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## Children Of Honduras Trust

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### LOADING DAY 2011

Loading day started dry, which was very good news. The bad news was that, on arrival, there was an electricity supply failure on our quarter of the site. This was a big problem because the warehouses that we use have no windows, thus it was very dark inside. Seven twenty in the morning is also too early on a Saturday to interrupt anyone's day off work. However, by eight fifteen the head of site was busy arranging for someone to look at the very large generator that was supposed to provide us with light. Within an hour the day was going as planned. Thankfully, catering was well underway as they were cooking with gas. We have to get the priorities right! We had one more blackout during the day but again the generator was cajoled into working.

We are very grateful to the Lord that we have been enabled to achieve another excellent and safe loading day. Thank you to everyone who helped and to those



- SHARING PASTA AT SCHOOL -

who prayed. The event was a superb team effort.

The import of the containers, however, did not go as smoothly but more about that in the next newsletter!

### EXPEDITION TO HONDURAS 2011

Every four years, or so, it becomes necessary to visit the work of CH Trust in Honduras. It is the time when one obtains a better insight into what is happening and how the different ministries have developed since the last visit. As usual, my recent trip to Honduras, accompanied by Jenny Smith, was exhausting but very profitable.

The object of our visit was to audit the use of our supplies to Honduras and assess future needs. The principal message we received, is that of all the contributions we make, the number one item with all the projects is food. Everyone is trying to feed the children in their sphere of operation. Although schooling and other things may be valuable they are less of a priority if you are hungry. Although not the most glamorous of the areas we address, food will once again be the main focus of our efforts for next year.

There is so much information to be downloaded that I barely know where to start! Hopefully, over the following months, opportunity will be made to tell you more of our visit. What is written here is but a taster.

Thank you to all who support the work of CH Trust. Without your contributions, the Trust would not exist and hundreds of Honduran children would be less well nourished and denied the opportunity to better themselves through education. God bless you.

### ARRIVING IN STYLE

In credit to the airline, our outbound trip to Honduras was both comfortable and uneventful. On our arrival at Houston, Texas we were greeted with temperatures over 100°F. One of those occasions when you really appreciate air conditioning! The hot dry weather followed us from Houston to Tegucigalpa in Honduras. On arrival the temperature was 89°F and later rose to 92°F. Our accommodation was close to the Valle de Angeles, up in the mountains where, fortunately, it is noticeably cooler.

We were met at Tegucigalpa airport by Dina, air side! (Dina is the lady who sorts out the importation of our containers into Honduras). We found to our delight that we were spared the hassle of queuing for passport control by being taken through the then vacant diplomat passport control. Very nice touch! We were also met with a bunch of roses each from Dina. These were immediately confiscated and scanned before we could leave, as they too had been air side. The journalist with Dina, who organized this special welcome for us, also collected our cases and submitted them to be x-rayed yet again. Alonso and Cesar were then waiting to meet us with the pickup ready for our journey to the Valle and home for the next two weeks.



**- GIVING OUT EXERCISE BOOKS IN SAN PEDRO SULA -**

**SETTING THE SCENE**

Life in Honduras, for us, is always an adventure! One of the incidents that propelled our prayer life was the occasion we went up the mountain to Monte Verde. This proved to be a rather exciting journey, as the rains had started. The rainy season starts in May and our visit in June coincided with rain late in the afternoon, most days and often through the night. The showers, generally, featured heavy storm rain. The upside was that it cooled the temperature for the start of the following day and provided water in the water butt for washing, cooking and showers.

The journey to Monte Verde requires travel by four wheel drive vehicle on dirt roads. There were five of the party inside the cab and three in the pick-up at the back. The journey there was alright but on arrival we experienced two hours of very heavy rain.

We left late. It was already 4.30pm with only about an hour or so of day light remaining. After about a mile we encountered a very steep part of the road. We made three attempts at the rutted, muddy incline but failed to achieve the summit. When the vehicle started sliding backwards towards the cliff edge, it was rather scary. Following our instinct for self preservation, we offered to get out and make the truck lighter! With help, we walked to the top of that bit of road. It felt much safer watching. We spent over an hour in the rain during which time local people arrived, many with bare feet, carrying various implements. They started to scrape the mud off the road so that the tyres could grip the rock underneath. Many attempts were made to climb the incline but without success. It was not comforting to be told that one person had spent a week up this mountain, when she could not get the car past this point! Large piles of fallen pine needles were then spread on the road. After about nine or more attempts, they wrapped a large chain with a padlock around one of the wheels. Finally they managed to get the vehicle to the top. We wondered if a set of European type snow chains for the wheels would work for them?

