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Children Of Honduras Trust

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LOADING DAY ANNIVERSARY, MARCH 2009

On Loading Day, this year, we celebrated thirty five years of sending supplies to Honduras. I started sending small two pound parcels to the Valle de Angeles Orphanage formerly run by Josie. We have now sent over forty x 40' containers and supply twenty six ministries across Honduras. They, in turn, distribute the aid to many other smaller ministries.

We started to load the four 40' containers on the Friday afternoon when TDG kindly gave us the use of a forklift and driver. We loaded about thirty pallet loads of items onto the containers including many large very heavy barrels. (When empty these will serve to collect and store water in Honduras).



- CHILDREN RECEIVING FOOD IN SAN PEDRO SULA -

Loading Day (Saturday) was blessed with a lovely dry, warm day with sunshine. This was a real answer to prayer. By 8.30am, the unit was being emptied and loading of the containers in progress. On this occasion, in recognition of our 35 years anniversary, we were honoured by a visit from Honduran Ambassador, Ivan Ramirez Rodriguez, and his wife Miriam. They arrived during the course of the morning and surprised us all by joining in with the work. At one point, Ivan pitched in with the people chain transferring buckets from the unit to the containers! His wife in turn gave the catering team a hand. We were also honoured by a visit from the Lady Mayor of Erewash, Mrs Barbara Harrison and her Chaplain. We are very grateful to them all for taking such an interest in the work being done. I think I can say that they thoroughly enjoyed taking part in the event and will be most welcome to join us again on a future occasion.

The Loughborough University Taekwondo Team and friends, numbering about fifty young people, also introduced a fun dimension to the day. They all brought with them a smile and the ability to lift, carry and just work for hours. In spite of the hard work, they still managed to call it fun! During a natural lull in the work they gave us an impromptu taekwondo demonstration. Some of the students are so keen that, when they leave the area, they still travel back for loading day. This year, a young lady from Norway made sure a visit from home to the UK coincided with Loading Day, enabling her to join the team.

We stopped for lunch soon after 1pm. The 163 people present enjoyed the food so much that at the end of the day we did not have the usual piece of cake to give to the security office when we left. We had nothing to give, the cupboard was bare, a compliment to any cook. I also overheard one young person say “this is real food, not done in the microwave.” Well done, catering team!

Lunch was followed by addresses from the Mayor of Erewash and the Honduran Ambassador. We also enjoyed a cake cutting ceremony. It was then back to work.

The first container closed at 4pm and the last at 6pm. An excellent job was done by our packers. We had hardly anything left in the unit. For once, it has enabled us to make a new start for this next year.

ARRIVAL

The containers sailed on the 18th March and arrived in Honduras 26th April. The four containers were cleared for opening on the first of May. This was Labour

Day, so there were extra men available to unload the containers. Two of the four containers were unloaded at Cristo Centro, in the centre of Tegucigalpa. The Peniel church, with Pastor Roger, unloaded the other two containers on the outskirts of the city. Representatives of the various ministries duly arrived to help unload and take their allocated items back to their churches. For those in the north of the country this means a four or more hour journey each way. Some of the more local churches make several trips with a smaller vehicle.

Now the big unpack and distribution exercise can begin. They usually like to give out items such as family bags on the Sunday near to the 7th May, which is their Mothering Sunday. After that they unpack the items out of the buckets and barrels. The people getting an empty bucket this year will be those who missed out previously. Some will have to wait until later in the year for buckets to become available i.e. after the oats or pasta they contained has been consumed. The schools, college and feeding centres will also receive their new supplies to feed the children.

A RACE TO THE FINISH! __

This year, Alison Nunn ran in the London Marathon for CH Trust. This was her first full marathon which she completed in 5 hours 34 minutes. She nearly gave up after about 19 miles but the thoughts of everyone supporting her and the sponsorship for the children got her to the end. Well done Alison. She raised £1,492 (with gift aid) for the children.

THE MIRACLE OF THE MILK BILL __

You may remember reading in the Christmas news letter that we were dreading the bill for our three tons of buttermilk powder. The price of the milk varies each year. It is hard to follow the reason for the price differences but this year we expected it to increase considerably. As you are probably aware, the price of fresh milk had gone up in the shops by about 20% and all fuel prices have gone up, which affects haulage costs. We expected these things to impact on the price of the buttermilk.

Jenny rang for the quote and told me to sit down whilst she read out the price. In 2008, this had been £1875 per ton. The price this year was £1525 per ton! This was £350 per ton cheaper, equating to a huge £1050 saving for our three tons. We could not believe the price. We praised the Lord, visited the building society post haste and sent our cheque off before they could change their minds. It did actually happen. The children are now busy drinking the milk.

