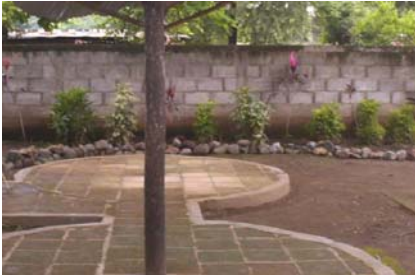


SISTER CITY ANNUAL REPORT

BROOKLINE-QUEZALGUAQUE SISTER CITY PROJECT

All Saints Youth Group Builds Garden for Library



This summer 7 teenagers and 4 adults from All Saints Parish traveled to Quezalguaque to build a garden in the patio behind the library. For all of the teens it was their first trip to Nicaragua. Laura McLellan's email home to her family gives you a flavor of their experience.

"The work on the garden has been going very well; we have been working as much as we can in the

heat. If we were in Boston, we would have been done planting yesterday. As it is, we had to dig up the soil, which is so packed that if you jump on a shovel; it doesn't even go in halfway. So that took most of yesterday, along with bringing in more topsoil, to create a kind of raised bed effect.... This morning we planted all the plants and then watered them. The work goes really quickly when every kid in the town wants to help. The school kids are really amazed by us and follow us everywhere.

Stonemasons are installing a terracotta tile walkway...[and] building two permanent picnic tables with canopies and concrete benches where they will hold art classes at

the library....The librarian really wants a patio and we have had to accommodate our design to her wants. I guess that's fine, because we came here trying to do what will be nice for the people of the town, and we're not trying to impose our will on them.

Tonight we are having a games night at the library for all the kids of the town, and the priest is blessing the garden.

This is really an experience, not bad, but eye-opening, certainly, and it has been fun."

Laura McLellan



Mobile Library Launched

This spring the Quezalguaque library launched a new mobile service, carrying books into five rural communities. Once a week the librarians pack plastic bins with books and transport them by taxi into remote neighborhoods to serve children and adults who might otherwise find it difficult or impossible to get to the main library.

The program is being conducted in conjunction with the Quezalguaque School Department and the book

exchange takes place during school hours in the rural schools.

The librarians began the program with five rural schools, but hope to expand it to serve other rural areas as finances allow. They have contracted with a taxi driver who, for \$30 a month, takes them to rural schools and waits for them while the children - and sometimes their parents - carefully select and check out their books.

The program is modeled on one in

San Juan Del Sur, Newton's Sister City, where a similar program was initiated several years ago and where a generous donor provided the library with its own vehicle, allowing the mobile library to serve all rural areas of their town.

Quezalguaque librarian Janina Martínez traveled to San Juan del Sur last January to observe their program first hand and accompany the local librarians on mobile library trips.

Alternative Energy in Quezalguaque?



Our friends in Quezalguaque go without electricity everyday during the day for a few hours due to supply problems with the national grid.

While this is inconvenient for all, it is a major problem for the medical clinics whose refrigerators are compromised during these black-outs. In addition the water supply

depends on pumps powered by electricity so there is no water delivered to the homes, schools, city offices and clinics

The Sister City committee is researching different possible solutions to this problem using alternative sources of energy. This could be in the form of solar (there's certainly a lot of sun in Q) and potentially wind (a little less of that). We are investigating the costs and feasibility of different projects

e.g. solar power for the clinics, solar or wind powered pumps for the water supply, solar power for the library computers

There are a number of projects already implemented in Nicaragua and Central America that we can draw on. If you have any expertise in this area, and any ideas we would love to hear from you.

Please contact Mary Ann O'Loughlin maryannol@gmail.com

Shipment to Quezalguaque Impending!

At long last, BQSCP is about to dispatch another shipment to Quezalguaque. We'll be sending medical supplies, books, art & school supplies, tables, filing cabinets, sports equipment and a computer for the police department.

Altogether, these items will occupy half of the shipping container (the rear end of a 14-wheeler). The remainder of the container will be filled by other Massachusetts sister cities and the New England Con-

ference of the United Methodist Church.

We're indebted to Harriet Goldberg and Don Weitzman for storing most of this material for the better part of 2007 in their carriage house. It currently occupies a space there measuring about 20'L x 8' W x 8'H.

