

Sister City Annual Report

BU Public Health Students Conduct Survey in Nicaragua



BU students Courtney Cawthon, Casey Rebholz, Karen Sherk & Denise Burke in Quezalguaque

Identified Needs:

- Regular supply of medicines
- Shorter waiting times at clinics
- Improved transportation to outlying health posts
- Ambulance service at night
- Improved mosquito control
- Cleaner water
- Expanded laboratory services
- Better health education programs

Residents of Quezalguaque see a more regular supply of medicines as their community's major health priority. This was the major finding of a community health survey conducted in the summer of 2006 by four Masters of Public Health candidates from the Boston University School of Public Health. In conducting the project, Denise Burke, Courtney Cawthon, Casey Rebholz and Karen Sherk became the first public health masters students to do a Masters Field Practicum in Quezalguaque. Sarah Johnson from the Sister City's health committee accompanied the students to Quezalguaque.

Working with the Brookline Sister City health committee prior to the trip, the students designed a questionnaire to identify barriers to health care and to investigate the health priorities of the community. With advice from Dr. Sadia Membreno, the Health Center director, students surveyed a representative sample of households in rural and urban areas of the municipality of Quezalguaque

The students conducted their surveys in pairs with the assistance of a driver and health educator from the Health Center to introduce them. In three weeks, they got 143 usable surveys rep-

resenting 793 people. They successfully conducted interviews in 83% of the households in the sample. After completing their analysis, the students presented a 62-page report translated into Spanish to the town.

Based on the success of this trip, the Boston University School of Public Health plans to send more students next June to do a follow up survey. As for Denise, Courtney, Casey and Karen, they have submitted a research grant proposal to allow them to return to Quezalguaque to do community outreach and education and/or additional needed studies.

Stove Projects Benefits Health & Environment

By Maxine Shaw



Woman enjoying her new Ecofogon.

The Quezalguaque stove project continues to be a great success. The stove project, operating since 2004, provides homes with wood burning stoves that vent to the outside. The stoves replace traditional stoves that lack an outside vent and create a great deal of smoke in households. The stove

project has multiple benefits: it improves the upper respiratory health of families, helps the environment by consuming less wood than the traditional open fires and provides a few jobs in a town with high unemployment. We continue to be involved by subsidizing stoves for low-income

families. We were able to purchase one of these "ecofogones" for each of the fifteen Habitat houses which we helped build, and another ten for families who could not have afforded them.

Now Miguel Mendoza, our Quezalguaque representative, Mayor

“Ecofogones” (continued from page 1)

Bruno Montoya, the new Catholic priest Father Escoto, and representatives of the Health Center, have identified 40 families with great need for the stoves and insufficient resources to even consider purchasing them. They asked us to purchase these stoves and we agreed.

The cost of constructing and installing a stove has risen to \$45, due to a spike in the cost of materials, but we believe it is still a good investment in the respiratory health of an entire family and the ecology of an entire community.

Please consider a holiday gift of one of these stoves to someone in Quezalguaque in the name of someone you love. Gift cards (\$45) can be purchased by calling Carol Caro at 617-737-9228

Baker School – Quezalguaque Relationship is Forged

by Fran Price

Thanks to parents and staff of the Baker School, a new relationship is being forged with several schools in Quezalguaque. Baker students are sending much needed school supplies; in return Quezalguaque students have offered their friendship.

In early 2006, as Fran Price and her daughter Juliana, a junior at Brookline High, were preparing to join a Sister City delegation to Quezalguaque, Fran contacted her friend Sherry Flashman, a Baker School parent, to talk about donations of



School children at Cristo Rey school with donated supplies from Baker School

school supplies. Representing the PTO Social Action Committee, Sherry elicited the cooperation of Principal

Tom Cavanaugh and Spanish teacher Christina Collins. The results was the contribution of an estimated 75 pounds of supplies.

Upon their return from Quezalguaque, Fran and Sister City incoming president Carol Caro introduced Christina’s seventh grade classes to Quezalguaque through a PowerPoint presentation. Inspired, Christina and her Spanish language students decided to deepen their engagement through an interchange with English learners in Quezalguaque. They outdid themselves, preparing 38 pen pal letters in Spanish, as well as bilingual dictionaries, books and classroom posters. Photos of the students, staff and school completed the package, which was transported by Juliana when she returned to Quezalguaque with a smaller delegation in late June.