SHENANIGANS AT THE DOCKS

In overall terms, this year's import went relatively smoothly. We did, however, experience some strange goings on at the Puerto Cortes docks. The customs authority decided that they wanted to know if the containers were carrying tinned meat and the name of the farmer who had sourced the meat! This confused me, as I cannot believe that they do not know that tinned meat is not specific to any one farm. This enquiry then evolved into wanting to know how many tins we had sent in the containers. Surprise, surprise, we did not have a ready answer to this question either, so they said they would have to x-ray the containers. This also puzzled me. I am reasonably sure that an x-ray through the inside of a fully loaded container would not enable them to count the tins. It would take an exceedingly large and super powerful CAT scan machine to do that, one I suspect doesn't exist in the world at this time. What would they do with the information anyway? The containers were contracted to clear customs at Tegucigalpa. This being the case, they could not be opened at the docks for the purpose of taxation or delaying us into demurrage charges. It may be another type of levy will be charged for the x-ray. However, at this stage there does not appear to be any evidence that x-ray has been performed and no visibility of a declared charge. This continues to be one of the mysteries of importing into Honduras.

We thank the Lord for the professionalism of our Honduran importation agents in extracting our containers from the clutches of the Puerto Cortes officials.

The containers were released within our free time allocation at the docks. After two weeks they start to charge each container by the day and this can build up a large bill on four containers. Thank you for your prayers as this is always a tense time in Honduras and England to get the containers out of the docks without extra expense. The new agents that we use are doing a good job for us and Dina uses part of her holiday allocation and much of her spare time in order to provide the agents with all the information they need and to organise the Pastors to collect from the containers. Thank you, and 'well done' Dina.

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION AT GUANACASTE

A big 'thank you' to everyone who took advantage of the Gift Card promotion, that provided the people of Guanacaste with a Christmas basic meal. The cost of this event was fully covered by the card sales and provided a first time Christmas celebration for these hard pressed villagers.



- HAVING A GREAT TIME AT THE CHRISTMAS PARTY -

Guanacaste is nestled in the mountains some 45km away from where Cesar lives. Access is via unmade roads, which are challenging to 4x4 vehicles and motor bikes. The meal was scheduled for 13th Dec at 3pm. It included the entire village population consisting of 200 families (mothers, fathers and children) and 50 individuals. From December through to May, the villagers obtain employment harvesting the sugar cane fields. Generally, Christmas is a time of hard work and survival. Since the event was a first for them, they took a day off to attend the meal.

To begin, after they had all met together, Cesar gave a quick speech explaining that the meal was provided by their friends in the UK, who had given money to enable them to have a Christmas meal; a gift to them from CH Trust. The event was considered important, so everyone came to the party wearing their best clothes. The dinner consisted of a buffet based around chicken. This was considered to be highly luxurious because chicken is too expensive for most of the people to buy, even for special occasions. Needless to say, they used every bit of the chickens, inside and out! In addition to chicken, the meal comprised of rice, carrots, sweet corn, pataste (a root vegetable) and tortillas. This was washed down with Coolade and bananas for the children.

Christmas songs were played in the background, powered by a car battery. When dinner ended, everyone played games like hopscotch, bingo and even a dancing competition. The event finished at 5.30pm. Because there is no electricity supply in Guanacaste, there are no street lights. It is dark by 6.00pm so people had to go home in the dark, some of them using the wind up lights sent from the UK.

The day was a great success. Everyone was so grateful and told Cesar to tell their friends in the UK, 'thank you' for a Christmas they will never forget.

THEN THERE WAS LIGHT

When Cesar requested a generator for Guanacaste we did not realise the tremendous impact it would have on this community, which has never had access to electricity.

On arrival, boxed and on the back of the truck, the generator and computers were met with a 'welcome committee' of children and mums as well as the three men allotted the task of guarding and maintaining the equipment. The people were very excited as they watched the toys and blankets being removed from around these electrical appliances; we always use every bit of space in a box! They then posed for photos and claimed it a day of celebration.

This was the start of great things in the village, as all sorts of things could now happen because they had light after 5pm at night.

Cesar says 'the generator has been a great blessing to the people in Guanacaste. It has helped to change the lives, not only of the children, but also the parents and young people of this village. With the light, it has been possible for many parents to begin to learn how to read and write. It has also encouraged many youngsters to continue with their studies after work. Never before have they seen electric lights in this village. Now they are very happy and are very impressed with the great work of CH Trust. The generator helps us a lot. Now the children and youngsters know about computers and how we can use them and we can work at night'.

