

Jan. 1, 2010

## Water project summary

*DG George provided the information below at the request of PDG Charlie Clemons, Chairman of the RI Water Resource Group*

District 7750 Water Chair is Al Steele, Rotary Club of Fort Mill

22/55 clubs participated in water projects.

Of note is the work of Al Steele himself. Al had been going to Honduras with his church to help replace grass shacks with concrete block houses. One year he found a water supply for a village clearly contaminated with human and animal waste.

A high percentage of the villages children were dying from water-borne disease. Al talked to the missionary, and was told that a spring was nearby, but the landowner would not let them use it. Al then talked to the President of the Rotary Club of Marcala and she said they had a Rotary Foundation grant for water filters. She would make sure that the village got one.

A few days later, he saw the Rotary Club President again and she said that maybe they wouldn't need the filters. She had talked to the Mayor, who talked to the Mayor of the adjacent jurisdiction, who convinced the landowner to make the water available. They just needed \$20,000 to pipe it, store it and distribute it.

Al came back a man on a mission. He raised \$10,000 and got \$10,000 from a RF matching grant. He completed that project and found it so satisfying, he looked for more. Both the Rotary Clubs of Marcala and Copan Ruinas had projects in their areas.

Al has now raised more than \$130,000 for water lines from individuals, local clubs, District DDF, matching grants and even contributions from clubs in other Districts.

The water systems have included finding a source of water, collecting it at a central point, treating it, and then distributing it to individual houses. In the project we dedicated in September, each house in the village had an outside spigot, latrine and a small tank for graywater.

Some 1800 families in rural Honduras now have water thanks to Al and Rotary. His home club (Rotary Club of Fort Mill) is also funding some scholarships. At the request of the Rotary Club of Copan Ruinas, he is also using DDF and club money for a school projects.

I attended the dedication of one water project for 80 homes in September, and the kickoff of another project for 25 homes. The celebration was fantastic, as it was the first time these people ever had water and sanitation right at their homes. School children sang and performed dances. Local dignitaries spoke. There was a dedication luncheon celebrating the work of Rotary and the Peace Corps Engineer.

I said afterwards that if every Rotarian in the District could have attended that event, we would never have to worry about contributions to the Foundation again.

Al hopes to complete two more projects this spring. He has great relationships with the Rotary Clubs in Honduras, as well as the Peace Corps, Engineers without Borders, Heifer and other international organizations. He has been able to leverage this money with some of their efforts.

Unfortunately, the Honduran District will become a Future Vision Plan District in 2010, and we will not longer be able to work directly with them. However, Al's work is a great story.