

Manos de Dios Ministry Trip to Danli, Honduras – January 7-15, 2020

The Manos Team just returned from our annual trip to Danli, Honduras. We are very grateful that we had a safe trip and full of blessings. This was a very special trip as the Manos Team celebrates 20 years since we first planted the Manos de Dios Church back in 2000. We had a total of 15 team members going on this trip from different churches including St. Francis by the Lake, Emmanuel in San Angelo, St Mark's in San Marcos, St Anthony de Padua in San Antonio and Mosaic in Hollywood, CA. Our motto this year was Humble Heart. We were able to work in many areas including the following: scholarship program, vision clinics, VBS, liturgical dance, music workshops, construction, fitness, and community service.



Figure 1. Manos Team: Tatiana Hoecker, Grace Baen, Fr. David Chalk, Mo Simmons, Jessica Massay, Patricia Perea, Harold Simmons, Dusty Hoecker, Jim Wade, Margo Case, Peter Baen (Pedro Frijoles), Dean Lalich, Tom Porter, Kevin Lee and Amanda Moore.

Feria 2020

In celebration of our 20th anniversary since we first planted the Manos de Dios Episcopal Church, we held a fair to feature and honor all our ministries at the church. This was a great way to engage our 70 scholarship recipients, their families, and members of the community. We had a total of twelve booths featuring many ministries including: Manos Scholarship Program, Club Intercambio (ESL), Club Aventura (book club), Youth camps, VBS, Music, Liturgical Dance, Manos a la Obra (community service), Confecciones Manos de Dios (sewing micro-enterprise), Club de Profesionales (college graduates), Club de Universitarios (college students), and ECW. Students and parents were given passports and they had to visit all twelve booths to get a stamp. Once the passports were completed, they were eligible to enter a raffle.



The 12 Ministries featured at the 2020 Fair were the following:

Music Ministry



Confecciones Manos de Dios (Sewing Micro-enterprise)



Club Aventura (Book club)



Club Intercambio (ESL)



Dancing for God Club (Liturgical dance)



Club de Profesionales Club (College graduates)



Club de Universitarios (college)



ECW - Baking Micro-enterprise



Christian Education



Youth Camps



Manos Scholarship Program



Manos a la Obra Club



Celebrating 20th Anniversary of Mission Work in Danli during Fair 2020



Manos Scholarship Program – Reaching Higher

This year we were able to add a total of 15 new scholarship recipients to our Manos Scholarship Program. We have expanded our Manos Scholarship Program to include a new initiative called Becas To Go where we give scholarship to students from remote areas where schooling does not continue beyond ninth grade, and the only way they can continue their studies is moving to bigger towns. This year we added two new students as part of the Becas To Go program that live in El Porvenir, which is a small mountain village about 2 hours from Danli.



Figure 2. New 2020 Scholarship Recipients including 13 students in 7th grade; and 2 students in 10th grade (Becas To Go)



The selected students needed to have an academic a grade point average of 92% or above, financial need and a strong motivation to excel. The Manos Team visited the new scholarship recipients in their homes to deliver the good news of the scholarship awards: “Te sacaste la beca” (you earned a scholarship).



This year we will have a total of 70 students in the Manos Scholarship Program including 50 in grades 7-12 and 20 students in college. In addition, we have 11 students that have graduated from college.

- 1 Student at *Universidad Politécnica* @ \$1600 = \$3,200 (*Industrial Engineering*)
- 3 Students at *UNAH* @ \$1000 = \$3000 (*Nursing, Business*)
- 1 Student at *UNA Catacamas* (*Agronomy*)
- 12 Students at *Universidad Católica* @ \$2,500 = \$30,000 (*Civil Engineering, Law, Computer Science, Industrial Engineering, Psychology*)
- 2 Students at *Universidad Católica Medical School* @ \$3000 = \$6,000
- 1 Student at *Seminario Mayor*



Figure 3. 2020 Manos Scholarship Recipients



Figure 4. Manos Scholarship Program Ceremony where we officially awarded the 2020 scholarships, as well as recognizing our honor roll students with medals and diplomas



Six of our students graduated from high school in Nov 2019 and five of them will be freshmen in college in 2020. From left to right: Julio & Kimberly (Industrial Engineering), Abimalec (Business), Katy & Gabriela (Marketing) and Helen.



