

Realization of a Health Fair

New Water Treatment Plant for Potable Water

On January 11th, 2008 the Water Board of the Four Communities; Los Bayos, Río Frío, Aldea Bonita y La Jagua of the Valle of Amarateca, Honduras, organized a Health Fair with the co-operation of Agua para el Pueblo (APP), the Spanish NGO CESAL, and the University of Cornell of Ithaca, NY.

With the intention of uniting the community, the fair's purpose was to support the Water Board through the promotion of the construction of a new water treatment plant using the technology of AguaClara. The fair developed a program that included games for children, medical consultations, vaccinations, and a soccer tournament. There was music and two national singers along with food and decorations on all the trees with information about watend the environment.

We are thankful for the personnel from the Metropolitan Health Region of Tegucigalpa, and of CESAR (Rural Health Centers) of Rio Frio who offered consultations in orthodontistry, general health, gynecology, as well as a pharmacy for the community. Approximately 200 people received medical attention. Dr. Ramón Antonio Arita, Dr. Rony Ramos, Mr. Raúl Antonio Ramos and Mr. Gerardo Murillo helped plan the event with the cooperation of Mrs. Luz Ordóñez, Mr. Manuel Solórzano and Mrs. Petronila Gálvez of the Health Center of Rio Frio. They also distributed information on water-borne diseases and pamphlets about Dengue Fever, AIDS and vaccinations.

Activities were developed for people of all ages. The day started with a 4-way soccer game between La Jagua, Los Bayos, Rio Frio and a team of Cornell University students. Around the midday there was a visit of members of Water Boards of different communities from the Valle of Amarateca. Throughout the whole day people visited the construction site of the of the AguaClara water treatment plant located in Los Bayos. These visits served to also clarify the function of the AguaClara technology. The explanation was reinforced using the demo plant where the fair was taking place. This demo plant explains the entire process of flocculation, sedimentation and disinfection in a miniature version that the actual sized plant uses.

The University of Cornell was represented by 20 students on the Civil and Environmental Engineering that work on the designs of the water treatment plant for the AguaClara Project. This Project is managed by Agua para el Pueblo (APP), an NGO that has been working in Honduras for over 20 years in the water and sanitation sector. For more information about the AguaClara technology and the University of Cornell, please visit: aguaclara.cee.cornell.edu

Children received apples, notebooks, goody-bags with candy and cookies. The Department of Villages of the Metropolitan Central District of Tegucigalpa, Honduras, coordinated by Mr. Allan Montenegro donated toothbrushes as well. During the afternoon, the Cornell students played educational games about environmental topics. One of the final activities was to collect trash and to talk about recycling and its connection to the cycle of water. There was also a demonstration on how to wash hands.

In the end, the *Jaguars* of La Jagua won the soccer tournament and received a trophy. All attendees signed a poster that read 'we support the construction of the potable water treatment plant' in different colors identifying what community they represented. This poster will serve as proof of community support for the Water Board. It will help to justify the increase in the monthly tariff for the operation and maintenance of the new plant, which includes the purchasing of aluminum sulfate, chlorine and a salary for the operator.

We hope that everyone learned more about the importance of consuming safe potable water and its relation to our health. We express our appreciation to everyone involved to help achieve the Health Fair and the construction of the AguaClara plant, especially to the Water Board: Jorge Manuel Lozano S., Dilcia Zulema Espinal Fonseca, Mayra Elizabeth Varela Lozano, Elmer Javier Sánchez, José Santos Martínez Fúnez, Wilfredo Zepeda Ortega , y Antonio Gómez.

