

Tuesday, August 12, 2014

## **2 More Communities Complete Their Projects – Hacienda de Pena Blanca and Ex Hacienda de Jesus**

Lotus Humanitarian Aid Foundation and SAPASMA  
Jointly Fund Cistern Projects in

Ex Hacienda de Peña Blanca and Ex Hacienda de Jesus  
With A Little Help From Their Friends  
CEDESA & San Miguel Midday Rotary Club

In March of 2014, Lotus Humanitarian Aid Foundation (LOTUS) and SAPASMA (Sistema de Agua Potable Y Alcantarillado de San Miguel de Allende) agreed to fund a project for construction of 18 water harvesting systems in the San Miguel community of Ex-Hacienda de Pena Blanca (XHPB). The Midday Rotary Club of San Miguel de Allende agreed to manage the project for the benefit of the donors.

XHPB had no local water source other than a much polluted, mostly dry, riverbed. They depended solely upon sporadic delivery of water trucks from the municipality which often left the whole community without safe water for weeks at a time. An agreement to split the anticipated cost of the project 1:1 was made between LOTUS and SAPASMA. The proposed budget was \$165,909.00 pesos for the Pena Blanca project. (See appendix.)

Simultaneously Rotary San Miguel Midday (RSMM) was asked to manage a pilot project of two cisterns in the community of Ex-Hacienda de Jesus (XHJ) in the municipality of San Diego Union. The budget for those two cisterns was \$23,290.00 pesos. (See appendix.)

LOTUS sent US\$8000.00 to RSMM project checking account in San Antonio, Texas. That money was transferred by wire to the RSMM project account at Bancomer in San Miguel de Allende on April 22. A total of \$103,360.00 pesos was received and it was allocated: \$17,047.72 for XHJ and \$86,312.28 for XHPB. SAPASMA agreed to fund its half of the project by providing materials “in-kind”.

Members of the RSMM project team were Lee Carter, Alejandro Guerra and David Hartman. Centro de Desarrollo Agropecuario AC (CEDESA), once again agreed to be the RSMM partner organization to manage these projects. CEDESA’s team included Chela Martinez, Holly Yasui, Saul Juarez C., and Benigno Caltzonzin.

RSMM visited the XHJ organizational meeting with CEDESA and began to manage the financial aspects of the project at that point. CEDESA was responsible for meetings, teaching the citizens to construct cisterns and coordinating the delivery of construction materials.

In this simultaneous project it was planned that LOTUS would fund two cisterns and that the local community would try to raise funds to complete two more cisterns. The original first LOTUS cistern was planned to be at the elementary school in XHJ but the participants have been unable to obtain permission from the school administrators to put the cistern on school property.

Because of this, the materials for the first “LOTUS cistern” were moved to the community of Adjuntas de San Jose.

A "second" cistern was completed through using community funds in the community of San Cayetano and there are independent funds available to do the original first school cistern should permission ever be obtained. The two pilot cisterns were built by a group of about 25 persons in XHJ and this portion of the project was completed May. Payment records are available on the shared Google Document.

The XHPB project began with CEDESA organized community meetings, attended by RSMM, in which the 17 families were self-selected through their participation and work with the Regional Citizens' Council (COCIRA). They divided themselves into three work groups who would send representatives to learn the construction process (kind of "train the trainer") as a cistern was built at the Kinder (kindergarten) in Pena Blanca. On most days that we visited, there were between 13 and 15 persons at the Kinder doing the work.

The roof of the Kinder was old clay "tejas" and it was determined that ½ of this roof needed to be changed to galvanized metal to assure best sanitation procedures. Rotary agreed to fund this out of project contingency funds by foregoing part of the administrative funds set aside for RSMM in the budget.

The community's parents decided amongst themselves that they would self-fund the other ½ of the roof and they purchased and installed the materials to accomplish that. A good cooperative start made for an auspicious beginning.