Matthew and Dani, who are currently visiting Honduras, add the following comment: 'We have seen the generator in action also! It proved very useful for the afternoon classes, because one classroom in particular gets quite dark. Our impression is that the school has become a vital hub in the community. It was lovely to see such a mixture of generations in one building!'



- PROUDLY RECEIVING THE GENERATOR AND COMPUTERS -

When it is to be used, Cesar carries the generator outside to connect power to the school. It is very heavy when full of fuel. Also, it is on the grass outside. If it rains, this can be a problem – he is hoping to build a small, ventilated, yet secure “kennel” for it so that it can be safely locked away, readily available and doesn’t require moving.’

SECONDARY EDUCATION

Few young people in the mountain areas have achieved more than primary education, equivalent to infant and junior school. This is mainly because, to attend further education, they need to travel to the nearest town (several hours away on the bus), buy the school uniform and the manuals, currently costing £20 for the year. This, as you can imagine, is beyond the means of most subsistence farmers, whose ability to provide for one child is a major challenge, let alone the whole family.

The government has recognised this problem and wants to provide secondary education covering grades 7, 8 and 9. Like many governments their ideas and reality have not yet coincided. Cesar has long since given up waiting for the educational system. He wrote to us advising that they had a young lady living in the village who had sufficient education to help teach this level of education.

There were, however, two problems. Firstly, Cecilia needed to support herself and, secondly, the students could not afford the £20 a year needed for the school manuals. Was CH Trust in a position to help?

I was presented with this issue two days before going abroad for a week! I thought it was a wonderful idea and one that would appeal to people in England, as the majority of us still value education. I told him to start to put the plan into action. By the time I returned from holiday they had been running classes for four days!

The great haste was because classes should have begun at the beginning of March and it was now the start of June. They had a lot of lessons to catch up but were very motivated, as this was an opportunity of a lifetime.

Cesar tells us that we now have 19 pupils in the colegio. 16 of these need to receive help from CHTrust. The other 3 decided to join the college of Guanacaste from other places, because they heard about how well the classes were going there, where they can learn English and Computing.

Now we had to catch up with Honduras. How could we fund this? We had previously planned an evening of slides to update people of all that had happened in Honduras since Christmas. This now turned into a fundraising evening as well. Glenda and her family were invited to be guests at this evening and told us about their experiences giving out the food parcels at Christmas and the importance of the food and generator.

We raised enough money for each of the sixteen students to have sufficient funding to purchase their manuals, pay some money to their teacher and contribute to the diesel for the generator. It was a great evening in every sense of the word, which has helped to secure the start of a better future for these young people. Such investment not only impacts these students but also their children, as each generation attempts to provide for their own children what they received themselves. Indeed, a truly a long term investment.

Now that light is available, I also heard that the adults had found themselves someone to run adult literacy lessons two evenings a week. Many of the parents and some of the young people had not had the opportunity to go to school and therefore could not read or write. They have to work in the fields during the day but can now receive lessons in the evening. They also required manuals for the

year, which they could not afford. Cesar managed to get a donation for these from a Cuban visitor to their school. We are told that some 30 parents are participating in the adult literacy classes.

What a step forward! Simply the benefit of a providing a generator, together with some funding, and adding them to the driving force we know as Cesar! I am so proud of what they are doing and I hope you are as well. It takes the combined efforts of all of us to achieve such things.

At this point in time, the funding for one out of the three years of schooling is covered but what about the following years? These sixteen students will need funding for year two and three. We will also have another group of fifteen to twenty children, following behind, starting their first year. Some will be graduates straight out of the school's Year 6 and others in the community that have never previously had this opportunity. Some of the students participating in this first year have already received sponsorship from CH Trust for their primary education.

We believe the simplest way to fund this initiative is by an extension to the sponsorship scheme. Jenny Smith, who co-ordinates all the educational sponsorship in Honduras for us and does a magnificent job, has agreed to run a £80, one off or continuing sponsorship scheme for these young people. This will allow them to access secondary education for a whole year. In common with the ordinary scheme, the extension will feature photos and letters from the students. If you are interested, please get in touch with Jenny or myself. Cheques should be made payable to CH Trust. We would like any monies towards this scheme to be in before Christmas. (The £50 sponsorship for the younger children is needed by November, as the Pastors need to buy the school uniforms for all the sponsored children.)

