

Adopt-a-Village International

Providing a hand up, not a hand out, to break the cycle of poverty
Fall/Winter 2008 Newsletter

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 hand out, to break the cycle of poverty.

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Adopt-a-Village International and Rotary International

AaVI is a non-sectarian not-for-profit public charity that is run largely by Rotarians. AaVI has been successful assisting Rotary clubs and other NGOs in Colorado, Peru and Ecuador to help make sustainable changes in the villages to which they provide service. Local Rotary clubs in Peru and Ecuador provide assistance and direction with regards to the most pressing needs as well as logistics and support when teams arrive to provide service. Matching grant opportunities are also utilized for projects such as clean water.

~Scott Perry, *Secretary*

Letter from the Chairman

2008 has been a great year for AaVI. During the year, our board decided to convert our organization to a 100% volunteer-led nonprofit organization. What does that mean to you? Well to start with, we have reduced our operating overhead to less than \$5,000 per year, enabling us to leverage every dollar donated to over \$4.00 in services provided to our friends in need in Ecuador and Peru.

With a core group of about 15 volunteers this year, we led two trips to South America. AaVI adopted a village known as Cananville in the county of Pedro Moncayo in Ecuador. AaVI completed a medical trip to Peru, a dental trip to Ecuador, and installed a well in Calamaca, Ecuador. We also converted our website www.adoptavillageinternational.org into a bilingual format.

In April of this year, Neal Levy graciously opened his restaurant, The Peppertree, to host a wonderful fundraising dinner, which netted over \$13,000 to AaVI. As always, fundraising is an ongoing effort, with so much need for individual mobility, fresh water, medical attention, dental treatment, education, and microeconomic development in Peru and Ecuador. Our in-country partners continue to present endless opportunities for us to provide assistance, and we are only limited in meeting those needs by our human and financial resources.

Please enjoy our newsletter, and if at all possible help us meet the growing needs in Ecuador and Peru by donating your time, your resources, or both. We remain humbled by not only the needs in these countries, but also in your gracious help in partnering with us to meet these needs.

~Darrell Fleck, *Chairman*

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(To be removed from our mailing list, please email info@adoptavillageinternational.org)



Board of Directors:

Darrell Fleck *Chairman*

Scott Perry *Secretary*

Sam Erickson *Treasurer*

Jack Thomas *Program Director*

Joe Mitchell

Beth Alessio

Rick Mueller

Project Report: Peru with Doherty H.S. Students

Two years ago Doherty High School Spanish teacher and former wrestling coach Mike Verderaime heard from his principal, Dr. Jill Martin, that Adopt-A-Village International needed volunteers for a trip to Peru. So, Mike grabbed his brother and went. He was so touched by the experience that the following year, he invited his Spanish students to accompany him on his next trip. Approximately 100 interested students attended the informational meeting, but because of the required level of commitment, only nine were able to sign on. The trip required not just time and energy on the part of the students, but funding, as well. Each student paid \$2,500 to cover the trip expenses. Fortunately, Mike and his students worked hard to secure donations from local businesses and organizations (*see list of donors, right*).

In June 2008, Mike and his nine students, along with AaVI Program Director Jack Thomas and Dr. Peter Grigg, flew to Peru. The team took a two-hour journey up a river in hollowed-out canoes to reach the Yanayacu Region of Loreto, Peru. For five days they conducted clinics in four indigenous villages along the Amazon River. In the mornings, the students assisted Dr. Grigg in providing medical care, teaching hygiene, and handing out medications. Under Dr. Grigg's guidance, the their classroom Spanish to ask and answer questions about health concerns, teach dental hygiene, and play with the children. These intense activities were in many ways emotionally draining for the students; thus the afternoons were reserved for experiencing the unique surrounding environment. The students were personally introduced to native wild life including snakes, sloths, monkeys, and turtles. Overall, this unique AaVI trip greatly benefited not just the local Peruvian villagers, but the students, as well. "This was the first time AaVI has involved a group of students in its activities and the result was an overwhelming success," said Thomas. "The results were so good that we expect to use student volunteers regularly in our future trips."students used