Now we were told that the 4x4 mechanism, which is essential for this journey, was not working! This was alarming, as going down the mountain is not all downhill by any stretch of the imagination. When you get to a one in four gradient you think you are on flat ground! We were now travelling down the mountain in the dark and rain. This is something that even the locals consider dangerous, in a country that is not known for health or safety. The Lord is good! We made it back in time for another church visit at 7.30pm to give out more toys, and then call in at Wendy's for some fast food on the way home. Bed beckoned. Back at base we had water in the tank but I was too tired to shower. Mañana, morning came all too soon! We still had a tank full of water, but now no electricity! I did manage to become used to washing in cold rain water but showering and washing my hair still needed the chill taking off. Jenny is much hardier and took cold showers. So, once again it was shower by 'bucket and chuck it'. I managed two warm showers in three weeks!

So much for life in Honduras! We were staying with relatively well off professional people. Think what it is like for the less well off folk!



- GUANCASTE SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY WELCOMES US -

### WATER FEATURE!

Many people ask about the water supply in Honduras. This varies from place to place. No water is drinkable in Honduras even though the majority of the people have no choice but to drink it. Bottled water is way beyond their means. The rain water is probably the best water in Honduras but this is only available in the rainy season, which starts in May and should finish in September. In the dry season water can become in very short supply, forcing many people to resort to water drawn straight from the rivers.

You can be in a very nice house with showers, sinks and toilet but it is your lucky day if water comes out of the tap! A relatively few more fortunate people can avoid this problem by constructing a water header tank. Generally, one considers it fortunate if the household possess a barrel or bucket of water nearby with a small bowl floating in it. This is used to flush the toilet and to wash your hands. Toilet paper cannot be flushed down the toilet as the sewage system cannot cope. Similarly, many people use septic tanks, which cannot cope with the toilet paper either. It is not as bad as it sounds and by the time you fly home you continue to look for the bin in which to place the toilet paper! The converse is also true. First thing in the morning, before you are fully awake, you wonder how much toilet paper can go down the toilet before you block the whole area. Fortunately we

didn't hit the maximum that the sewage system could take. Whew!!

Returning to the topic of water, we felt some areas were making progress, as they have started to stone filter the water and add chlorine. This is done at village level. However, it is only a step forward if properly maintained. In one village, if the supply of chlorine runs out none is put in the water. Sadly, when this happens, no one is told! So generally, the water is somewhat better in quality but unreliable. We visited a school that had a good water supply, which was chlorinated. While there, we were told that the water had recently been tested. The result revealed the sample to be 98% contaminated. Faeces were also found in the sample! The teacher was understandably concerned. As the school had both a good water supply and electricity, we purchased a UV light water filter for them. The school had the filter fitted the next day, probably by a volunteered Dad! They now have clean drinking water which they collect for drinking and cooking. (This particular unit was presented to Pedrigal School in memory of Jane Innes late husband). We also feed the children at this school.

News travels fast! It seems some of the other teachers have now heard about the UV light water filters, resulting in our receipt of several requests for them. In the past we have had difficulty in persuading the beneficiaries of UV filters to get them fitted. This time I advised them that they could only have a filter if it was fitted and a photo of it given to me before we left Honduras. The effect was magical everywhere. Where they received a filter, it was fitted next day and photos delivered to us. This gives an idea of how valuable they view a filter.

### AQUA FILTER PUMPS

The UV style filters, although very effective, are quite expensive to purchase and need ongoing maintenance in the form of new filter elements and UV bulbs. Aqua box has recently developed an aqua filter pump designed for use by families. This passes water through a membrane by means of a bicycle type tyre pump. The resulting water is of drinking quality. We have been offered some of these pumps at a cost of £20 each. They have a minimum life of four years and I expect, with loving care, some will last longer. This amounts to £5 a year to provide a small school or several families with safe drinking water. These pumps could provide a much needed resource in Honduras, especially in the mountains, where the people have to use surface water some of the year. Without electricity, some of these areas cannot have a UV light filter system, which we have provided for some schools.

We will be selling gift cards to help fund this project. Maybe it offers an idea for Christmas gifts or for those occasions when you need to give a gift to people who really have everything.

### LIVING AT THE BOTTOM OF THE HEAP

Some of the people I met in Honduras had a great impact on me. They lived in such poverty, some not knowing if they were going to eat that day or not. Most of their homes barely had walls and roofs. I found it hard to come to terms with the difficulties that these people face, every day, just to ensure that their families had enough to eat and to keep a roof over their heads. I have an enduring image in my head of remote houses set in rural villages with little in the way of community buildings around them. Most of the homes are made of pieces of wood, cardboard, awnings and scraps of other materials. Some are built out of mud and sticks and others of adobe blocks (mud mixed with pine needles so that the blocks will last longer). Nearly all the houses we visited had uneven mud floors and tin roofs held down by rocks. Cooking was done outside on an open wood stove. The luckier ones had a “pila”, a large concrete sink to store water. These people did not have access to even the most basic services, like water, sanitation, electricity and medical facilities. The people without land on which to build a home are obliged to rent property, or care-take other people’s property, in exchange for somewhere to stay. Both of these alternatives have drawbacks, especially for single women and their children, as there is no security and they are under constant threat of eviction.