We also celebrated two of our scholarship students graduating from college. From left to right: Orlando Josue (Industrial Engineering) and Jose Alexander (Agronomy Engineering). Jose Alexander has accepted a position as a manager of a dairy farm in Panama City, Panama.



In November 2020, five of our scholarship recipients will be graduating from high school: Jeffrey, Nixia, Heydi, Dixie and Christian are already starting to explore their future options.



Honor Roll Dinner with Top Students

We had our annual dinner with the top three students from the Manos Scholarship Program that made the honor roll. We started this incentive program 9 years ago and it has been a great way to motivate students. It is an honor for the students to be invited to dine with the Manos Team.



Figure 5. Top 3 Scholarship Students: Kimberly, Bryant and Leonardo



Launching the Rotary-Manos Scholarship Alliance

The Rotary Club in San Marcos, along with the Manos Team have been trying to get the Rotary Club in Danli to participate and contribute to our Scholarship Program for several years. We were thrilled to hear that this year the Rotary Club decided to accept the challenge and pledged one scholarship as the Rotary Club in San Marcos offered to match their pledge up to \$1500. We were able to form an alliance and solidify our relationships with three members of the Rotary Club in Danli: Dr. Erika Blanco (President), Luisa Aguilar (Vice-president) and Meiby Avila (Secretary). During our Scholarship Program ceremony, we were able to award three Rotary-Manos scholarships to the top three candidates that had applied for a scholarship in 2020.



Figure 6. Rotary-Manos 2020 Scholarship recipient: Andrea Liptari and Ayana



Figure 7. Luisa Aguilar (VP), Ayana, Liptari, Andrea and Peter Baen



Figure 8 Fr. David, Dr. Erika Peter Baen, Fr. Victor and Meiby Avila

Club Aventura – Comparing & Contrasting Life in Different Continents

In January 2015 we started a book club called Club Aventura with the intention of encouraging students to read and discuss books with their peers and discover the joy of reading. The notion of book clubs is not really something that our students have been exposed to as part of their upbringing either at school or at home. During the past year the students have been reading all kinds of books including a wide range of authors such as Isabel Allende, Paulo Coelho, Sandra Cisneros, Julio Verne, Edgar Allan Poe, Lorena Franco, Gustavo Adolfo Becker, Julia Alvarez, Pablo Neruda and Shakespeare. Two years ago, we introduced Kindle tablets to the Club Aventura which has been a big success. We are very excited that the Club Aventura is growing. We launched Club Aventura II as we have more students that want to be part of this wonderful opportunity. This year we decided to join the Club Aventura I and II and read the same book “The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind” by William Kamkwambe. This is a story about a thirteen boy in Malawi who invents an unconventional contraption to save his family and village from famine. Interesting enough the students were able to make parallels between their lives in Honduras and life in Malawi. After the discussion of the book, we all sat down and watch the movie based on the same book, which evoked very interesting discussions among the students and the Manos Team.



Club Intercambio (ESL) – Touring Danli and Exchanging Words & Dreams

As we see our students graduate from high school and college, we have noticed that they have a disadvantage compared to students from other schools that might have been more fortunate to learn English as a second language. Given this situation, in March 2014 we decided to start an ESL program for our scholarship students. Sunday morning, the Manos team had an exchange session with the ESL students and let them practice their English skills during a walking tour of Danli. Everybody had a great time visiting the park, the Catholic church, and the market. The highlight of the trip was practicing colors, numbers, nouns and verb tenses in English as they enjoyed their ice cream in the main plaza.



Manos To Go – Serving Together

In 2012, we started a new ministry called Manos To Go. The idea is to maximize our resources and spread the blessings and go to remote villages and work with local communities. Our Manos To Go trip this year was to Yuscarán where we conducted a vision clinic, a construction project and a VBS session. We worked side by side with our Honduran partners, fitting glasses and training new team members. Manos To Go has become an outreach effort for the Manos de Dios Church throughout the year.



