



Esperanza

Newsletter



Summer 2021

Our Mission

COMMIT is a team of dedicated volunteers from Southwestern Ontario working under the umbrella of the Rotary Club of Stratford Charitable Foundation. Our team's mandate is to provide long-term support to some of the poorest villages in Nicaragua. Our focus is to provide medical clinics, and other outreach services such as clean drinking water, sanitation, eco-friendly stoves, sustainable agriculture as well as educational and social support.

Our newsletter name

***Esperanza translated means
"Hope"***

***We (COMMIT) have hope
that our efforts will improve
the lives of our friends in
Nicaragua.***

COMMIT Website:

[Click here](#)



Canadian Outreach Medical & Mission Team (COMMIT) is a project of the Rotary Club of Stratford Charitable Foundation and works in partnership with NPH Nicaragua.



Thank you to all our donors for your support

Over the past 10 years COMMIT has been truly blessed to have the ongoing support of many friends and family. Thank you!

Through your donations we have been able to accomplish so many worthwhile projects such as: Fresh Water Wells, Garden and Reforestation, Eco-Friendly Stoves, Sewing Program, Medical Clinics, COVID & Disaster Relief, Community Centre, the shipping of containers full of desperately needed supplies, equipment and more. We together have been improving the lives of so many communities and families in Nicaragua, but also giving them a “hands up” helping effort towards combating Global warming in this developing country.

We are extremely grateful to our donors and supporters!



COMMIT thanks the following donors who made exceptional gifts of \$1,000 or more in 2020.

Abel James

Adidas Canada (Shoes & clothing)

Blaine Dr. Kirsten

Canadian Hospital Specialties (Supplies)

Charlene Gordon (In-kind)

Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (ECG Machine)

Collings Jackie & Tom

Evans Andy

Foster Garry & Simply Kids Day Care

Hill Rom Canada (Birthing beds)

Hodge MaryAnn

Honsinger Chip & Mary

Huber Eric

Interface Center For Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery (Patient monitor)

Knoppert David, Diane & Smudge

Lennon Betty

London Health Sciences Centre (Exam tables & supplies)

Mashkinonje Lodge

McArthur Dr. Paul

Narayan Dr. Mehra

Narayan Dr. Shanil

Ontario Home Health (Medical Equipment)

Poker Daus

Rauser Janice

Rosser Mike & Kathy

Scarfe Pamela & Stanley Ralph,

Environmental Health Foundation Canada

St. Thomas Elgin Hospital (Defibrillators, stretcher & supplies)

Stratford General Hospital (X-ray equipment)

Thompson Dr. Doug



Working Together with Rotary



COMMIT would also like to recognize and thank all fellow Rotarians for all their encouragement and donations towards our Eco-Friendly Stove Project.

Rotaract Club of St. Thomas
 Rotary Club of Bracebridge - Muskoka Lakes
 Rotary Club of Brantford
 Rotary Club of Brantford - Sunrise
 Rotary Club of Chatham
 Rotary Club of Dartmouth
 Rotary Club of Downtown London
 Rotary Club of Dundas
 Rotary Club of East London
 Rotary Club of Festival City Stratford
 Rotary Club of Grand Bend
 Rotary Club of Kenora
 Rotary Club of London Hyde Park
 Rotary Club of London South
 Rotary Club of Mississauga
 Rotary Club of New Minas Sunrise (Halifax)
 Rotary Club of Niagara Falls – Sunrise
 Rotary Club of Nipigon
 Rotary Club of North Bay
 Rotary Club of Owen Sound

Rotary Club of Port Elgin
 Rotary Club of Regina
 Rotary Club of Richmond Hill
 Rotary Club of Sault Ste Marie
 Rotary Club of Sooke (BC)
 Rotary Club of St. Catharine's
 Rotary Club of St. Catharine's Lakeshore
 Rotary Club of St. Marys
 Rotary Club of St. Thomas
 Rotary Club of Stratford
 Rotary Club of Sudbury
 Rotary Club of Summerside (PEI)
 Rotary Club of Tavistock
 Rotary Club of Toronto East
 Rotary Club of Truro (NS)
 Rotary Club of Walkerton
 Rotary Club of Winnipeg West
 Rotary Global Passport Club
 Rotary Lakehead Club



Water Project Update

ACCESS to Water Saves Lives

We are approaching the end of the present COMMIT water project in Nicaragua. Five wells were drilled and three distribution systems to pipe water to convenient parts of the village for better access were built. The men and women of the village dug trenches for the systems by hand laboriously. We are replacing a system with shallow wells that dry up or become contaminated and as a result water has to be trucked in from Nandaime twice weekly.