FOOD BOXES FOR THE NEEDY

Like the rest of the world, the people in Honduras are subject to the current rising food prices. Many poor families in the mountains have now come to rely on the morning school meal, which CH Trust provides. This helps to supplement the diet of their children, which at the best of times is often meagre and inadequate. During the long Christmas holiday (from November-February), when the children are not at school, the families are under increased pressure to try to ensure their child will receive one meal every day. To provide coverage for this period it occurred to us to address the need by distributing, where necessary, individual

food parcels containing basic items as described below.

We planned to purchase the following food for a family, costing about £5: 4lb. of rice, 4lb. of maize, 2lb of dried red kidney beans, 2lb of sugar and five small packets of coffee. This would last a family of four for 2-3 days.

Cesar went into the city to locate the best food prices from the wholesalers. He returned with 100 lb. sacks of rice and red beans that his family then placed into smaller bags to give out. However, he was unable to purchase maize, as the price had increased so much. (The Americans are buying up the maize to make bio fuel). Cesar had to buy flour instead, for the mums to make tortillas.

When the first truck loaded with bags was ready, they headed for the hills to distribute them to poor families. Many mums had walked for several hours, with their children, to receive this gift of food that you here in the UK provided.

They were called by name to receive their food bag. This was done from a list compiled by the teacher who knew the families. The children were also given a piece of fruit, either an orange or banana.

Even though this initiative was hard work to deliver in Honduras, it was so rewarding that we have decided to perpetuate it through the £5 gift card scheme. This enables you to purchase an alternative Christmas present for someone, the cost of which will buy a parcel of food for a poor family in Honduras.

Similar to last year's cards, it will feature a photograph of CH Trust activity in Honduras with text to explain the purpose of the card and the identity of the sender. This year, in order to spread the load, Veronica and her husband, John, have agreed to print the Christmas Gift Cards and mail them out to customers. Please make cheques payable to: C H Trust and send your order to:
Mrs Veronica Brown, 109 Lower Manor Lane, Burnley, Lancashire BB12 0EF
If you live locally, you can still obtain them directly from me, Jenn Cox.

PARTY TIME AT CHIQUISTEPE

During the course of last year, a UK business man generously donated a sum of money to provide a Christmas party for the children of Chiquistepe School. This was an experience that they have never previously enjoyed. Like Guanacaste, this small village is very poor and hidden away in the mountains, largely forgotten by the government and school authorities.

After discussion with the parents, it was decided that the party should be restricted to the children only i.e. it was to be the children's Christmas. It was also agreed that Cesar would give small amounts of money to chosen mothers to cook individual parts of the meal at home e.g. rice, vegetables, etc. On the day, these were brought to the party. Some other mothers and schoolteachers also came to give a hand with the preparation, cooking and party games.

The party started at 11am on the 10th December. Some mothers arrived early to arrange the food. Others arrived together with their children. While the mothers helped, the children played games. Cesar gave a speech and explained how someone in England had provided money for the party. In total, fifty-five children attended. After their dinner, they played traditional games of marbles and hopscotch. They also enjoyed music and dancing. In line with the tradition, they attacked a large pinata, made in the form of a Santa and filled with sweets. The party finished at about 2pm after more dancing and two sponge Christmas cakes!

THURSDAY – THE 5 O'CLOCK START!__

This article is provided courtesy of Matt and Dani, currently visiting Honduras and working in the Guanacaste School.

We woke to the daily sounds of Las Cañadas – the cockerels, dogs and heavy rain! We set out on our way to Guanacaste at 6am. The views of the Valle are breathtaking! The journey was an experience. We honked, whistled, shouted and picked up many of the passers by en route, then reached the road to Guanacaste. At this point, we embarked upon a journey that resembled a ride at a fair. (The government has been promising to tarmac this road for years. In fact, work continues slowly even as we drive on it!). On the way, we picked up teachers, parents, friends and children (about 16 can fit in the back of the pick up truck, despite there only being a seat for 3!) Everyone calls Cesar "Prof". We don't think there is anyone who doesn't know him here! The school is next door to a few very poor families and the only shop in Guanacaste but with a beautiful view of the mountains!

We were introduced to the entire school by gathering together outside at 7.30am. Cesar and the other teachers and helpers sang songs with the entire school. The children spent the next 15 minutes tidying, cleaning, feeding the chickens



- HITCHING A RIDE TO SCHOOL WITH 'PROF' -

and burning rubbish. We spent the day observing the school and helping where we could. It was amazing to see such obedient and polite children eager and ready to learn. The atmosphere was very lively and the classrooms buzzed with enthusiasm! We visited a local house to warm up our lunch on their stove (which apart from their mattresses was all they had), and once again we were welcomed in with smiles – they had little or no food in their home and it was evident that they lived day by day.

