

**The Humanitarian Project of the
Friendship Force Western North Carolina
Exchange with
Trujillo, Peru
May, 2008**

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In the spring of 2007, the Friendship Force of Western North Carolina Board of Directors expressed the desire that future outbound exchanges, both domestic and international, should incorporate some form of humanitarian project into the exchange. The idea being that future exchanges should be something more than an enjoyable travel experience. In early 2008, the Board went one step further to promote their desire that future exchanges have a humanitarian project as part of an exchange. The Board established a budget item of \$1,000 for each of the next five to six years for Charitable / Humanitarian purposes. The criteria for requesting funds was to further one of the Club's goals: a) *to improve exchanges by including service projects, scholarships for young ambassadors, etc. or b) to Promote international understanding and overcome cultural barriers in local communities.*

When FFWNC was putting together the May 2008 exchange with the Trujillo, Peru club, we broached the idea with Trujillo of doing some form of humanitarian project as part of our exchange. I think their first reaction was "what is this? We've never done this before. Who are those crazy people in the hills of North Carolina?" But they warmed to the idea and began exploring possibilities. Their gratitude is expressed in an e-mail from Roció de Arévalo, the Trujillo Exchange director, which, in part, says:

Regarding the humanitarian project, your efforts will be very well received and it makes me very happy to know that we can count on such wonderful people to bring happiness to those less fortunate as our Peruvian brothers. In the name of our club and me personally, I would like to express our gratitude.

After looking around, the Trujillo club decided on a pre-school / kindergarten for approximately 60 children who, for all practical purposes, have been abandoned by their parents. The school that was selected is in one of the poorest areas of Trujillo, where there is very little in the way of extra money for such luxuries as education. Anything we could do for them would be greatly appreciated.

In the three or four weeks before departure, the 15 Ambassadors going on the exchange set about buying school supplies, teaching materials, clothing and food items. All told, we had around 400 to 500 pounds of these items. At the same time all this was going on, the exchange director made a formal request to the FFWNC Board for \$500 of the 2008 budget for charitable / humanitarian purposes. The Board readily agreed. With that \$500 in hand, an e-mail was sent to all FFWNC club members informing them as to what was happening and what we were trying to do. We also asked for donations from club members to further this effort. We received an additional \$700 from twenty-nine club members. That gave us a total of \$1,200 to take with us to Trujillo for the humanitarian project, PLUS the 400 to 500 pounds of school supplies, clothing, food, etc.

Upon our arrival in Trujillo on Saturday May 3, Roció informed us that in their search for a humanitarian project they came across another school that desperately needed help. This non – denominational school had been founded by a Catholic priest about two years ago because of the

lack of schools in an extremely poor “barrio” just north of Trujillo. The school has about 250 children and receives no assistance from the local government. At lunch time, mothers take turns to come in and prepare lunch for the students, which in many cases may be their only meal of the day. They have many needs, which include,, money for food supplies, for infrastructure, for school supplies, etc. So on their first evening in Trujillo, the Ambassadors agreed to give all the items which they had brought from the U.S.A. to the kindergarten and the \$1,200 in cash to the Corporación de Educación Popular de Huanchaco school.



The next day, together with ten to fifteen Trujillo club members, the Ambassadors visited the kindergarten school. Much to our surprise there were many more than the expected 60 to 65 children. Nevertheless, for the next three hours or so, we set about distributing some 75 crayon boxes, rulers, dozens of books in Spanish, a lot of clothing, candy, some 60 to 70 small tubes of toothpaste and tooth brushes, etc., to all the children. It will be hard to measure the benefits of our efforts, but the smiles on the children’s faces and those of their parents, plus the appreciation and gratitude expressed by the principal, Patricia La Rosa, and the parents made the

effort worthwhile.



The children, Trujillo members & some of the Ambassadors



Patricia de La Rosa

On Wednesday afternoon, we visited the Corporación de Educación Popular de Huanchaco school run by Father Víctor Hugo Tumba Ortiz. We were shown their class rooms with leaky roofs, their kitchen (which was more like a rustic open air grill which uses firewood), the lunch room, etc.



The kitchen



the lunchroom



A leaky classroom

After listening to the Father's needs and wishes, the Ambassadors decided to fund the purchase of some of the materials to put roofs on three of the classrooms. This not only would provide more protection when raining, but also, serve as floors for three new classrooms on a second level. We gave the \$1,200 to Felix Casalino, the Trujillo club president, for the Trujillo club to purchase rebar for the cement roofing. Several weeks later we received photos of the rebar being delivered to the school together with a wonderful e-mail expressing thanks for our efforts.

"I would like to express my gratitude for the help which I have received from you. Felix Casalino has purchased rebar for us with the \$1,200 you left with him. I am very grateful.... With the materials purchased we will begin the construction of the roof and will send you photos of it. The roof will cost approximately \$4,500, but we are sure that we can obtain that additional money. We will begin work on August 4, when the work foreman returns from a trip."

*A big hug,
Father Víctor Hugo Tumba Ortiz
Corporación de Educación Popular de Huanchaco (Trujillo-Perú),*



The Trujillo club was a wonderful host club. Every Ambassador had an outstanding time not only getting to know their host family and other Trujillo club members but also seeing the wonderful sights in and around Trujillo. Roció, as ED, and with her helpers Maruja, Bety and Sandra, amongst others, planned an exciting week for all of us, one that will be truly remembered and treasured. Then, on top of all that, we had the pleasure and enjoyment of helping Peruvian children that needed help.

On behalf of the 15 Ambassadors, I would like to thank the Board of Directors of FFWNC for the \$500.0 contribution, the 29 club member who contributed \$700.00, the Trujillo club, their President Felix Casalino and the ED, Roció de Arévalo, and all their members for making this memorable exchange and humanitarian project achieve the success that it did.

Jack Mullen
FFWNC Exchange Director