We have installed electric pumps in all the wells except in the remote village of La Flor, which does not have electricity. A hand pump will be used there. Five water towers were also installed. Local committees called CAPS, provided teaching on health issues, wise use of water, testing, sterilization and the starting of a contingency fund for repairs. This will make the project sustainable into the future and open up economic opportunities in the villages.

We are very much indebted to all the people that donated for this to happen, and you have changed the lives of over 1,000 families not only in the area of health but in opening up many more opportunities for these people. We are also thankful to our representatives in Nicaragua and to the Rotary Club locally and in Granada for helping us carry out this project. Their President Gustavo Reynosa spent many hours visiting, organizing and supervising the project for the Rotary Club of Granada. This is an example of Rotarians working together internationally with no political agenda to benefit mankind.

Clean potable and accessible water should be the right of people all over the world.

Doug Thompson

Village children watching the installation of fresh water wells





Stove Project Update

On October 1st 2020 I began a virtual ride across Canada to raise awareness of the hazards that are associated with open fire cook stoves. My other objective was to raise funds to replace open fire cook stoves with eco friendly cook stoves.

Doug Thompson, Co Founder and Co Leader of COMMIT, and I gave our presentation to 58 Rotary Clubs (56 in Canada, 1 in the US and 1 in Panama) and some church groups.

There are 2 problems with open fire cook stoves. They are dangerous to the immediate and long term health of the family, especially mothers and children. And they also produce greenhouse gases, which are dangerous because of the CO₂ production and subsequent contribution to the increase of the world's temperature (i.e., the "greenhouse effect"). The new eco stoves are well insulated with the gases vented to the outside of the home. Family members, especially mothers and children, will no longer be exposed to harmful smoke.

Over 3 billion people in the world use the open fire cook stoves. The amount of resulting greenhouse gases that result are greater than all of the cars and trucks in the world, combined.

The new eco friendly cook stoves use 50% or less wood and an equal reduction in greenhouse gases than the open fire cook stoves. We will be using the 'Justa' version of the new stoves.

The reception by the Rotary Clubs and church groups was wonderful. Most people were unaware of the dangers created by the open fire cook stoves. They were very receptive to our message and were also very generous financially. Through this initiative alone, over \$30,000 was raised. Other members of the COMMIT Team (Doug Thompson, Janice Rauser, Bev Neeb and Mary O'Rourke) also had individual, athletic based fundraisers and their cumulative success was over \$20,000!

We are now in the process of writing a Rotary Global Grant Application. Our colleagues in Nicaragua are part of the Global Grant Committee. The London Hyde Park Rotary Club will be officially submitting the application once it is complete.

All of us who were involved in the athletic based fundraisers sincerely thank everyone who has supported us both financially and emotionally. We all needed a few 'pick me ups' along the way and our friends were there for us.

As soon as we have submitted the grant application and have heard back from Rotary we will inform you.

David Knoppert





Garden Project Update

Our Garden Project is “growing” in support from local farmers and we are very grateful for the ongoing leadership of Jimmy Espinzo and Edgar Avilia our project coordinators in Nicaragua. Fourteen farmers in Nandarola are now growing a variety of crops including passion fruit and they are looking forward to a bountiful harvest this year, which will be shared with other communities.

The worm boxes are producing an excellent amount of compost and this fertilizer is making a significant difference in the quality of crops grown.

Two tree nurseries have been completely planted with 2,000 saplings distributed to 7 villages as part of our Eco-friendly Stove and Reforestation initiative. 251 Families received between 7 and 15 saplings each. These trees include different varieties of fruit, precious wood and other types. Each family is required to water their trees, protect them from animals and care for them as part of the project.