The materials, along with gifts of dictionaries and flash cards, as well as paper and colored pencils to encourage responses (the latter purchased with contributions from Juliana’s teachers at Brookline High), were divided between two

English teachers, one located at each of the two high schools. By the time that Megan Fountain, the last member of the delegation, had left Quezalguaque in July, she was carrying letters from 19 students of Maryuri Ulloa, who teaches at the Las Mercedes regional high school, immediately outside of the urban center of Quezalguaque. The letters were addressed to particular Baker School students, carefully written in English, decorated and, in many cases, including drawings or individual or family photos. Reading these, the Baker School students are learning that, for all their differences in culture and material wealth, their counterparts share many of their interests – baseball, hip-hop, reggae and rock music, animals, and friendship.

Come February, the Sister City delegation will again be carrying supplies from Baker School, and also letters to new friends named Marisol, Anselmo and Yorlene, who live in places with such names as Divino Niño, Las Mercedes and Quezalguaque.

Join a Brigade in Quezalguaque

Our next trip to Quezalguaque will be school vacation week in February, 2007 (Feb 17-24).

We will be working on library projects:

- Helping to set up new bookcases and re-arranging the collection
- Finishing small construction projects

- Exploring possibilities of “libraries in a box” for remote schools with no access to main library.

Other possibilities are in the planning stages. If you are interested, send an email to:

brooklinesistercity@gmail.com

Brigades are not all work as you can see in the smiling faces in the photo.

Hope you’ll consider joining us!

Carol Caro



1st row Martha Curtis and Mary Ann O'Loughlin; 2nd row John Bassett, Oliver Bassett & Simon O'Loughlin.



Library Update

by John Bassett

Painting Library

A Brookline delegation joined with a large crew of Quezalaguaque residents to paint the library and add a mural in February 2006. The mural designed by former Mayor Felipe Loza depicts local history, plants, and animals. The mural was painted by an enthusiastic crew led by Oliver Bassett, Juliana Price, a young man from Quezalaguaque named Christian, and Mario, the Night Watchman at the Health Center.



Bookmark Project

As a way to engage children in encouraging their parents to use the library, Fran Price brought pre-printed Quezalaguaque Library bookmarks.



Mary Ellen Carideo

Assisted by Carol Caro and Mary Ellen Carideo, kids decorated the bookmarks and added notes on the back

inviting their families to come and use the Library.

Celebration

The occasion was threefold: Maxine Shaw's retirement as President, to welcome new President Carol Caro, and to say farewell to those of us who had been visiting for a week.

There was an impressive and almost



complete array of Town officials, many speeches, a marble plaque that will be

mounted in Brookline Town Hall after renovations are done, food, loud music, and wild and crazy dancing.

Ongoing Support

This past February 307 donated books were brought to the library. We contribute to improvements to the building, and participate in community events held at the Library. The Library was designed by architects Tony Tappe, from Brookline and Marta Portocarrero from Nicaragua. Construction was supervised by Raymond Borsman. The building was finished in 2003 and has an impressive reading room with a high ceiling and good natural light and ventilation, an office that will function as a computer lab with 12 computers, and a large room that is separate from the reading room and is used for meetings and classes. The Library is well used and supported. It's the civic and intellectual center of Quezalaguaque.

Librarians



Janina

Patricia

The Sister City Project continues to pay the salaries of librarians Janina Martinez and Patricia Chacon.

Other highlights of our February visit were:

Game Night



A game night for kids. Fran and Juliana Price brought educational games, including Uno, Checkers, Chess, Sorry, and Scrabble. 50-75 kids (8 to 16) and a few parents came. The games will

stay in the Library and will be well used.

Container Shipment Spring 2007? by Frank Farlow



Once a year or so the Sister City Project sends supplies of various sorts to Quezalaguaque -- medical, library, schools, office equipment, etc. We join other organizations to fill a container (the rear end of a 14-

wheeler minus the wheels) that is shipped to Nicaragua. Last year we paid for one-tenth of a container (4'x4'x8'). At present, we have accumulated two-tenths for the next shipment, which fills a storage room in the old Lincoln School.

The fall shipment that we've been anticipating for the past year has fallen through. The New England Conference of the United Methodist Church (550 churches) was hoping to coordinate this shipment, but they have not yet received the grant

that they've applied for. So we're looking forward to shipping next spring or, at latest, next fall.

A list of educational and health items needed is provided elsewhere in this newsletter. If you have items to donate or know of someone or an organization that might, or if you have questions concerning possible donations, please contact me.

frank.farlow@verizon.net



Brookline-Quezalaguaque Sister City
27 Elba Street
Brookline, MA 02446

Brookline Sister City Project

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email Address: _____

Amount: _____ For Specific Project _____ or Where needed most _____

All donations are tax deductible.

Please make checks payable to Brookline-Quezalaguaque Sister City Project.

Mail to: Carol Caro, 27 Elba Street, Brookline, MA 02446

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

Email: brooklinesistercity@gmail.com