Thus, we spent our first day in what is to be our workplace for the next two weeks.

THE SAGA CONTINUES

Today we have been making maracas with all of the children – 70 children with plastic cups, newspaper everywhere, PVA glue and sticky hands – it was fantastic! Hopefully they will be dry for tomorrow – we are hoping to paint them so that the children have some instruments to play with!

Yesterday we saw Guanacaste democracy firsthand! Cesar called a meeting so that we could arrange Friday's party. The plan is to have a party with the children in the morning and then a meal in the afternoon with the parents and those who attend the senior school classes. We decided on chicken and a kind of salad dish

– we have a committee of 5 mums who are going to be cooking all day on Friday! Everyone is bringing a little something – some are bringing wood for the fire, others some rice, others some beans.

It is good to hear that people in Guanacaste now seem to have a life now, rather than just an existence.

THE 'PLANT A TREE' PROJECT

Lack of employment is the greatest cause of poverty in Honduras. In response, we are always looking for ways to help provide income for the poorest people. This year's new idea was to purchase fruit trees for some of the poor people who live in the mountains. To fund this, we have sold gift cards at £5 each. Each card has paid for two fruit trees, namely banana and various varieties of orange trees. The £5 also included a small bag of fertiliser to feed the new plants.

Lourdes, who headed up the project in Honduras, negotiated a good price, bought the trees and fertiliser and distributed them to suitable people.

The people who live in the remote rural villages know how to tend these trees. This is how some earn what little money they can by working in the fields for the



**- RECEIVING TWO ORANGE TREES
AND PLANTING A BANANA TREE -**

plantation owners at planting and harvest times. However, they cannot afford to purchase a tree of their own even though they can usually find a space to grow one.

This year we have bought 200 trees and watch eagerly to see if the project is going to be a success.

The trees have to be planted in May, at the start of the rainy season. The banana tree is an annual which will crop in the New Year. The original plant then dies but produces at least two new suckers. Thus, in a year or two, they will have two banana trees. It takes at least a year for an orange tree to become fully established but it will then go from strength to strength. These trees will give food to eat and possibly to sell. We are already selling cards to collect funds for next May's planting. We can also purchase lemon and mango trees at a similar price.

In this way, a small gift of money from England can hopefully make a large difference to the future of a Honduran family and illustrates another form of long term investment.

Matt and Dani report: Today we visited a house that has benefited from the project. They have 2 banana trees and 2 orange trees. In addition their fruit, it seems that the banana trees are a great help in holding the ground together and preventing soil erosion, especially in the mountains, where people live on very steep slopes. We have spoken lots with Lourdes about the project. It has been successful so far in that all the trees have been planted. She is hoping to be contacted when they start bearing fruit (oranges: ready in January, bananas: ready in December). Until then, we won't have a real idea of their success. It is a case of waiting to see how they take to the ground and how they grow. People here have always grown these crops, which have proved popular in the past. They are planted in May/June time because there is always so much rain and they always grow. For now, Lourdes has distributed trees on one side of the mountain only. However, she would like to extend it to the other side also. The plus of the banana trees is that once they have reached a certain size, they can be cut and replanted, creating more trees. However, the only negative is that Lourdes says they are very difficult to get hold of. She had to travel up to 4 hours in the car to buy them! Lourdes has also suggested lemons, peaches and maize. The lemons are really useful here as many people use them to make medicine and also use them instead of vinegar to dress salads, etc. The peach trees are good. According to Lourdes, many Hondurans like to eat the fruit before it is ripe. They also produce a kind

of syrup/honey/sugar that can be put into jars and sold. Lourdes has emphasized that maize is really important, especially for the poorest. They need it to make the most basic food items – tortillas, etc. (Maize cannot be imported to Honduras).

SNIPPETS OF NEWS

A few comments from our distributors in Honduras:

- Several have said that the containers have been such a blessing this year, especially as the critical economic situation means that many families are suffering and it has been good to be able to help them.
- Angela Pavon was so excited when she wrote to tell us that now every child in church and in the children's project has a pair of shoes to wear. This has obviously been a great concern for her, as the Pastor's wife, and a goal she was jubilant to achieve. She has also proved that vinegar is good to treat and prevent Athletes foot. They are slowly eradicating head lice, which is a big problem. This is a result of the distribution and use of the nit combs that we send. Oral hygiene has also greatly improved now that we have provided toothbrushes and a little toothpaste.

Angela has advised that the toys we send are not just a distraction but help teach the children to socialise and share. We sent in some beautiful large dolls that have been shared between the Sunday Schools, so that they can all enjoy playing with them.

