

Adopt-a-Village International

Providing a hand up, not a handout, to
break the cycle of poverty

Summer 2010 Newsletter

In this Issue:

Letter from the Chairman
Doherty Peru Trip 2010
Humanitarian Run Update
Upcoming Events

Board of Directors:

Darrell Fleck Chairman
Scott Perry Secretary
Sam Erickson Treasurer
Maggie Adams-Holway
Linda Johansen
Joe Mitchell
Karen Mitchell
Dave Ruckman
Karen Yuan

Our Mission:

The mission of Adopt-a-Village International (AaVI) is to partner with strategic leaders in developing countries to provide sustainable improvements in the basic human needs of impoverished villages. We accomplish this by providing a hand up, not a handout, to break the cycle of poverty.

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 26599,
Colorado Springs, CO 80936

Phone: 719-492-8736

www.adoptavillageinternational.org

Letter from the Chairman

By the time you are reading this, I will no longer be the Chairman of Adopt-a-Village International (AaVI). Subject to the vote of the board, Dave Ruckman has been nominated to be our next Chairman, to lead Adopt-a-Village International to its next level of "Connecting people and resources to humanitarian needs around the world to end the cycle of poverty." In our next newsletter, Dave will share our goals for the next few years.

I am excited about the direction AaVI is going. The biggest success we can obtain is improving the lives of those we offer help to in Ecuador and Peru. And as thrilling as that is to see, it is equally important to see the change in those who have had the privilege to help others and learn they CAN make a difference. This year I will also complete the full cycle with my family, having previously gone to Peru with my son, Ross, and Ecuador with my son, Max. On August 18th Kim and I will be traveling to Ecuador on a dental trip, and will hopefully participate in the final details to get our first full-time dental clinic opened in Ecuador. This clinic will be serviced by an Ecuadorian dentist. Our U.S. dentist will have the privilege of working in the clinic and trading knowledge and skills with the local dentists.

Needless to say, there is more for AaVI to do than resources are available. As a 100% volunteer driven and operated organization, volunteers are our lifeblood. We continue to look for volunteers to help in many areas, including board positions, trip planners, trip participants, leaders, organizers, fund raisers, and those with medical, dental, and mechanical skills. At the end of the day, our volunteers can't accomplish anything without your financial support. We have opportunities to adopt many villages. As we help villages, we gain models that others villages can work to emulate, needing less and less support from AaVI. Our future success is dependent upon your help.

Please enjoy our newsletter, and if at all possible help us meet the overwhelming needs in Ecuador and Peru by donating your time, skills and financial resources. I remain humbled by not only the needs in these countries, but also by all of your continued support of AaVI and our mission to "provide a hand up, not a handout, to break the cycle of poverty."

Darrell Fleck

2010 Peru Trip Experiences

In early June, Mike Verderaime took his Doherty High School students to Peru for a two-week trip, which included one week of clinics in small villages along the Amazon and one week of traveling Lima, Cusco, and Machu Picchu. This newsletter is comprised of the participants' experiences. Enjoy and hopefully we will see some of you on one of our future trips.

Volunteering in a developing country after studying the native language for only two years was an exceptionally rewarding experience in more ways than one. Hannah Ruckman, a student at Rampart High School, recently returned from a two-week medical trip to Peru, which proved to be an exciting learning experience. Hannah decided to volunteer with Adopt-A-Village International because her father has volunteered with the organization for three years. Hannah is very thankful to have volunteered with AAVI; in fact, she said, "If I was given the chance to do this again, I would do it in a heart-beat!"

Mother Teresa once said, "Peace begins with a smile." Hannah mentioned that the most notable moments during her trip to Peru were when she made her patients smile. She developed friendly relationships with many of the people whom she helped – especially the children. Hannah described one of her first days of the clinic where she met a little girl with whom she spent a lot of the day. This little girl became best of friends with Hannah; in fact, Hannah said that saying good bye to her was one of the most emotional days of the trip.

Making new friends was not the only thing Hannah took away from this experience of a lifetime; she learned a lot about the Spanish culture and language as well! Before leaving Colorado Springs, Hannah spent lots of time preparing for her trip by practicing conversations with her Spanish teacher. This proved to be of great help on the trip. Hannah also took away a new sense of Peruvian culture. "One of the biggest culture shocks for me while in Peru was all of the poverty." Hannah mentions, "A lot of the people live in one-room houses." Her biggest piece of advice to anyone planning on doing an AAVI trip in the future is to be prepared to see some things that you have never seen before, but it will all be worth it in the long run because you will know that you are making a significant difference in somebody's life.