In the cities, the poor fare little better. There are whole communities of overcrowded ghettos stacked high on the hillside, with landslide or flooding a constant threat. Many of the houses are less than 5 metres square, divided into two rooms by old curtains or sacking. Such a home is likely to be shared by two complete families and their animals.

I saw first-hand the poverty and hardship that many people have to endure but I also saw hope and a great spirit. On the whole, their wealth is measured by what they have spiritually and not what they own materially. It has been such a privilege to see the work that Jennifer and her supporters have been doing for the past 38 years. I hope all the things that CH Trust has achieved will be enjoyed by the Honduran people for generations to come. They deserve it. Jenny Smith.

## IHER RADIO EDUCATION SCHEME

IHER is a government approved charity that provides secondary education opportunities for 13-16 years. This is the age when they should be doing this level of education. In reality many are attending these classes well into their twenties. This happens because of absences due to lack of money and time. Education in Honduras takes many different forms. Various educational programmes are conceived to try and reach children who need to work in order to eat and also those from the rural areas, who do not have local secondary education available. These circumstances present a big problem for an under resourced educational system.

IHER reaches the students via radio programmes during the week and local classes, which the pupils can attend at weekends. Many will walk for miles to attend. In one mountain area the children walk for four hours each way to weekend secondary education. This is often in the scorching heat, or storm rain and mud, depending on the season. Many have to work very hard to get the education they want.

Valle de Angeles is the location for one of the IHER project meeting places. It meets in the old school that was closed down after hurricane Mitch and is no longer considered a suitable building. This gives you an idea of the quality of the building that they are trying to work within. The staff outlined two projects they wanted to achieve. One was a science class, which would need more science equipment and some work on the classroom. We have previously helped them with some very basic science equipment, which was lent to them long term from CH Trust. They were so thrilled with the help that they fund raised until they could buy a second-hand wooden cabinet to store these precious supplies. The students have very little capability to contribute towards buying any equipment as IHER is providing only for those from very poor homes.

The other project was the installation of two toilets. The building complex already provides two toilets, one for men and one for women, which demand payment for their use. This is a situation that IHER cannot alter. Many of their students cannot afford to pay for this basic need. Even the lads cannot easily find some bushes as the building is in the middle of a busy tourist village. The girls have no chance. Neither are there any public toilets in the village.

We asked what they considered to be their most pressing project. Their answer was the toilets. CH Trust is able to supply them with the two toilets required and



wash basins. However, they need to build a block structure to house them and connect to the existing water and sewage system. If we could make this happen for them no charge would be made for the use of the toilets, now or in the future.

## HELP FOR THE HUNGRY

We sometimes wonder what we fancy to eat for the next meal. The people we are trying most to help wonder if there will be a next meal. It is indeed a different world to what we experience in England. We happened to be in Honduras shortly after the new seasons maize crop had been planted, last month, to coincide with the start of the rainy season. Maize is a protected species, which provides the staple food of the country. This means that we are not able to send this out in the containers, as seed.

In spite of the emotional stress, it was a privilege to help with the distribution of some of the food, vitamins and other items that CH Trust sent for the children. Most of our Honduran helpers try to feed the food directly to the children. However, there are situations where giving food to the family is also required. We were involved with two of these. The first was when we visited the mountain school of Guanacaste. This is a very special village for CH Trust. It was here where we placed our first generator and started adult literacy and senior education. Education had been beyond the reach of nearly all in this village as the children had to work in the fields with their parents in order to buy enough food to feed the family. The generator allowed the students to study into the late afternoon after work. In the village of Guanacaste there is little or no work for six months of the year. The villagers are currently waiting for the sugar harvest, in December, when there will be work in the fields harvesting the sugar cane and work in the local sugar factory. During the three months up to February, the people will work 24/7. During our visit we gave out a black sack of essential supplies to the most needy of the families who were called out by name. It contained about a kilo of rice, oats, pasta, flour, and a smaller bag of beans and milk. This would help to feed them for some time, as they make the food last for as long as possible.

The other occasion was when a trip was made to the Lenca tribes. These are an indigenous tribe from Honduras who live high in the mountains in the La Paz area. They get little or no help as they are very difficult to reach. Jenny and I did not go on this trip. We delegated this trip to our younger and fitter visitors, Jenny Smith's son, Matt, and his girlfriend, Danielle. They left at 3.30am in the morning and returned at 9.30pm. The journey was long and hard. They had to walk the last hour carrying the supplies. They brought back photos, video and

many touching stories. Every child and adult is living below the international poverty level and the children, in particular, suffer badly from malnutrition. They came across one four year old child who did not have the strength to stand. They gave out bags of food to the people who came to meet them. At the end, the visit became rather distressing because they had run out of bags of food to give out, while a large number of people were still eagerly waiting their turn to receive help.



