

Adopt-a-Village International

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

Fall/Winter 2010 Newsletter

Letter from the Chairman

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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.

It is such a privilege to serve on the board of Adopt-a-Village International. In this first letter to you as chairman of AaVI, I would like to share my gratitude for Darrell Fleck and the rest of the board and volunteers for giving of themselves selflessly to "provide a hand up" in our humanitarian work in Ecuador and Peru. When I think of their leadership, I'm reminded of the saying, "Men are rich only as they give. He who gives great service gets great rewards." Sincere thanks for all you have done and continue to do!

Over the years, I have had the opportunity to travel to some amazing places and to meet some wonderful people. Each trip has left me with distinct memories. Each has offered its own unique sights to take in, interesting sounds and unforgettable experiences. Each trip has also shared one thing in common, something that always seems to strike me when traveling abroad ... the people. It's a big eye opener to realize that these people are just like you and me, except for the circumstances they were born into and the opportunities they have been given. It isn't too hard to imagine that if I had been born in the Peruvian or Ecuadorian jungle, I would be facing the same struggles they are.

It has been my privilege to be part of several recent trips with AaVI. They have given me a firsthand view of the difference we are making in the lives of these special people. The medical and dental services we offer have improved the quality of life for many and have saved the lives of others. The education that students, teachers, families and community leaders have received is helping little by little to change the trajectory of their lives. The completed clean water and sanitation projects will provide a healthy and sustainable resource for generations to come. As I have sat and listened to community leaders talk about what a partnership with AaVI would mean to their villages, it is obvious that there is so much more that can be done. These things motivate my involvement with AaVI.

As AaVI moves forward over the next few years, the board and I will continue expanding on what has been started. The systematic process of partnering with strategic leaders in Ecuador and Peru to provide sustainable improvements in the basic human needs of needy villages will continue to be our mission. We hope to expand our partnerships in the medical and dental communities, complete more water and sanitation projects, provide more opportunities for high school and college students to be involved, engage business leaders in micro credit projects, and continue to cultivate existing relationships.

AaVI is all about partnering with others to make a difference in the lives of people in need. None of the work we do would be possible without our Rotarian friends. Rotary provides crucial leadership for planning and maintaining our AaVI projects in Peru and Ecuador. They have also been a generous contributor to many of our projects. I want to say thank you to Rotary, our donors and faithful supporters for helping us "provide a hand up, not a handout, to break the cycle of poverty."

Dave Ruckman

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Rotary and Adopt-a-Village International

Continue to Serve Ecuador

by Scott Perry

In August, a dental team consisting of five Adopt-a-Village International (AaVI) members, four of whom are also Rotarians, returned to the Pedro Moncayo region of Ecuador. During the four day clinic, a total of 165 individuals received dental care and hygiene instruction in four different villages.

The team was led by Dr. Roger Allan and wife Marcia who just completed their fifth trip to South America on behalf of AaVI and Rotary. Four Ecuadorian dental students joined the team from Colorado; two of the students served with Dr. Allan two years prior. We are thrilled to see these young professionals volunteering their time and are pleased that they are rejoining our team, spreading the word of our sustainable message and asking their peers to join in the effort.

We are pleased to report that the two portable dental units donated by the North Colorado Springs Rotary Club worked perfectly. While in country, we also purchased a portable dental chair that will also be utilized in the new clinic.

During our visit, we had the pleasure of visiting the new permanent dental clinic located in the Parish of Malchingui. Upon arrival, the team was welcomed by a large portion of the community showing their appreciation for the efforts of AaVI and Rotary. The reception was overwhelming, shutting down the main street of town and featuring traditionally dressed dancers and characters from Ecuador's history books. We saw children dressed as clowns walking on stilts, a skit performed by community members and were treated to a traditional dinner followed by a bonfire. It was an amazing evening; I only wish it were possible to communicate the appreciation and emotion we were shown with regards to the new clinic.