She says it is a great joy to see the expectant mums looking so happy when they receive a small toy or piece of clothing for the expected baby. They are so thankful for such a small improvement in their lives. It makes us need to rethink our lifestyle.

- Wind Up Lamps

82 lamps have been distributed to families – so far we have received very good feedback!

Cesar says:

I can say that in each house in Guanacaste there is now a lamp. It is very useful that the children can read at night, paint, their parents can do their jobs better. The lamps give them more time at night. The torches have helped – we have

distributed more than 70 torches. It is very useful, because the parents can walk at night time from the Villa de San Francisco up to Guanacaste and from their homes to church.

- Work continues at La Fortin (known to us as Mars)

Beverly, from Cristo Centro, Tegucigalpa reports:

The first building of Cristo Centro's children's centre will not be completed until the end of the year. However, it has reached the stage where part of it can be used to spread out the children. For the last four years, they have met in and behind the home of Seila, a member of their church. When visiting, one had to be very careful where you placed your feet, because children were sat on every available bit of floor, eating their meal. The extra room will be a great blessing.

La Fortin is a very poor area on the edge of the capital. The Cristo Centro church provides 'after school' classes and extra tuition for those who are struggling at school. When they can, they also provide a meal for the children. The recession, however, has caused cut backs in their programme. Never the less, it is still making progress.

- Mother's Day at La Fortin

Beverly comments: I've attached here some photos from our Mother's Day distribution in La Fortin (Mars). Your donations arrived just in time to help these children give a wonderful Mother's Day present that will bless their whole family. Each child received a packet including a variety of toiletries (shampoo, a brush or comb, toothpaste, toothbrush, soap, washcloth, etc.) to give to their moms, along with the special card they made themselves.

- Extra Help for a Young Lady.

This little snippet came from Dina, the person at Centro Church in Tegucigalpa, who helps with the import of the containers.

'One of our little girls in particular, named Dinora, is chronically undernourished in spite of the extra food she receives from the project and our efforts to give groceries to her family from time to time. For the next month or so, we have organised her to pass by Seila's house daily to drink Fortisip, a high nutrition

product that you sent. I'll try to send a photo at the end of the month and let you see how well she's doing.'

SCHOOL FRIENDS IN ENGLAND

There are now a number of schools that support us in England and Scotland. Some have been long term faithful partners. The projects that they have been involved with include basic support such as the collection of food, clothes, shoes, toiletries and school supplies etc. (Some have purchased new items and others have donated used clothes and shoes. We are able to benefit from all of these items in various ways). Schools have also helped us in other ways, some of which are mentioned below:

- Raising funds to buy food and medicines.
- Sponsoring the education of 8 children over the past 4 years.
- Holding concerts and non-uniform days on our behalf.
- Producing Christmas boxes filled with toiletries and school supplies.
- Donating monies and supplies of dried food and tins from Harvest Festival events.
- Gifting of surplus science equipment, stacking chairs and tables etc.
- Knitting squares! - One activity that particularly touched me was that of a local school club for five year olds and upwards that are learning to knit and make squares to create blankets. They are now into their second blanket.
- School Trips - A different area has been fundraising to enable the children of Guanacaste to go on their first school trip. They went to the zoo in Tegucigalpa.
- Christmas meal and food parcels - One school contributed funds to buy food parcels for poor families at Christmas and pay for some families to attend the Guanacaste Christmas meal.

I am sure that there are other forms of contribution that I have failed to bring to mind. Whatever the format, all contributions are valued and appreciated, especially by the recipients in Honduras.

Our young people are often the targets of bad press. This is a shame, since they only represent a minority. The young people assisting us are doing our country proud and helping many children in Honduras. Well done. In all, the many schools taking an interest in our work provide a significant and very much valued contribution to the work of CH Trust. If that were not already enough, we are even capturing retired teachers to help pack the goods at our operations unit on Tuesdays throughout the year!

FIFTY POUND SCHOOL SPONSORSHIP

Under the care of Jenny Smith, this scheme continues to thrive. Occasionally, there are phone calls from sponsors asking why they have not received a request for their next year's money. Because the scheme is fundamentally a one-off device, we do not assume that people will continue with their child unless we are otherwise advised. Thus, we never send out a letter for the following year's money except in response to a specific request. We do not wish to pressurise anyone or make them feel under any obligation to continue something that they feel is no longer right for them. If you need a reminder please let this be known to Jenny.