**- PASTA IS SERVED IN MONTE VERDE -**

We also saw our food being eaten by children from toddler age up to teenagers in college. The little ones often started the day without any food and too often had little or nothing else for the rest of the day. We visited a day centre for under sixes, which served single mums who needed to go out to work. Again we believe that this facility is means tested, so only the poorest children attend. We saw toddlers in cots getting a small amount of breakfast cereal from a worker. She used the same spoon for each child. We looked on with our mouths open at this practice, which now seems so foreign in this country. Also, at the small amount of food that everyone survives upon from toddlers to adults.

Some of the teenagers, who had to travel to college, were faced with the dilemma of choosing between paying the bus fare across the capital, which is too far to walk, or something to eat. They did not have enough money for both.

One of the food items we send out is oats. These are used to make a nice drink with floating bits. It is made with water, oats and sugar, often served warm from the stove. Up north, where the temperature was in the 30's, they served it chilled. The most valued item and the most expensive, is our dried full cream milk. This tastes sweet and creamy and is full of goodness. Everyone asked for more and had to be told that we can only afford to send four tons, to be divided between all, which costs us nearly £8000.

## — VISITING THE LENCA IN LA PAZ —

Our trip to visit the Lencas began early, with a 3.30 am start to the day. As the sun was rising we noted that we had already been on the road for a few hours. The pickup must have looked like the strangest vehicle on the Pan American Highway with such an assortment of goods stacked on it. The night before we had packed the truck high with essential food items, clothes, shoes, stationery and mattresses.

The Lenca are an indigenous community of people living in the Department of La Paz, on the border with El Salvador. Cesar first visited the Lenca people this year on a trip made with his friend Elmer, who works in the First Lady's office. According to Cesar many of the Lenca communities are so close to the border that they do not know if they are Honduran or El Salvadoran.

We had spent the previous two evenings bagging much needed basic food items: 2 pounds of rice, beans, milk, oats, pasta and coffee were divided up to present to needy families on the journey. However, knowing as we do of the "jungle telegraph", we loaded several sacks and buckets of rice, pasta, flour and oats on the pickup to divide amongst the extra families who would inevitably turn up as news spread.

We arrived in the communities around 11am to be greeted by lots of children at merienda (break) time. We distributed lots of "Brakes" biscuits, shoes, dolls, exercise books and stationery to smiling children. It all became rather overwhelming once shoe fitting commenced!

Medical supplies were also provided to a rural health centre - including much needed fibre drinks (suitable for malnourished children), vitamins and bandages. Blankets were also greatly appreciated since in La Paz it can get quite chilly in the hours of darkness.

Matt and I were horrified to hear that, in this region of the country, children had been dying from starvation - being so far from the capital. This zone appears to have

very little government presence. According to the World Food Programme in 2010, Honduras had the second highest child malnutrition rate in Central America. We were introduced to a mother with two small children. One little girl looked no more than 18 months old, when in fact she was four and so malnourished that she was unable to walk. Her little brother also appeared much younger than his 18 months.

With just one truck (crammed to the brim!), we had enough goods to distribute amongst 2 schools, one community and one health centre. Although almost everyone we saw received something from England, we just scratched the surface of some very needy communities.

We arrived back at 10pm absolutely exhausted both physically and emotionally (with an empty truck!). Thanks to the generous donations, we can continue to make a difference where it is so greatly needed and put smiles on faces.

Matt and Dani



**- LENCA VILLAGE RECEIVING BAGS OF FOOD -**

## TOOLS OF THE TRADE

We continue to send out as many plastic bowls, beakers, spoons and forks as we can. However, it seems to be an ongoing need. Even though we think that we have supplied most of Honduras, yet we still came across many situations where they desperately needed our dishes and beakers. I guess fingers will work at any stage. The children were being fed everywhere we visited but they do need a bowl and beaker to receive the food. We visited one small school where the children had arrived for our visit, as it was the time of a week's holiday from school. Some of the pupils, as well as mums and preschool children arrived. The older children sat down to a pasta meal and an oat drink. There were five small children who had nothing to eat or drink as they were not of school age and did not have a dish or beaker, even though there was food available. We felt very sorry for these little ones, as they watched their older siblings eating. A little while later a mother arrived carrying some supplies from home. The children were then able to join in with the meal. We saw boys with Barbie pink princess dishes but they did not mind. After all they held food. We have several ministries who hope to provide food for children in the future but need these items as well. You may ask why they cannot bring them from home. The answer is that they probably only have one bowl each at home and no means of replacing them if lost, or left at school, or at the feeding centre. So, they need our input.

