

Water Project – Cochabamba, Bolivia, Village of Aramasi

In Rotary Year 2003-2004 the Rotary Club of Space Center led three other clubs (Friendswood, Vienna, and Wintertur) in establishing a Matching Grant Project (MG 56831) in Bolivia, which covered 3 years. This was an agricultural project in the rural Andean Mountain areas 80 kms outside the City of Cochabamba. The goal of the project was to locate a continuous water source, distribute it throughout the Village of Aramasi, and train the village occupants to grow and maintain fruits and vegetables, which were absent in their diet. Work began on this project in the fall of 2005 and was completed in December 2006. Rotarians from the participating clubs (e.g., Franz Albrecht - Wintertur, Switzerland), led by Club member Stan Galanski, visited the Host Club (Tunari Cochabamba) and the Village of Aramasi in June 2006. There, they witnessed the successful tapping of an underground spring and the piping of this water over 3 kms into the Village. During this visit, the farmers of the community were in the process of digging trenches to route the water, via PVC pipes, to each home in the village. Preliminary garden plots had been started and produce was beginning to be harvested (on a small scale). It was the opinion of the visiting Rotarians that the initial and projected long-term success of this project was dependent on the everyday presence of a professional Agriculturalist (Jose), whose salary the matching grant was funding.

In June 2007, Stan returned to the Village of Aramasi. This time he was accompanied by Club President Geoff Atwater. When they arrived, they found a village that had been transformed from a brown and gray terrain to a patchwork of Green Gardens associated with 70 home sites, all fed by the water from the spring tapped the prior year. In short, this project (and the associated MG 56831) proved to be a complete success, even to the point that surrounding villages were now pleading with the local NGO (Amistad Mission) to come teach them how to grow such plentiful gardens. Geoff and Stan met with the Tunari Cochabamba Rotary Club and finalized all the paperwork for MG 56831, while they were there.