

Building a capacity for health. The health project continues to be built on basic health promoter training started more than 10 years ago. Members from the Guatemala partner churches were selected for training in preventive health care. Over time interest has grown and more health promoters have become involved. The promoters recognized that specific initiatives had to be undertaken in order to encourage healthy life-styles within their communities. As this work has proceeded, promoters have begun to work more closely with each other and with other institutions, leaders have been trained, and communities have become empowered and more hopeful.

Your prayers for our Guatemala brothers and sisters and their work, and for the individuals who support the program are appreciated and needed. In Guatemala the ministry is led by health coordinator, Flor de Maria Alvarez, and board members Hilario Gomez, José Asencio, Cipriano Chan, and Emilton González.

The Presbytery of Western North Carolina enjoys a remarkable partnership with two presbyteries in Guatemala — **Suchitepéquez and Sur Occidente**. The partnership began in 1992. The partnership has 30 churches in Guatemala paired with 32 churches in PWNC. This is a newsletter updating you on our **partnership's health ministry**.

Health Project Updates



Walk right in, sit right down. A nice place to do your business. The traditional pit privy used throughout Guatemala is a source of soil and ground water contamination. Pit privies are now being replaced by **double vault composting toilet systems**. Managed properly, there is no odor or fly breeding in the composting toilets and the composted human excrement becomes a safe source of agricultural nutrients.

Half the firewood and no smoke. Fuel-efficient wood stoves continue to be built in homes. The savings in fuel (wood) and decrease in smoke related illness offer great home and



health improvements. **Ovens are also being built** in some communities who have not had bakers. The ovens are creating new opportunities for people to become bakers and they offer new sources of income. Bread, pastries and roasted chicken from these ovens are wonderful!

Every person should have access to safe, refreshing, and life-giving drinking water. Two types of water filters are being introduced in partnership homes': **bio-sand filters and clay**



pottery filters. The bio-sand filters are made using layers of sand and gravel. As the water slowly passes through a layer of aquatic growth and sand it is purified and cleaned. The clay pottery filters are made in Antigua by local craftspeople associated with Potters for Peace. The clay pot is impregnated with colloidal silver which clean and purifies the water.



Growing medicinal herbs along with vegetables is increasing in practice in family gardens and yards because of the work of the health promoters. As the promoters learn about herbal health remedies they are teaching others. The promoters are assembling details on the herbal remedies for reference and are documenting their work for others to use. The goal of the effort is to make treatments for common family illness affordable and readily available. Additionally, each church now has access to an excellent resource book, "When No Doctor Is Available".



Family education and children's nutrition are long-term and continuing programs in many communities.

Youngsters are fed a nutritious meal and snacks and parents have opportunities to learn about healthy growth and development. This year in conjunction with the Women's Organization numerous workshops about women's health and sexuality were held. This wholistic approach to growth and development and human sexuality will continue to expand into men's health issues and healthy families in the future.



Talking trash, litter, recycling and the environment. Our partners are building a spiritual foundation toward **Caring for God's Creation**. They see the connectedness of their lives and environmental quality. Issues of flooding and reforestation, litter and illness are all concerns that they are considering.

Please consider giving a life-gift of health this Christmas through the Presbytery's Alternative Gift Program.

It is good way to help improve many lives. Looking for more information, please send us a email ~ Doug Michael dougmichael@charter.net.

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