Upon completion of the pilot cistern, CEDESA and RSMM coordinated the delivery of materials for the rest of the cisterns from our normal suppliers and directly from SAPASMA. This created extra coordination and minor difficulties, but the donation of ½ of the total cost of the project in materials from SAPASMA has made us optimistic re possibility of the current administration of SAPASMA to partner with RSMM in future projects, (we have successfully partnered with Sapasma with past administrations, & this is the first one with the current administration).

Because of economies that we were able to achieve in the materials cost, we were able to add a 19th cistern to the project, at the local primary school. We were very pleased this worked out as the children at both schools had no safe water supply available.

Each team of 5 to 6 families began the work of constructing one cistern at each of the family's home. CEDESA representative, Saul Juarez, and the RSMM project team visited the community at least on a weekly basis during the construction process. The 19 cisterns were completed and a celebration was held August 8, 2014 at the community with all involved parties invited to attend.

The final celebration, as always was a joy to attend. More than 100 adults and children were in attendance of which approximately 50 were from the seven COCIRA communities that are on the waiting list for our upcoming projects.

SAPASMA sent the Secretary of the Administrative Board along with two others. CEDESA brought five representatives including Chela Martinez, the Director of CEDESA.

Rotary showed up with nine club members, one wife and two grandchildren. Gary Reid came with us to take photographs of the families, the cisterns and the beautiful Pena Blanca area. After painting the pre-school and a nice closing ceremony, we enjoyed a spectacular fiesta prepared by the families of XHPB. It was a beautiful day and a fitting closing to a successful project.

Of significance, the teacher at the pre-school brought two of the supervisors who oversee most of the schools throughout the various San Miguel communities. We had the opportunity to talk with them about future school projects and particularly working to improve water education with the kids, the teachers and the parents.

#### Appendix -- Financial Notes:

This is a financial summary of the Ex-Hacienda de Pena Blanca project. Details of payments and costs are available on shared Google Docs and all parties to this project have been invited to share and review these documents at their leisure.

1. Project Budget for 18 cisterns: \$165,909.37 (mxn Pesos)
2. One-half of this amount was funded by materials in-kind from SAPASMA. Thus, RSMM was managing LOTUS' portion of \$82,954.69. \$86,312.28 was available after wire transfer expenses.
3. The municipality of San Miguel de Allende provided "pipas" (water trucks) needed to mix cement) weekly throughout the project saving approximately \$3,500.00 pesos.
4. With a 19th cistern added to the project, the final cost of the project for LOTUS was 72,058.26. This is \$10,896.43 below the budget.
5. At the request of LOTUS, RSMM will be holding the saved funds to be applied to the next Rotary Water Harvesting Project that is Global Grant #1422619.
6. Also LOTUS funds received for this project were \$86,312.28 when their budgeted portion was \$82,954.69. The extra \$3,357.60 pesos will also be held for the Global Grant.
7. Total LOTUS funds to be applied to GG#1422619 are \$14,254.02 or approximately US\$1,117.96.

Simultaneously Rotary San Miguel Midday (RSMM) was asked to manage a pilot project of two cisterns in the community of Ex-Hacienda de Jesus (XHJ) in the municipality of San Diego Union. The budget for those two cisterns was \$23,290.00 pesos.

- 1 Project Budget for 2 cisterns: \$23,290.00.(mxn pesos)
- 2 Project Expenses paid in cash by LOTUS directly to CEDESA: \$6,395.00
- 3 Allocated funds to this project from LOTUS Foundation donation: \$17,047.72.
- 4 The final cost of the project for LOTUS was \$21,472.40. This is \$1,817.60 below the budget.
- 5 At the request of LOTUS, RSMM will be holding the saved funds (and overfunded amount) to be applied to the next Rotary Water Harvesting Project that is Global Grant #1422619.
- 6 Total LOTUS funds to be applied to GG#1422619 are \$1,970.32 or approximately US\$154.53.

THEREFORE: Total funds carry forward from both projects combined: US\$1,272.49.

Report submitted by Lee Carter - RSMM