## DINA'S EXPERIENCE

In the wake of a visit to Sauce, Dina from Cristo Centro, Tegucigalpa, passed on the following observation. She wrote:

*"We could see tears in the eyes of a very old lady called Doña Amalia, to who we had given some food. She told us that, that day she had nothing to give to her grandchildren to eat. All they could have done would be to cut down a few mangoes from the tree. Now, with what had been given, she could go home to prepare something for them.*

*There was also a baby vaccination day in the Health Centre. Here they had been able to give food and baby clothes to mothers and other patients waiting to be seen, many of whom came from the nearby mountains where they live. Some people wondered why this aid came from so far away. I could only answer that God moves hearts to bless us from anywhere in the world. I called them to thank Him and pray for the families who made these donations possible."*

## BEARING FRUIT

The trees that we have planted in schools over the last two years are doing well. We have, as a result, been asked for more funding to increase the scope of this project. The aim of growing trees in these establishments is twofold. Firstly, to teach children how to tend the plants. Secondly, via the dining room, to provide long-term food for the children in school.

Several varieties of orange, plum, nectarines, mango and cashews have been planted, which will probably fruit at slightly different times. Although fruit is grown in Honduras it is too expensive for those with little money. Therefore, the children from poor homes lack fruit in their diet. The trees we have already planted will provide a continual source of free fruit for many years. So far, we have been able to plant trees in four different schools. Now more schools want to join in this project of learning and eating.

Luis, one of the teachers at Vicente College remarked that “It is important not to give, give, give but to develop projects which encourage the students to help themselves and their families, like the tree and chicken projects”

## THE £50 SPONSORSHIP SCHEME

All 11 ministries taking part in the sponsorship scheme have sent their sincere gratitude to all our kind and generous donors. They have all expressed the view that, without this input, many children would not have the opportunity to go to school at all. Most of these families only earn between 20-30 Lps per day (less than £1). This has to feed an entire family, when food and other essentials cost more in Honduras than here in the UK. When food security is so often threatened by lack of employment, people are forced to prioritize the immediate need to feed their family above the education of the next generation. Our recent visit has shown that once again the sponsorship scheme has proved very popular and successful in Honduras; so much so, that we have been asked for a further 35 scholarships for the youngsters who attend schools in the rural mountain communities. Can you help towards this new target?

At this time of year we are considering sponsorship for 2012. The earlier we can send donations to Honduras, December at the latest, the more time our co-workers have to source and make up the necessary fabric for the uniforms, fit the youngsters with shoes, purchase manuals and stationery, ready for February when the new school year starts. This task often falls to the Pastor's wives and,



**- WE'VE GOT RUCKSACKS FROM ENGLAND -**

with no ASDA or Tesco's to rely on, it means a dedicated trip to the city to find suitable fabric and supplies.

For our new readers, the £50 sponsorship provides a child with uniform, shoes, trainers, school bag, school manual (in Spanish) and sufficient equipment to attend a state school for one year. (There is a £25 half-sponsorship option also available where CH Trust matches 2 sponsors to provide a child with a full year's education). If anyone would like further information there is an introductory news-sheet which we would be pleased to forward to you.

Finally, the following is a quote from one of the administrators of the sponsorships "Your help has awakened a desire for education and the students are prepared to work hard, because they recognize that an education, unlike so many things in their lives, once gained cannot be taken away." This reminded me of a quote from my days at school, "Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire." Well, I am happy to report that, despite the everyday hardships the children face, the fire is burning brightly in the many Honduran schools we visited. Thank you for helping CH Trust to make it a reality for so many children.

If you would like to sponsor the education of a child, we would very much like to hear from you. The contact details are on the front cover of this newsletter.

Can any cheques please be made payable to “CH Trust”? There are two options available, sponsorship for a full year, cost £50, or a half year option for £25.

Jenny Smith

### **BATTLING WITH DIABETES**

Many people in Honduras suffer from diabetes. One of the side effects is leg ulcers that will not heal. In Honduras, the main medical response to this is amputation. As you can imagine many grandmas suffer badly. Many of them are the sole carers for children. We can do little to improve the situation but we could bring some comfort with dressings and support stockings, if there are any available. Second hand support stockings are acceptable. We were given some specific dressings which we took to Honduras in our luggage. We gave them to a lady called Chella, who took them to help some of the suffering ladies. George, in Honduras, has recently written to us to say that Chella has done a great job with the dressings. He tells us, “Dear old souls are making hazardous journeys down the mountains to see the new “couradora,” in Naranjal!! The dressings worked wonders. Within days old weeping wounds were skinning over and the ladies thrilled with the results. Thank you for your concern, we do appreciate it.” Are there any more of these dressings that we can send to help the ladies?