Vision Clinics – Partnering with Local Optometrists & Ophthalmologists

We had two vision clinics, one in Manos de Dios and another in Yuscarán. We were able to fit about 355 pair of glasses, which is the highest number for us ever. This time was particularly productive as we partnered with Dr. Marvin, a local optometrist and his team. Their help was invaluable, and we are hoping that they can assist us in the future. In addition, we were able to identify 19 patients that need cataracts surgery. Fortunately, we have connected with an Ophthalmologist in Danli that is willing to donate his time and perform the surgeries at no cost, as long as we provide the surgical materials.



Figure 9. Dr Marvin debriefing Manos Team



Casitas Project – The Gift of Rainwater

We built two rainwater collection systems for two families in the community. Our construction team worked together with the older scholarship recipients. The two families were very grateful to be able to start collecting rainwater for everyday use. Water is delivered to their homes only every two weeks and families store and ration water as much as they can.



Figure 10. Casita project 1: Betty's house



Before

After



Before



After





Figure 11. Casitas project 2: Mariana's house



Figure 12. Improving Doña Mariana's rainwater collection system to supply water to her water tank and shower

Manos a la Obra – Creating Clean Zones

We launched the 2020 trash pick-up and recycling awareness campaign. We worked hand in hand with our scholarship students, their parents, and members of the community including the Honduras National Police and COPECO (EMT). A total of 107 individuals walked to the top of the Cross and were able to pick up and plant six trees.



Music – A Universal Passion

We offered two music workshops to the members of the music ministry at Manos de Dios Church. Members from our team were able to play with the music ministry called “Vida y Adoración” during the Sunday service. It was wonderful to see them play together.



Liturgical Dance & Zumba – Moving Gracefully

We conducted two workshops in liturgical dance and one Zumba session open to everybody. They were able to perform their newly choreographed dance during the Sunday service



Vacation Bible School

We held two VBS sessions this year. About 40 children got together during our vision clinic in Yuscarán and during service at Manos de Dios Church to learn and share the love of God.



Praying Shawl Ministry – Bringing Hope

We visited Doña Luisa and gave her a colorful shawl to provide her serenity and comfort as she goes through very challenging health issues. The Manos Team in conjunction with Doña Luisa's family prayed over her at her house. This beautiful shawl was made by the ladies at St Francis who have a very active Praying Shawl ministry.



Visit to the Jardin de Niños Mundo Infantil in Ojo de Agua

St Mark's has sponsored a pre-school/kinder garden in Ojo de Agua since the year 2000 and visits the school each year to ascertain its wellbeing during our annual Manos de Dios trips to Danli. This year, three St Mark's parishioners (Peter Baen, Margo Case and Dean Lalich), met with Suyapa who is one of the main teachers at the school and our primary contact since the program's inception.

Our mission is primarily about funding the purchase of food to be able to provide one good meal every day for 80-100 Pre-K and Kindergarten children during school. In addition, St Mark's sometimes helps with various capital improvement projects. Aside from reconfirming the health of the program, (which is excellent, as always), the primary purposes this year was to discuss moving forward with a building under development for the past two years. The object of the meeting was to confirm the specifications to relocate and expand the size of a covered outdoor structure used for various school activities.

St Mark's vestry recently approved funding for that project and work is expected to begin in February or March and be completed in about two months.



Kevin Joel's Baptism

We were blessed to be able to attend the baptism of Lenin and July's baby named Kevin Joel. Lenin is one of our scholarship recipients that graduated from college back in 2013 with a degree in Forestry Engineering. Fr. David and Fr. Victor officiated the beautiful baptism.



Our Future – Thinking Big

As we look into the future, we will continue supporting our sister church Manos de Dios, as well as helping out surrounding villages through our Manos To Go program. The idea of Manos To Go is to maximize our resources and spread the blessings by going to remote villages and work with the local communities in various ministries. It is our vision to grow awareness and participation in mission work as Goers, Senders, Givers and Pray-ers.

***Gracias to the Manos Team:
Goers, Givers, Senders and Pray-ers!***

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Patricia Perea @ 210-241-9258 – email: pereasearch@gmail.com

IF YOU WANT TO MAKE A DONATION PLEASE MAKE CHECKS TO:

St Francis by the Lake Episcopal Church
Re: Honduras
P.O. Box 2031, Canyon Lake, Texas 78133



