

Bolivian Water Project - Cochabamba  
Editor: Stan Galanski

Space Center Rotary led three other clubs (Friendswood, Vienna, and Wintertur) in establishing a Matching Grant Project (MG 56831) in Bolivia, which has 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. The project began in the fall of 2005. The activities that took place in Rotary year 2007-08 are discussed below.

Upon returning to the U.S., the water well grant was crafted, reviewed, published and approved (MG 64413). The funds were finally allocated and delivered into the Tarija-Aranjuez bank account in April 2008.

While this was going on, the Tapacari Government began constructing the dam above the Village of Aramasi in November 2007. Unfortunately (as expected), they were only able to build half of the required dimensions and left it standing (in December 2008) until additional funds could be found, either by the government - projected to take another 3 years, or from Rotary. Through some heavy lobbying, Space Center Rotary (SCR) was able to combine Rotary Club and The Rotary Foundation (TRF) contributions totaling \$53,000 by March 2008, and get another MG approved for the construction of this dam (MG 67468). Stan was able to get the remaining funds from the local NGO (Amistad Mission) who had a vested interest in the success of this project.

Right before the drilling contractor was to begin work on the Concepcion Water Well (April 2008), he made a final review of the local community records and found that several attempts had been made in the past year to drill water wells in that area, only to come up dry. Hence, with this new and validated information, the Drilling Contractor retracted his proposal (so as not to waste Rotary's money). With this news, it was apparent that an alternative plan had to be put into place. Stan immediately got concurrence from TRF that the money could sit in the Tarija-Aranjuez account while a Plan B could be devised, and that the MG proposal could be amended if an alternative water project could be scoped for the Dominican Girl's School.

In June of 2008, Geoffrey Atwater and Peter Reichers returned to Concepcion to review the historical findings on previous water well bores and validated what the contractor had reported. They learned that a new water source was to be coming on-line in the coming year (channeled water from a fluctuating river) and that a Water Purification System would be needed. Hence, readings and tests were taken by Peter to determine if an existing (water purification) solution, deployed by Engineers Without Borders, would be viable for this community. They concluded that such a system was viable and could be deployed within a year, once EWB resources could be freed up to install the equipment. Hence, MG 64413 was to be rescoped and put on hold for 6 months, until technical supporting elements could be scheduled to do the job.

While all this was taking place, John Nodalski had convinced local Interact Clubs to devise a sacrificial project that would allow High School students to raise money (in addition to the \$23,000 MG) for the Concepcion Water Purification System. This was most needed and welcome, since the MG could not pay for the requisite water tanks and piping system into the school dormitories.