We need to have the sponsorship money in by the end of October, so that it can be sent out in plenty of time for the Pastors to buy the appropriate uniform etc for the children in the New Year. Their school terms run February to November. Thus, all the school clothing and supply offers are promoted in the shops during January.

WHEELCHAIRS

We sent a good number of wheelchairs this year. We were given some locally and a large number came from Essex. The chairs were spread around the country through the churches, clinics and the main teaching hospital in Tegucigalpa. These will have made a great difference to the quality of life of so many people.

FLOUR

This year we bought well over two tons of plain flour. We always send some but it can be a difficult item to pack. We can only buy it in the New Year, at a time when we are getting very busy, because of the short shelf life of this item. However, we were greatly motivated to send more when we heard that flour had been bought instead of maize to make the food boxes at Christmas. The flour had cost £1.48 for a two pound bag. Ours was only costing 43p for a three pound bag. We also heard that they preferred our English flour to their own home product.

They used the flour to make tortillas. These are like a pancake that they eat every day with their meals. They used to buy maize to make the tortillas but the price has increased greatly. America is buying Honduran corn to produce bio fuels and the poor can no longer afford to buy this basic Honduran food.

A BED TO THE RESCUE

We were given several Z beds last year. I have received a photo of one of these that had been given to a family who lost their home in a fire. Fires in homes are fairly frequent as they cook on wood inside the home and they also use candles.

JUST IN TIME

We were given a two-year-old commercial gas cooker, which was converted to propane gas and sent out. This just arrived in time, as the old cooker at the Peniel Church children's centre decided that its life was over. This was indeed a well-timed blessing, as the cooker is used to cook for the children and also by the teenagers learning to cook.

SOME THINGS THAT WE NEED FOR NEXT YEAR

Tin openers - We have had a request for tin openers. We did not think that they used them but it seems they do and they like them.

Wind up lamps and torches - a great hit. We wondered how long these lamps would last. So far they are all still working. The oldest one has been in use for two and a half years. These are treasured so much that they are used sparingly and with care by those who have no electricity and cannot afford to buy batteries for conventional torches. However, replacements will be needed in due course.

Cesar says that each family in Guanacaste now has a lamp and a torch. He says another 50 lamps would be good, as he knows of another village without light. Last year, some people managed to buy them in local shops. The rest we bought in bulk at £6.99 each.

Umbrellas and Wellies – The weather in Honduras is generally warm but can be very wet. This results in lots of mud and puddles. The rain is torrential and often falls when people are returning from work. In such conditions, wellingtons are very useful and greatly sought after.

EDUCATION BLACK HOLE

We have literally hundreds of children who need school supplies in order to attend school and of course, the rucksacks needed to carry them.

Stationery - notebooks, reporter's pads, exercise books and A4 pads are all needed since all paper items are expensive in Honduras. Pens, pencils, rubbers, glue

sticks, rulers and pencil sharpeners.

Sugar paper, pictures of animals etc often found on calendars are also wanted by the schools.

For science, test tubes, beakers, magnets, prisms, lenses, laboratory weighing machines for chemicals; microscopes, prepared microscope slides, basic electronics material, etc.

Craft resources such as artist paint brushes, embroidery silks, large hole needles and other sewing needs etc

Football make for great playtimes!

Modest resources such as these can facilitate exciting lessons for children only used to chalk and talk.

Has anyone come across a loud school hand bell for Cesar, who has requested one to call in the children?

Rubik's Cubes - Do you still have one in your cupboard? We thought it might be good to give some to the children in Honduras as a challenge. However, we do need several to make it competitive and fun. If anyone is going to a Spanish-Speaking Country could you please look out for one with Spanish instructions which we could copy and send?

Agricultural Tools - Cesar says some of the people living near to Guanacaste have land but do not know how to cultivate it. He wishes to teach them so that they can better provide for their families. However, they will need tools. A popular tool for gardening is the pickaxe, as the ground is often dry and hard. The other obvious tools are spades, forks, rakes, shovels, trowels and hoes. He has also asked for mattocks (short stubby axe), fence-post augers (look like a giant corkscrew) and scissor type post hole diggers that look like a pair of back to back shovels. I think almost any useful gardening tool. It seems that they do not have a use for hedge shears.

Metal dustpans and sweeping brushes.

SEEDS

The seeds that Suttons have given us for the last two years have been a great success. We have sent them to every organisation we support throughout Honduras. This gives much needed extra food for the families and some to sell as well.

PASTA AND SPAGHETTI

Pasta is proving to be one of the most popular foods we send as it is very easy to cook and so versatile. You can add nearly anything to it to make a meal. We send large amounts of tinned chopped tomatoes, these mix well with the pasta and onions, and other flavours can also be added. They also like meatballs, beans and tinned spaghetti because of the rich sauce. Sausages can be chopped and added to the dish.