We toured the clinic, a four-room facility originally built in the early 90's by Unicef and then abandoned and subsequently remodeled and donated by the Parish. Dr. Allan made a few suggestions regarding the layout. Prior to the end of the year, AaVI will provide the funds to equip the clinic and has committed to funding operations for the first two years with assistance from our partners at CIMAS, based in Quito. CIMAS is our on-the-ground partner in Pedro Moncayo and will be coordinating a two-year plan for self-sustainability by coordinating efforts with the local Ministry of Health and dental universities that will provide dental professionals on a rotational basis. A plan for a mobile dental clinic is also in the works. More updates to follow!

We wish to thank all of our donors who continue to support our efforts to make a sustainable difference in both Peru and Ecuador.

AaVI Partners with Rotarians in

Our Third Community in Ecuador

by Jack Thomas



Our collaboration with various Rotary organizations remains one of the strengths of AaVI. In Colorado, we continue to benefit from good liaison and excellent support from the Rotary District 5470 Foundation Chair, Joe Williams. With the help of Joe and his wife, past District Governor Jan, we receive first-rate liaison not only from southern Colorado Rotary Clubs but from other nearby Rotary Districts as well.

Earlier this year, Rotarians Bill Savage and Jack Thomas from Colorado Springs visited Rotary Clubs in Quito, Ambato, and Santo Domingo, Ecuador. While in Santo Domingo, they helped dedicate a collaborative Rotary potable water and sanitation project funded by Rotary districts in southern and northern Colorado, AaVI, and the Rotary Club of Santo Domingo Ecuador.

In April 2010, with the assistance of our strategic partner Minga International, Rotaractors (college-age Rotary affiliates) from Durango, Colorado returned to central Ecuador for a second year of activities to help boys and young teens with locally-developed entrepreneurial construction projects. Beyond this, Adopt-a-Village maintains continuing liaison with Rotary and Rotaract Clubs in Colorado and in three regions in Ecuador and one in Loreto, Peru, where we are continuing to pursue opportunities to explore local project opportunities.



My wife Kim and I were fortunate enough to travel to Ecuador in August of 2010, to participate in a Dental Mission which was organized through the partnership of AaVI, Rotary, and CIMAS. While our purpose was to work with AaVI in providing dental care to those in need, much more was accomplished.

Having the opportunity to meet and work side by side with local (Ecuadorian) Rotarians and other NGO members provides not only the opportunity to make new friends, but the opportunity to learn about another culture and another government and its impact on its citizens.

Often all of us live in our own little world, going to work, serving our family and community, and just focused on our goals. Working side-by-side with Rotarians from another country provides a unique look at the history and the present issues of the local country as well as understanding that country's perspective on the U.S. While our press loves to bash the U.S. and to represent that we are not liked by the rest of the world, often this presentation is not a true reflection of reality. My experience in Ecuador spoke volumes to the trust, respect and thankfulness that Ecuadorians have for the U.S. and for our leadership role in the world.

In Ecuador, we were received with open arms by the Rotarians, members of CIMAS, and the indigenous people we had the honor of serving while in country. Ecuador is struggling, with a new government, new constitution, corruption, and the global economy. I found that everyone that I had the opportunity to talk with wanted to discuss their challenges, and at the end of the day were striving for the same freedoms and opportunities that are available in the U.S.

At the end of the trip, upon reflecting upon my experience, there was no doubt that we do set the standard on freedom and opportunity, and more importantly with our freedom and prosperity we have a personal responsibility to provide a hand up to those who are not fortunate enough to have been born in the U.S. I encourage you to find the time and resources to help AaVI make a difference.