The following businesses/organizations graciously provided donations in support of last summer's Doherty H.S. Peru trip with AaVI:

El Pomar Foundation - \$5,000, which helped lower the trip cost for students and purchased medical supplies

The North Face® - duffle bags for packing necessary gear and supplies

General Ecology, Inc. - water filters, a real life-saving essential

Better Energy Systems LLC - Solio™ solar panels were an essential tool to power medical equipment

Pelican™ - secure cases for medicine and medical supplies

Fountain Fort Carson School District 8 - \$3,000 to help lower the trip cost for students

Whole Foods, Inc. - \$201.25 to purchase supplies needed in Peru



One Student's Experience

Doherty High School student Ashley Bonner accompanied her Spanish teacher, Mike Verderaime, and eight fellow students to Peru in June 2008. Here are some of her impressions:

My trip to Peru was absolutely amazing. I expected to find people completely different from us in the U.S., but words cannot describe the immense need these people truly had. The appreciation they extended to us was incredible. Just playing with the kids, giving some simple medicine, or even just offering a sincere smile seemed to make their day. Teaching the kids how to brush their teeth was my favorite accomplishment because that is something they can take with them forever; it's a skill that will last longer than the medicine we gave them. People were remarkably willing and interested to learn what we were teaching them. Instead of the hustle and bustle that we experience everyday, the villagers lead simple lives and their primary concern is with simply sustaining life. From participating in the trip, I realized that so many people take for granted the opportunities and material objects they have access to everyday, which these people do not have. I now have a greater appreciation for life and the simple things, as well as the need to slow down and enjoy living. This trip was truly inspirational.



Upcoming Project Update: Doherty H.S. Students Will Return to Peru

Inspired by his last AaVI trip to Peru with some of his Doherty H.S. students, Mike Verderaime is planning another trip to Peru for June 2009. The trip will include many new faces, but also the familiar faces of some of the students who accompanied him last year. Last summer's trip "was an amazing opportunity for these students to begin to understand the effect of poverty on a global level." Mike says. "I am very proud of these young adults who made this journey an extreme success." Mike's third trip to Peru with AaVI is scheduled for June 8th – 21st. He is currently in the process of signing up students, securing funding, and organizing details. Mainly because of increased fuel costs, this year's trip will cost each participant an estimated \$3,200, somewhat more than last year's trip. If you are interested in helping to sponsor a Doherty student, please send your tax-deductible gift to AaVI and designate it to "Doherty Peru trip."



Project Report: Ecuador Dental Trip

North Colorado Springs Rotarian Dr. Roger Allan, DDS, his wife Marcia, (dental hygienist) and daughter, Abby, led a dental team to Ecuador in August where 165 Ecuadorians received dental care in two different villages over a five day period.

Over the past five years, the Allans have completed four dental trips to Peru and Ecuador in conjunction with AaVI. The team consisted of twelve volunteer participants from Colorado and California, five of whom are Rotarians. The volunteer participants enjoyed the experience largely because of the exotic locations and interactions with people that would ordinarily not be possible. "The feeling of making a difference in someone's life through a hands-on project such as this is amazing," said Abby Allan.

Most of the dental clinics are supported by local dentists and dental students. The interactions and experiences with the people and the cultures of the areas visited are what make the trips unique and special. For many participants, the trips can be life-changing and somewhat addictive.

Interested in Donating or Volunteering?

One of the best ways to contribute is to share your time and talents. Volunteers come from all different age groups and backgrounds. Consider joining an Adopt-a-Village International medical, dental, or reality trip, and help give a hand up to a community in need. Please visit our website (www.adoptavillageinternational.org) to see an updated schedule of planned trips and learn more about AaVI and how you can help change someone's life, including your own.



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