Pasta is expensive to buy in Honduras. The contribution we send makes a welcome change from rice and tortillas.

RICE AND OATS

We buy some of these in bulk. However, any smaller scale contributions add to what can be sent. Rice presents us with a particular problem this year, since its cost has increased dramatically.

POWDERED MILK

The milk we send continues to be a very expensive but vital food. We buy it by the ton but smaller containers of milk are good to give to a family in need.

FLOUR AND OIL

Both these items continue to be needed. However, they have to be bought in the New Year, as all use-by dates need to extend beyond September 2010.

Cooking oil is very expensive in Honduras but has lots of calories, a useful contribution to meagre diets.

CEREALS

They are liked but we only send them as emergency supplies to the feeding stations for the occasions when no cook is available. You get through a lot of packets of cereal when 400 children sit down for lunch!

SUGAR

The families use a lot of sugar in their coffee, which is the main drink apart from water. They get their calories from the sugar as we used to do 50 years ago. Do you remember when the sugar bowl was the size of a mixing bowl? We will send

out any sugar we are given. It is also used in the feeding programmes.

TINNED FOODS

Tomatoes, meat balls in sauce, beans, tuna etc. These are usually used to add variety, flavour and colour to the children's diet. We would prefer two tins of a cheaper make to one tin of a branded product.

Children's shoes, wellies, flip flops all are needed. Black shoes are the most important as these allow a child to attend school.

Children's clothes are still a large part of our shipment. You might have thought about all those new pants and socks that we ask for each year. I have now got lots of pictures of children holding up their new underwear! If there is not room in this newsletter for one of these pictures, look on the web site www.chtrust.org.uk where I have posted a new selection of photos.

The state school uniform generally features dark blue sweatshirts, jumpers and skirts and dark grey or black trousers. They also wear white shirts, short or long sleeve, like our children. Any of these items would be very welcome and, of course, the black shoes. If we can provide any of these items, new or second hand, it allows more children to access primary education. Without uniform they cannot go to school. Many parents never went to school and as a result cannot read or write. It would be good to improve this situation with the coming generation of children. We can help to do this.

DENTAL EQUIPMENT

Dentist chairs, basic instruments, lamps, suction equipment, amalgam mixer, etc. Anything related to dentistry. We were blessed to be able to send out a dentist's chair this year.

CREAMS AND VASELINE

Antiseptic cream and cheaper petroleum jelly is way beyond the funds of poor families. Can we provide some this year?

CALENDARS

We have A4 Calendars to sell, featuring an A5 colour photo from Honduras to display each month. Every penny of the £5 purchase price is used to buy rice to send to Honduras. A Christian couple produces them free for us as a fundraiser. In the past this has paid for several tons of rice. This year, unfortunately, it did not quite cover the full cost due to increased prices but remains a tremendous help.

If you would like a 2010 Calendar, please write to the address at the front of the booklet. The cost for postage is 76p for one, £1.04 for two or three.

All cheques for donations and Sponsorship should be made payable to CH Trust. Payments can also be made directly into our HSBC account.

WANTED FOR RECYCLE

Unwanted clothes or shoes. We are able to convert worn out clothes, shoes, old bedding, curtains or material etc., which are not good enough to send to Honduras, into cash.

During the year 2008 we raised a total of £1538.40 from recycle. If possible, this next year, I would like to use the recycle revenue to buy an extra ton of dried full cream butter milk for the next containers. This is expected to cost around £1600.

A black bin bag of recycle currently fetches £4. My understanding is that the better items are sold and those with no useful life are used for rags or road making.

We cannot use cushions, pillows or duvets for this purpose.

Any assistance you can give us in taking advantage of the recycle option will be very much appreciated.

SOME SAD NEWS

David Dobinson unexpectedly passed away on the 10th August. David was a member of the CH Trust Board and a Container Loading Captain for many years. Although you may not know him by name, those who assist us on Loading Day will no doubt have seen him leading his container crew.

Thank you, David, for your contribution to the work and your unwavering support of the Trust over the years. We will greatly miss you.

We also extend our deepest sympathy to his wife Caroline, who has suffered this sudden loss without warning. David was a committed Christian and Lay Preacher who knew the Lord. We ask that the Lord will comfort Caroline and bring her His peace.

Loading Day next year March 20th 2010



- GETTING SOME NEW SHOES FROM ENGLAND -



- ALL THESE LADIES RECEIVED A BAG -