### **HEAVENLY SLUMBER**

We were present when four single mattresses were given out at two mountain schools. The mattresses in question had previously been resident in a cruise ship that had now been refurbished. They were supplied to us by “givingworldonline.com”. The teachers are often able to point out real need amongst their pupils, as they have close contact in their small communities and know who would make the best use of our limited supplies. The first two mattresses were given out at Chiquistepe School, where they were seen disappearing down the mountain on dad’s head. The next two were given out at Sabaneta School. One was given to a grandmother, who was the sole carer for her grandson. We delivered this one for her. The other we delivered to a house where the children were sleeping on a very thin piece of foam. The nine year old boy was ecstatic with the thought of a real mattress. He said he had dreamed of having one for a long time. He would not have this mattress to himself but would share it with several other siblings. He lives in a wooden plank house. We met the teacher a week later. She reported that the mattresses had been such a success that the children of the two families had not turned in for school next day. The new mattresses had a greater attraction than school! We take such things for granted.



## **WINDUP LAMPS AND TORCHES**

This year the villages of El Guayabo, Buena Vista and some of the Lenca tribe will receive lamps and torches. We need to send more next year for other Lenca tribe villages. The gift of a lamp is so important to these families because it extends their working day and costs nothing to use. I often think how difficult it must be for a mother to tend a sick child in the pitch black of a Honduran night or for a family member to find their way outside to the latrine. We buy these in bulk at the end of the year. Wind up torches can often be found in Poundland.

## **JEANS RULE OK!**

My packers often complain that the goal posts keep moving when it comes to selecting what to send and what to reject. This is because things change in Honduras along with our understanding of what is needed most. As our understanding develops we alter what we are trying to send. We have discovered that the Honduras government has made a very sensible decision to allow boys to wear jeans for school instead of formal school trousers. This is very good news as they cost half the price and last twice as long. This change of policy does not seem to extend to all schools but a significant proportion is electing to adopt jeans.

Here in England, children's jeans can be purchased from the large supermarkets, ranging from £3 to £4. We need ages six to fifteen. If anyone wants to help a child attend school, this would be a good purchase. They start school at the age of six. Whatever we send will fit someone! Will this be a jean year?

## **OTHER CLOTHING NEEDS**

Black shoes of any description, second hand, new, even plimsolls allow children to access school.

The white or blue school shirts help to achieve the same. They do not seem to have a preference for long or short sleeves so, if we are buying; we purchase whatever is going out of season in England that offers a good reduction in price.

Dark blue is still the main school colour for skirts and dresses. In the mountain areas where the schools are smaller any matching uniform seems to be acceptable. Some schools give us their lost property or collect the out grown school uniforms. This gives a complete uniform for a school even if it is bright red sweat shirts.

Pants are needed, especially for the girls. We rarely get them second hand. Underclothes are very much valued, especially for the older girls. They have also asked for bras for the older girls.

All children's clothes are needed. Boys and baby clothes are the most expensive to buy, even second hand, as boys pass little on after they have played in clothes. It is a hot country so no thick coats or tights please. So far we have had very few clothes this year.

School uniforms are also needed and prized by the children. A 7 year old girl wrote "When I get home from school, I take off my school uniform and hang it up before I help my Mum with the work in the house" Many children are attending school because they have received uniform from England. Does a school near you have lost property that could be donated to us, rather than throwing it away at the end of the year?

### SHOES, WELLINGTONS AND FLIP-FLOPS

This was often the next most requested item after food. Footwear in Honduras is very expensive and of poor quality. A pair of UK second hand shoes has lasted for over four years, being handed down through the family. We were told a pair of new Honduran shoes would only last three months. No wonder ours are in such demand. Black shoes or pumps will allow a child to go to school. Wellingtons preserve the precious school shoes during the rainy season when tracks become thick mud. Flip flops can cope with most types of weather and are worn by many, since they are the cheapest form of footwear available. Any footwear is better than none because they protect the feet. We saw one boy with one bare foot and one with a sock covering an oozing sore.

Wellington and walking boots, in particular, are very practical for negotiating the thick mud which makes up the paths to school during the rainy season. They are also a fashion item for some who live in the city, as wellingtons are not too common, especially when they are in the nice bright colours for the tots. Charity shops and stalls can be good for those.

As always, the second hand clothes and shoes are greatly in demand. We have made a slow start this year with these two items. We hope to get more coming in later or the children in Honduras are going to be disappointed.

Please note that we are no longer able to accept the Oxfam square style jumpers

or knitted teddies.

## COMBS AND BRUSHES

We are educating the children to brush and comb their hair thoroughly each day as an aid to reducing head lice, which are prolific in Honduras. Good combing and brushing can stop the lice from breeding. This only works if the children have a brush or comb at home to use. Can we help to provide some?