What is your impression of living in a developing country?

3

I feel like in a developing country you have to work harder to get where you want in life, and sometimes the natives don't have the opportunity to fulfill their dreams as someone does in a developed country like America. – *Brianna Anthony*

Even though there are a lot of circumstances separating us from a country like Peru, the lives I saw were remarkably similar to our own. They take less for granted and value a hard day's work more than those of us in the US, so in some ways, I'd say those in developing countries are blessed with a more pure life experience. – *Erick Chewakin*

Describe your experience with the Peruvians:

I found the Peruvians very compliant and extremely patient. I kept imagining if our clinic, with our one doctor to serve an entire village, was held in America. There would inevitably be several irritated people complaining about the immense wait time and our lack of multiple doctors. However, it is just not the Peruvian culture to criticize and complain. I was also surprised by the strength and toughness of the Peruvians. When little kids fell or hit their head on something, they didn't cry, they just got up and moved on with life. Peruvians grow up with a sort of resilience and an air of invincibility. – *Marcia Nygaard*

We also had the opportunity to stay with a Rotarian family in Iquitos and my experience with that family was amazing in a whole different way. My host family had three daughters who took us out to a movie, then for pizza. It was great talking to them and seeing firsthand how some things, like Harry Potter, are universal. – *Li-Mae McClellan*

Your Spanish Journey:

The experience with the Peruvians in the villages is amazing. For someone like myself who isn't fluent in Spanish, I thought it would be hard to interact and create a bond with them; but it was the complete opposite. It just goes to show how a language barrier isn't so much a barrier and that emotions, actions, and expressions are more than enough to share commonalities. – *Brianna Anthony*

My comprehension of others' Spanish improved far, far more than I expected it to. When we arrived in Peru, my comprehension abilities were about equal to my speaking abilities, but as the days went on, I found myself understanding more and more. At the end of the trip, I could understand nearly everything I heard in Spanish. I may have had to think about it if I needed to respond, but I had absolutely no troubles with comprehension after two weeks in Peru. – *Li-Mae McClellan*

Best memory/experience:

Simply knowing that I transcended the cultural and lingual barriers between the US and Peru to make significant human connections with people from a different world gives me an indescribable sense of satisfaction and accomplishment. – *Erick Chewakin*

My favorite part of the trip was probably the first clinic we did because it was so cool to see that even though we didn't speak Spanish very well we could still bond with the kids by playing soccer or volleyball. – *Amy Morris*

The best memory for me was when a mom brought her badly burned baby to the clinic and Nurse Anne and Dr. Brad were able to help him. I was there through the entire thing and it made me open my eyes and helped me to realize what I might want to do in life. I want to keep learning Spanish so that maybe one day I can return Peru and help more people. – *Betheny Blakney*

I held a baby sloth!!! – *Erick Chewakin*





Second Annual Humanitarian Run

By: Dave Ruckman

Our 2nd annual Adopt-a-Village International Humanitarian run was held on May 8th in Palmer Park. It was a blustery spring morning, but runners and walkers came out with warm enthusiasm. This year's race included a 5K, 10K and Kids' Fun Run. The event brought in over \$2,000 to provide pharmaceutical supplies for our June medical excursion to remote villages in Peru.

This year's top runners in the 10K were: Joel Hawkins – 44:50 & Krista Roy - 52:07

This year's top runners in the 5K were: Aaron Reistad - 22:03 & Sarah Farmer – 28:15

Special thanks to Spanish teacher Mike Verderaime and his team of Doherty High School students for all their hard work helping organize and staff this event. The Board of AaVI sincerely thanks all the supporters of the run – sponsors, walkers, runners, fundraisers, and volunteers – for making this event such a success!

AaVI Trip Information

One of the best ways to contribute is to share your time and talents. Join the next Adopt-a-Village International medical, dental, or project tour, and help give a hand up to a community in need.

Remaining 2010 Trips

**August 18 - 28 Dental Clinical Visit
Pedro Moncayo, Ecuador**
**October 8 -17 Reality Tour / Clinical Visit
Loreto, Peru**

How to sign up:

1. Determine which project you would like to participate in, and complete form found at adoptavillageinternational.org.
2. Send your application with a deposit of \$250 to:
Postal mail - P.O. Box 26599, Colorado Springs, CO 80936
Scan and email - info@adoptavillageinternational.org
3. The deposit is nontransferable and non-refundable. We purchase tickets based on deposits received. We will accept late registration if space is available.
4. We will contact you with specific information and forms concerning your project choice.