The village of La Vigia is in the process of setting posts needed to start their passion fruit crop. Beans and corn are growing well, however the fields need rain after a 20-day drought. This highlights the need to have systems in place to irrigate crops from new wells and water reservoirs.



Passion fruit and other crops growing well ready for harvest



Tree nurseries all planted and ready for distribution to local families as part of our reforestation initiative

Good supply of compost collected from worm boxes



Trees used as renewal fuel for the eco-friendly stoves, fruit trees for food, shade trees for the environment & biodiversity and stakes for passion fruit



Thank you to all those who supported our annual charity golf tournament held at the River Valley Golf Course on June 5, 2021. We had beautiful weather and an amazing day raising a grand total of \$13,185.

Some highlights from the day:

- We had two teams tie for first place with a score of 54, The Birdie Boys and Club Hoppers. Congratulations to both teams.
- The longest drive men and women went to Cameron Overbeeke and Laura Hawkins
- Closest to the pin male and female went to Kevin Smith and Cathy Pinnell
- Balls toss winners were Ian Maclean and Patricia Riehl

We had many amazing door prizes with each player receiving a prize. A special thank you to all our sponsors. The ball toss, silent auction and baking table were a huge hit. All in all it was a great day. Thank you River Valley for hosting COMMIT'S annual charity golf tournament.

Till next year!





Coffee Fundraiser Update

David Knoppert made a suggestion during one of our many Zoom conference calls this past year. His idea was to find a local vendor for ethically sourced coffee, sell it by the pound to friends and family and use the proceeds to help our Nicaraguan friends build and buy eco-stoves for their homes.

Since David was in the midst of a virtual cross Canada cycling fundraiser volunteers were sought to move this idea forward. Kim Neeb took on the Stratford section. Jo-Anne and Mark Edlund accepted the London area.

Patrick's Beans is a London-based company that does its own roasting. The owner was happy to work with us for orders and delivery. Our group decided on a price for the coffee and tea. We also decided that any customer buying 10 pounds of coffee or 10 bags of tea would get the 11th one free.

We set up our contacts of potential customers. Anyone making a purchase was offered free COVID friendly delivery. We have been pleasantly surprised with the response. Some of our friends and family members do not drink either coffee or tea but offered to make cash donations to our eco-stove project.

We have set up our orders to be received by Patrick's Beans on the last week of each month. We arrange delivery for the first week of each month.

In the four months we have been in operation so far we have sold 330 pounds of coffee and 81 bags of tea. This has allowed us to transfer over \$2,000 to the Eco-Stove project set up by the Stratford Rotary Club.

We have had mostly positive comments on the products and the project. We are going to continue the sales for the foreseeable future.

Mark Edlund

Self-appointed VP of Regional Sales

Coffee and tea orders being prepared for delivery



COMMIT Projects

Over the past ten years, COMMIT has delivered more than \$500,000 in supplies, equipment and aid to Nicaragua, including a bus to transport less fortunate children to a better education and nutritional meal program at NPH. Even with the challenges created by the COVID pandemic and difficult political times, we are committed to continue our work and support in Nicaragua.

Our focus over the next 3 to 5 years is to:

- Initiate our eco-friendly stove project in two villages (250 stoves) with accompanying reforestation project (3,000 trees) and related environmental spinoffs; and if possible obtain a Rotary global grant that may triple the number of installations.
- Expand our composting and garden project to other villages.
- Explore other microeconomic projects with loans to villages that through good planning can demonstrate sustainability and scalability (expand) and a way forward to decrease poverty.
- Continue to ship containers with desperately needed supplies and equipment.
- Continue to financially support natural disasters, COVID and other emergency needs.
- Continue to support COVID and other natural disasters as needed.



COMMIT Team loading supplies into storage container, ready for next shipment to Nicaragua



Bus purchased for NPH Orphanage

For more information or to donate please email:

commitnphnicaragua@gmail.com

COMMIT Website: <http://commitwithnphnicaragua.simplesite.com/>