**Towels and bedding** including blankets, knitted or ordinary, are needed in the high mountain areas.

## SCHOOLS AND KINDER

**Each child to attend school needs:-** a rucksack, black shoes, paper pad or exercise books, pens, pencil, felt pens or crayons, 30 cm ruler, rubber and pencil sharpener. The older children need a compass, protractor and set square.

### SCHOOL NEEDS

There is so little in their classrooms that it is difficult to know where to start with a wish list. Obviously they need basic items, sugar paper, marker pens, white board pens, blackboards, white boards, chalk, liquid paint, paper, exercise books or reporters pads (the cheapest). They also need equipment for the more specialised lessons.

- **School Supplies** eg. Pens, pencils, felt pens, erasers, pencil sharpeners, calculators, compasses, protractors, set squares, pencil cases etc.
- **Paper** is very expensive, so reporter's pads or exercise books are a great help to families. They also need individual glue sticks or containers of glue.
- **For science;** test tubes, thermometers, beakers, flasks, mesh and gauze for bunsen burners, tripods for burners, magnifying glass, magnets, prisms, lenses, laboratory weighing machines for chemicals, microscopes, prepared microscope slides, basic electronics material, etc.
- **The schools also like our wall charts and posters.** Sometimes you can find them in Spanish in some of the shops. If they are in English they cover the writing over with Spanish. They also like pictures of animals and plants that they can display or cut up. Old calendars are good for this.
- **Craft resources** such as artist paint brushes, embroidery silks, large hole needles and other sewing needs, etc.
- **Football** make for great playtimes, great gifts for the boys as well as the old favourite, marbles.
- **Football boots** are a real treat.

- **Skipping ropes** are popular with the girls. Also **dolls**, baby or Barbie are greatly loved by the girls.

Modest resources such as these can facilitate exciting lessons for children only used to chalk and talk.

- **Black and white boards** are still being requested by the schools.
- **Recorders** are an item asked for by many schools. They have recorder groups but lack enough recorders for the children. **Guitars** are also needed.
- **Inexpensive digital watches** for the older children.

**Large saucepans**, jam pans or pressure cooker bases. These are needed for cooking lunch in the schools.

### **BABY BAGS**

One item that was mentioned by several ministries was the baby bags. These are made by several groups of ladies, as well as individuals across England. The cloth bag is slightly smaller than a pillow case and contains baby clothes, petroleum jelly, baby blanket, towel, soap and any extra's for a new baby. Everyone says what a joy it is to see a new mum's face when she receives a bag for her baby. In terms of clothing, babies get very little attention in a poor family. It is the growing children who need the few resources that are available for clothing. To be given pretty clothes and necessities that they would never be able to afford is such a blessing that many mothers are reduced to tears. As you might expect, we have been asked for more. The clothes do not have to be new and a second hand towel would also be good. An item of clothing in the next size, or maybe a small toy, could be added. Everyone makes them slightly different. Is there anyone else that would like to make a baby bag for a new mum?

**The family bags** also continue to be popular. They contain a towel, toothpaste, several toothbrushes and soap, petroleum jelly, comb or brush. A toy, pen or pencil can also be included.

### **VITALITE**

Has anyone got any of the round plastic tubs that originally contained Vitalite margarine, before they changed to a more modern style? We sent some to a soup kitchen to use as bowls about five years ago and they are still working well. They said that they are better than any bowls we can buy! Are there any languishing in your cupboard that we can send?

## MOSQUITO NETS

Malaria and dengue fever are a seasonal hazard in Honduras. The poorest houses are those that need a net the most, as the wooden and cardboard walls do not seal against insects. The family size net is needed to cover both double and single beds, as they usually have several people sleeping in them.

£5 can purchase a family mosquito net which will be given to a family who cannot afford to buy one to protect their children in Honduras. Malaria is not a great problem in most of the country but Dengue Fever is. This is spread by mosquitoes, especially in the rainy season. If you would like to contribute, we will be sending in a 'bulk' order for mosquito nets before Christmas. We would also appreciate the donation of any nets that are now surplus to requirements. Cards are being sold to raise money for this project.

## CHICKEN WIRE

Several schools will need chicken wire to form a fence around the school property. In the places where we have planted trees, without a fence, the ground is seen as open ground and anything planted there can be harvested by anyone. With a fence in place, even though it would be easy to climb over, the plants will be respected as private. So this is the first need, to fence the schools boundary.

## SNOW CHAINS

Does anyone have any that they can donate or something that would do the same job of helping to get vehicles up the mountains through thick mud?

## TARPAULINS

Three ministries have asked for tarpaulins for their children's work. These are needed more against the sun than the rain. Many of the children are fed outside but the sun, through the clear air, is very strong and very hot. They really need the old fashioned canvas tarpaulins, as the modern plastic type will only last about three months due to the destructive power of the sun's UV rays. The modern type is good for keeping rain out of vulnerable homes.