We've begun to plan a liaison visit to the Loreto region of Peru in late February of 2011. Karen Yuan, Joe Mitchell and Jack Thomas expect to return to Iquitos and the surrounding Amazon region with several project objectives. These include completing the process of identifying one or more villages for us to make a long term "adoption" commitment. In addition, they will continue to explore possible future relationships with Dr. Linnea Smith of the *Amazon Medical Project* and one or two new NGO project partners. The objective will be to lay the groundwork for increasing the number of annual visits to the region to at least two a year. This group would benefit from additional expertise in micro-business project planning or in small construction projects. If you have interest/experience in these areas, please consider volunteering to join this planning trip. Contact Jack Thomas (Jack@adoptavillageinternational.org) or Karen Yuan (karenyuan@me.com).

The Ecuadorian people left me with the most memorable experience of our trip. I found them to be beautiful, grateful, patient, kind, inquisitive, proud, devout, hardworking, resourceful, and friendly people, to whom I will always be grateful to have helped and met. I wish for you to have the chance to experience the same life-changing experience that I did. Who knew the human heart could grow so large? :) **Kim Fleck**



Suzu enjoying the children of Chimburlo



The little girl who had several tooth extractions then said "Gracias Doctora" and had us all nearly in tears



The little guy who couldn't stay awake during Roger's painless dentistry



Our "Dora the Explorer" ... very curious and at the ready at Roger's elbows

This trip was my most exciting one so far. It was very heartwarming to visit the village where the dental clinic will be set up. The people of the San Juan community treated our group as if we were royalty! They are so appreciative and genuine. It is truly gratifying to see near completion of the dental clinic project, which has been a joint effort between Rotary, AaVI, CIMAS and the local leadership in Ecuador. This goes to show what can be done when people work together to service a need.

Marcia Allan





This was my first project trip with AaVI after volunteering with the organization for almost 2 years...and I wish I had done it sooner!! The people of Ecuador are amazing, and each and every one that we met greeted us with warmth and genuine gratitude. My fondest memory and something I will keep with me forever is getting to know and work closely with Jimmy, Giovanna, and their children Johanna and David. Jimmy and Giovanna were incredible, not only as driver/tour guides, but helping us in the clinics, bridging the language barrier, and helping out in every way imaginable. I became especially attached to their two children Johanna, age 14, and David, age 10...partly because I have grandchildren the same ages as them, but mostly because I was so impressed with how hard they worked alongside the rest of us in the clinics, from morning til night. They helped with translations, packing and organizing dental supplies, disinfecting instruments, helping patients with registration, assisting the dentists/students, and loading and unloading our suitcases every day (David would not allow me to carry a thing!!). These children never once complained or got bored (or wanted to call their friends or watch TV) and they were always ready and eager to pitch in wherever and whenever we needed them. I'm sure their parents are exceeding proud of them and how much they helped us and the villagers – I know we all are. I am not sure I can ever express how much it meant to me personally to have them be a part of this memorable experience. Even though we don't share a common language, and communications were a challenge, these two children and their parents made us feel as though we were a part of their family –I feel as though they are part of mine and I can't wait until I see them again. **Maggie Adams-Holway**

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Hope for the Holidays

Help change the lives of people living in the villages of Ecuador and Peru with a donation to Adopt-a-Village International.

Looking to innovate your gift-giving this holiday season? AaVI will send gift cards to your friends and family announcing the special gift you've given in their honor. They will be touched by your vision and influential gift, and you will be making a tremendous difference in the lives of those in need. Please use our **Giving Form** to make your tax-deductible donation. The form can be found below or at:

<http://www.adoptavillageinternational.com/documents/givingform.pdf>

Giving Form

Provide Adopt-a-Village International addresses and we will send gift cards to your recipients announcing the special gift you've given in their honor. Please allow 2 weeks for delivery.

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Address _____

City _____ St _____ Zip _____

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Please send _____ cards, for a minimum donation of \$25 per card.

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- Send information to me about upcoming trips.
- I want to receive the AaVI newsletter.
- I want to get involved. Please contact me.

*Please include addresses as necessary.

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