We will probably be transporting the supplies to Pittsfield for loading the container in mid November

or early January. The truck we will be using - a moving van owned and generously operated by Walter Mucha - will be organized and loaded by volunteers on the Friday or Saturday preceding the trucking date. The coordinator of the shipment has not yet determined the container loading date, but volunteer wannabes are encouraged to call Frank Farlow at 232-9654 for details.



Munguía to Lead Quezalguaque Schools



Yanys Munguía, wife of Pedro Martínez Ruiz, a Quezalguaque teacher who visited Brookline in the fall of 2000, has been named superintendent of schools for the

Municipality of Quezalguaque.

She is already collaborating with the librarians on the mobile library project and other pro-literacy projects at the

library and has indicated that she is looking forward to working closely with the Sister City Project during her tenure.

Brookline Sister City Health Committee Activities

Health Survey & New Grant

The 2006 Quezalguaque Health Needs' Survey conducted by a group of four Boston University public health students identified several needs. First the medical personnel were not going to the Cristo Rey clinic regularly because of trouble with transportation. We agreed to pay for twice daily taxis to transport clinic staff and patients to and from the Cristo Rey clinic five days a week.

Secondly because of the high incidence of respiratory and diarrheal disease, last year's four public health students wrote and got a grant from Colgate Palmolive to study a trial intervention. They will be teaching and encouraging

hand washing to see if will decrease respiratory illness and diarrhea in children less than six years old.

Denise Burke, Courtney Cawthon, Casey Rebholz, and Karen Sherk direct the grant. Three additional Boston University public health students Nicole Daley, Julie O'Donnell, and Christine Yennaco help collect data and administer the intervention.

After getting full support from Dr. Martha Arbizú, the new director of the Quezalguaque health center, the researchers hired two local health educators to collect interview data and observed data about hand washing in four communities. They divided the 4 communities into 2 intervention communities and 2 comparison commu-

nities. In the intervention communities, mothers are provided with soap every two weeks and have a series of educational programs about the theory of germs and how germs from hands can spread respiratory or intestinal diseases. Hand washing is modeled.



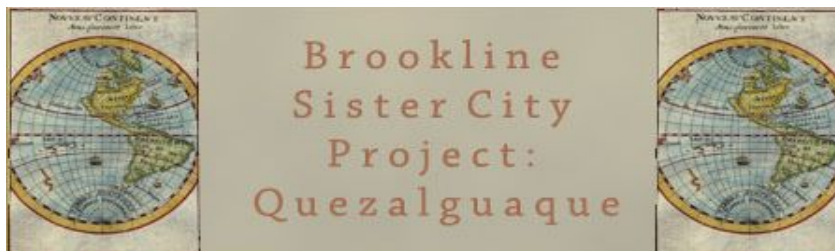
The local health educators collect data on severity of respiratory and gastrointestinal symptoms in all the study families biweekly. In February, the team will see if the intervention changed reported or observed hand-washing behavior

Other Concerns

The 2006 health survey reemphasized the alarming death rate from chronic renal failure—6 deaths again in 2006. This high rate of kidney failure is a problem all along the Pacific coast of Central America, and to date no one

has a plausible theory for why it is so high. The Brookline health committee established a subgroup to address this issue again. We hope to convince Boston University Medical School to send students along with more public health students to identify rates of undiagnosed renal failure.

Another deficit we discovered is extremely small size of the health center emergency room—now one room with space for two cots. We are awaiting a plan from the health director so that we might expand the emergency room and add another two storage rooms. We hope to fund this expansion.



Visit our Website: <http://www.sistercity.brookline.ma.us>

BROOKLINE-QUEZALGUAQUE SISTER CITY PROJECT

27 Elba Street
Brookline, MA 02446.

2007 marks the
20th
Anniversary
Year of the
Brookline-
Quezalguaque
Sister City
Project

Brookline Sister City Project

Brookline Sister City Project needs your help to continue these programs and to fund new ventures. Please be as generous as possible.

___ \$500 ___ \$250 ___ \$100 ___ \$50 ___ Other

Please make checks payable to Brookline-Quezalguaque Sister City Project.
Mail to: Carol Caro, 27 Elba Street, Brookline, MA 02446

Website: <http://www.sistercity.brookline.ma.us>

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