## LADDERS

Several of our ministries in Honduras have asked for a ladder to aid decorating and maintenance.

## **PERSONAL WATER BOTTLES**

Children need these to take a drink of water to school, or into the field when working with their parents.

## **PLASTIC SHEETING**

We are looking out for plastic sheeting or large plastic bags, the sort in which new mattresses or suites can be wrapped. These are needed for wrapping and protecting the mattresses that we send out to Honduras. In Honduras, mattresses are an expensive item that will often only be acquired through inheritance. Many poor families sleep on cardboard or whatever else they can find to make a base. It is our desire that any mattresses we send arrive in the best condition possible. To achieve this we need to keep them dry and clean in transit. We have observed that the mattresses we have sent are often found, years later, in homes with the plastic covering still in place! This is because they are keen to keep their prized mattresses in good condition for as long as possible.

## **SPECIALIST ITEMS**

### **ROTAVATOR**

We sent four 8 horsepower petrol rotavators. These were asked for to help turn the ground, which is often very hard due to lack of water and the baking sun. Large areas of land are hard to till with only a spade or fork. We have sent them to areas where the students are working to provide food for the dining room. We have since been asked for more, especially from the Orphanage, which has over 50 acres of land that is gradually being brought into cultivation. Small domestic rotavators are not capable of performing this task.

### **PETROL STRIMMERS**

These have been requested to cut down the grasses and weeds that grow prolifically during the rainy season. When the rains end, these weeds dry and become a fire hazard, threatening crops and buildings. Again small domestic trimmers are not suitable for the scale of this task. Electric powered tools, again, are not suitable because of the lack of electricity supply and, where available, the supply standard (i.e. 110 Volts, 60 Hz). The trimmer type which uses metal cutters, rather than consumable chords, is preferred because obtaining replacement chord is likely to be a problem in Honduras.

## RECYCLE

We raised £2000 last year from recycle. This paid for a ton of full cream dried milk. We are continuing with the scheme. We want all clothes, shoes, bedding and curtains. The good items that are not suitable for Honduras are sold. Those items that are well past their best are made into rags.

## PROBLEMS AT THE MILL!

Once again we ran into problems with Packing Week. This year, I found packing week to be very long and demanding. It seems to be getting harder each year. The situation was aggravated by some people, who felt they needed to bring in items the week before. The result was that I had to go up to the unit every day of that previous week to meet different people bringing items to the unit. Added on top of everything else I am required to do at this time, I finished up being exposed to an unacceptable level of stress that I cannot afford to repeat. Outside of Packing Week, I have to insist that deliveries can only be made on Tuesdays, prior to packing week, or a Saturday, if we are working that day in advance of packing week. This may seem un-cooperative but it is coming to be a matter of survival. As packing week is approached the work load also increases with lots of paper work, bidding for items, arranging import and export as well as the obvious sorting and packing. Unless we can improve the situation I will not manage to cope with sending containers for another four years. So, to those who are affected please accept my plea that you organize your plans around these constraints.

## 2015 - THE LAST CONTAINERS TO HONDURAS

After much thought and prayer, with the agreement of the trustees and members of CH Trust, I have decided to make 2015 the last year for sending containers to Honduras. We are all getting older and the work involved in sending the containers becomes harder each year. We decided that an orderly finish date, which everyone can plan for, both in England and Honduras, is the correct way to proceed. I know that terminating this part of our work will be very hard for so many of us, including myself. By 2015, I will have been sending to Honduras for 42 years. Many of you have also been involved for twenty years or more.

CH Trust **will** continue and so will the sponsorship of the children, as this can be done from home. We will also finance projects through the excellent people we have on the ground in Honduras. Life will go on!

## GIFT CARDS OPTIONS FOR AN ALTERNATIVE PRESENT

The cards feature a large format photo on the front and will cover the cost of various options as listed:

£5 buys a bag of food for a needy family at Christmas

£5 buys a family size mosquito net.

£5 buys two trees and some fertilizer for a school

£5 provides two manuals for a college student (four per year are needed)

£7 provides a wind up lamp for a family without electricity

£10 provides both a windup lamp and torch

£20 provides five chickens and a cockerel for a family

£20 buys an aqua filter pump for a family providing clean drinking water

**2012 Calendars** are again on sale at £5. Postage is an extra 92p for one and £1.23 for two or three.

The calendars feature a different large colour photo each month. All of the money goes to buy rice to feed children through the schools and feeding centres.

Cheques should be made payable to CH Trust and sent with orders to Mrs J Cox, 20 Chapel Street, Spondon, Derby DE21 7JP. Donations the same.

## DATES FOR 2012

**Receiving Week - February 11<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>** excluding Sunday

**Loading Day – Saturday, 24<sup>th</sup> March**



**- CARRYING DONATIONS HOME -**