

## **Report No. 3 from Alto Cayma - 19 Aug 18**

### **Catching Up**

No, your eyes aren't playing tricks on you. Today is Sunday the 26th, and this report is dated Sunday the 19th. It's the report that didn't get published last week, and in fact is being written not in Alto Cayma but in Cuzco, even as we speak. Read the report, and you'll see why.

### **Down Memory Lane**

I was writing the other day to Barbara Horstmann, now a member of Dilworth Rotary, about her participation in the very first group of visitors we brought to Alto Cayma in January of 2003, and I told her, "It was easy to remember the year you first went down to Alto Cayma because that trip launched Gloria's and my ministry, or whatever you want to call it, down here. How were we to know that from that very trip onward, we would be returning every 6 months, and for ever-longer stays? The only trip we missed was when Gloria was in treatment for cancer, so that means that my current trip is my 31st. Can you believe that? It also means that I have spent the equivalent of almost 8 years in Peru, and have spent 340 hours on airplanes just going from Miami to Lima and back alone. Oh, and not to forget, the girls in the card shop made, and we had to sell, over 50,000 cards. :-)" Little things, if persistently pursued over time, do add up to something.

### **Visitors**

A group of 7 visitors arrived on Wednesday morning. These were all people who were coming for the first time, including 2 Rotarians and 5 of my cousins. They were joined on Friday by 3 repeat visitors (2 Rotarians and 1



cousin). These 10 visitors will figure prominently in this week's and next week's reports.

### **Arequipa Day**

Wednesday was the 478th anniversary of the founding of Arequipa, so we took the visitors downtown to see the big parade they hold each year. The



parade includes dancing groups and floats, and runs for about 11 hours.



It's very festive, and people come from all over Peru to see it.

### Home Visits

On Thursday morning, we started visiting "ahijados" (sponsees) who are being sponsored by our visitors. This is always something special, as the



people here simply can't believe that someone would travel so far to come and see them. I always enjoy these encounters, because no matter how many

letters may have been exchanged in the past, to meet face to face is always a mutual revelation. By the time the visit has ended, there's no room left for



doubt in the sponsor's mind as to how worthwhile and appreciated his or her



support has been. It's not unusual to visit a house and find the walls covered with positive messages and educational materials. This is something we



strongly encourage in the sponsorship program, to always aspire to higher values for the good of the family.

On Thursday afternoon, we visited 4 people who don't have sponsors yet, but are on the waiting list. The visitors were quick to notice that the contrast between those who have been in our program for a while, and those who are still waiting to get in, is often quite dramatic. Three of the 4 now



have sponsorships as a result of these visits. When visitors see firsthand the challenges these people face, and the courage and optimism with which they face them, sponsorships practically spring up out of the ground automatically. It's a constant frustration to me that try as I may, through photos and stories, I can't seem to get that across to my readers, whereas the few who are able to come visit us "get it" immediately and respond on the spot.

### **English Class**

On Thursday afternoon, we also dropped in on John's English class in Mujeres con Esperanza. This class is always well attended, and one look at



this boy tells the story of how challenging it is to capture the attention of so



many young kids at once, and keep them focused on the lesson at hand.

## Meeting the Rotarians

On Thursday evening, we went to the Chinese restaurant Fung Wha, which is where the Arequipa Ciudad Blanca Rotary Club meets. The restaurant is owned by Miguel Martinez, Past President of that club, but our motive for going there was simply to partake of his excellent Chinese food. Nevertheless, when we got there, we found several members of the club



waiting for us, so the occasion turned into a good experience of international Rotary fellowship as well.

## More Visitors

As mentioned above, on Friday 3 more visitors arrived to join the 7 who were already here. These 3 were all people who had been here at least once before, but the interesting thing was that Tim O'Connell's only previous visit had been 11 years ago, and Warren Kean's was 12 years ago. Everything has changed since then! For example:

- All our streets were dirt then; now the lower settlements are all paved.
- The settlements extended only a few hundred yards above the Volunteer House then; now they stretch for miles above.
- The Aldea (orphanage) consisted of rude cement block buildings, but was home to 50 boys and girls; now it has beautiful buildings,

houses boys only, and has expanded into a full family service center created by Father Alex. Once again, time plus persistence yields progress.

### **More Home Visits**

On Friday afternoon we visited the "ahijados" who are being sponsored by the last visitors to arrive. Sevrin Huselid visited Jessica, who was just admitted to the National University to study Psychology. She was still in the



Acercádonos program when Sevrin started sponsoring her 4 years ago. It gives a great deal of satisfaction to see the people we're supporting progress in this manner. Jessica's father abandoned the family shortly after she was born, and her mother has supported Jessica and her younger sister by making and selling handicrafts. She's very good at what she does, but there's



no way she could afford to educate her daughters on what she makes without the supplemental help that Sevrin provides

Warren Kean visited the family he's been sponsoring for 12 years, but had never met. (They were selected just after his visit.) He was pleasantly surprised to see what a nice house they had been able to build, a little at a



time, with his support. Tomás, the father, was away working at the time of the visit. Frank, the younger son, is now in the Air Force, and Juan Carlos, the older son, was also away, but Warren had the opportunity to meet Anaís



(on the left), whose university studies he is still supporting. He also was greeted by Maruja's youngest daughter (in his right arm) and Anaís' daughter (in his left arm) The family expressed great gratitude to Warren and his wife, Amy, for their steadfast support over all these years.

### **An Important Anniversary**

Five years ago Saturday, we dedicated our first Service Center building in Alto Cayma, named the Jim Catapano Community Center after the gentleman who bequeathed us the money to buy and rehabilitate the building. Jim's brother, Ron, and his family, and Ashley, one of Jim's



daughters, were present, which made the occasion very special. In fact, we had held up the dedication ceremony for some time in order to await their availability.

### **A Proposed New Daycare Center**

On Saturday morning we took the visitors up to Mujeres con



Esperanza, to the "wide open spaces". We toured our new service center



building, and discussed a proposal for a new Daycare Center to enable the



mothers in that settlement to work, pursue vocational training, or participate in other positive activities offered by our association without having to worry about what to do with their children. Charlotte Rotary and other clubs will be approached with the opportunity to help equip this center and the nutritional program which will accompany it.

### **Wall of Fame**

Later Saturday morning we added the visitors' handprints to our Wall of Fame. It was one of the longest strings of handprints we've put up at any



game of musical chairs involving the kids and elderly together, John took advantage of the large number of visitors by staging a game of musical chairs just with them. The final contest was between two corporate lawyers, and just as Paul Wyche went to sit down to claim the championship, Warren



Kean pulled the chair out from under him. I think it's what lawyers refer to as "professional courtesy". :-)

### **A Practice Hike**

On Sunday, we took the visitors on the traditional hike to town for



lunch and sightseeing. The visitors were struck by the beauty of the Chili



River Valley, with the volcano Chachani rising majestically in the background. They also did their part to support the economy of the local



grape, barley and hops growers, and they didn't neglect the local cuy (guinea



pig) producers either.

I refer to this as a "practice hike" because we were warming up for the 4-day trek over the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu, which we were to undertake the following week, about which a separate report will be written.

We ended the day, and the visit, with dinner at Zig Zag. And now it's



on to Cuzco and the Inca Trail!

"Love God, Serve Neighbor/Serving Alto Cayma",

Jim