

May 2006 Adventures

We thought we would begin this month by sharing with you some of the issues with money, and the difference in what a worker receives in Paraguay vs. the United States. May 1st is Labor Day here in Paraguay. It is customary to have an asada (meat cooked on the grill). We had an asada for our workers who are building the Susannah Wesley School in Quinta Linea. We bought 15 kilos of beef ribs (\pm 33 pounds) for \$20. The meat was roughly 1/3 bone, 1/3 fat & gristle & 1/3 actual meat. We fed about 30 people. Sounds like a great deal? On another note, four of our pastors asked us to buy them a new Bible while we were in Asunción. They paid for the Bibles out of their own pockets, which cost around \$25 each, which is equivalent to 4 days wages. How much is 4 days pay in the US? At \$20 per hour it comes to about \$640. Feeding our bodies for as little as possible always sounds good; but would you pay 4 days wages to feel your soul? Think about it.

Now for the resolution of the Y'Apy well problem from last month – the pump we had put in 18 months ago did burn out. Our supplier had many of that model of pump returned. We replaced the pump with a new one, different model, and they are now back in business! **PTL**

May has been a month to get caught up on projects here at home and official business in Asuncion. All three vehicles needed to have sticker renewals. This seems rather simple, but for the big Mercedes truck, the “rules” have changed each year for the past 3 years. This year, we started at 1 location, and then after 2 different stops, we still had to wait for 15 days to receive the sticker. The Hilux and Land Cruiser went quickly, but all of this has to be done in Asuncion. That has now all been taken care of – at least for another year!

We had our usual medical emergencies to handle. The most severe was a motorcycle accident one of our workers had with a mandioca truck. Elfirio was on his way home after spending the week-end in Santaní. He comes to Santaní every week-end where he is attending college, studying computer science. About 6:00 AM on a Monday morning, he was riding on the shoulder of the road, when the truck stopped directly in front of him. He hit the truck and was badly injured. His liver was damaged, as well as his lungs, his right elbow, jaw, and he lost several teeth. He was transferred to a hospital in Asuncion by ambulance, as injuries as sever as these cannot be handled here in Santaní. His internal injuries were so sever that he underwent three surgeries and received 14 units of blood.



Elfirio is not only a worker at the Susannah Wesley School, but he is also the son of one of our pastors, Rutildo. He is still at a “public” hospital in Asuncion. Rutildo has been staying with him every day since the accident on May 22nd. A family member has to be available to buy all necessary drugs, etc. Nothing is provided by the hospital except a bed (without linens or blankets) and doctors. No medicines, gloves for doctor’s use, needles, etc. – all must be bought by the family. The needed blood for transfusions has been donated by friends and family. However, blood donations from 2 people were “lost”. It seems a family member was not present when the donations were given and the technician sold the blood,

without giving credit to Elfirio. We understand the thieves receive about \$50 for a pint of blood.

The expenses have been tremendous for this family; even though they are at a “public” hospital. The family has sold their cachape (4 wheeled wagon) and 1 of their oxen. This generated \$370. The national church as been supplementing the family with needed funds, as have we with the donations generously provided by you all.

However, we had a good ending to our month. This month we hosted our first team of the year, Memorial UMC from Fernandina Beach, Florida. They were involved with the accident victim, as we’ve been carting family members back and forth from their home in the Yrybucua region to the hospital in Asuncion. They “passed the hat” and collected funds for the family to buy back their cachape and oxen! What a blessing.

We managed to work the team hard again this year. This team started with the first shovel of dirt at the Susannah Wesley School in May, 2005. I think they were impressed with the amount of work that has been done over this past year. They got to do a lot of overhead work, sealing and varnishing the tongue and groove ceilings, as well as varnishing doors, putting plaster on the walls and doing a lot of other odd jobs.



Team with their many new & old friends

All in all, we had a great week and got a lot of work done from just 7 folks. Our next team comes in the middle of June to pick up where Memorial left off.

Next report we’ll let you know how the next group does.

*In His Service,
Ed & Linda Baker*