been fantastic and we hope you will continue to help us in the future.

Past Events

Since our last report in July 2004, we have benefited greatly from donations and fund raising events, some of those are as follows:-

1. On 15th October, Tracey Rodford held her inaugural Gala Dinner at Shrigley Hall near Manchester. The setting was beautiful and the organisation brilliant. Many of those who attended commented that it was the most enjoyable charity event they had attended. We raised a staggering £13000.00 on the night. Tracey hopes to make this an annual event and we wish her well.
2. On the 13th November, the Star public house at West Leake near Nottingham, held a music night and auction. The event started at 3.00pm and finished at 5.00am the next morning. The marathon sing a long raised just over £7,000.00, a remarkable sum. James Blowers and his team are planning a summer music event to try to beat this sum.
3. Paul Scrutton has been busy traveling the world and climbing everything that doesn't move. Since our last report he has completed his journey and is currently in the process of collecting his sponsor money. Paul hope's to have raised circa £4,500.00 We will confirm the exact amount in our next report.
Our sincere thanks go to him for his support for the foundation.

Events for 2005

In addition to Tracey's dinner and the music event at the Star we hope to have several more fund raising events.

1. In late summer we are planning a golf day in Nottingham. More details to follow.
2. Neil Rodford to arrange a Murder Mystery night. More details to follow.

We are continually looking for good ideas where we can both, have an enjoyable event and raise funds for the school. We would welcome any suggestions and/or help.

Summary

We have come a long way in 18 months. We believe that we now have a school capable of educating our children to the level required to make a real difference. We have a long way to go and the weight of responsibility rests heavily on our shoulders. We can not express enough, our gratitude to all of you for your support and generosity.

Break Time

