

Integrated Solar Cooking in Guatemala

On October 8 Lorna Milligan led a team of 5 (including her) members of the Rotary Club of Fresno on a trip to Guatemala to teach Integrated Solar Cooking to women in the area of Gualan. The other team members were Walt and Diane Parrish, Benta Fries and Kathryn Wage. We were joined by three people from Mexico (Dr. Bricia Cruz, Rotarian, Tere Rodriguez, Wife of Rotarian and Hermino, Rocket Stove maker) who are experienced teachers of solar cooking and are bilingual).

The team was hosted by the Rotary Club of Guatemala City East (Club Rotario de Guatemala del Este). The club president, Ignacio Andrade and the project leader Carlos Galvez treated our group to a tour of museums and a visit to Antigua while we stayed with their families to get oriented. We attended a Rotary Club meeting at their club and were honored for the work we going to undertake. Their club has about 35 members and many are involved in International business or have been to the US. Carlos and Ignacio both attended an American School in Guatemala City and were well versed on our culture and politics.

We left for Gualan, a city of 45,000, to the east in Guatemala on Saturday in two cars. Gualan was described as arid and sunny; it only gets 50 inches of rain each year! It is cattle country with plantations of bananas, pineapple and other tropical crops. We felt as though we were in parts of Hawaii.

Rotarians from the Gualan Rotary Club met us as soon as we arrived to welcome our team. This club has 18 members, was founded 8 years ago, and has 5 matching grants already! They have taken on major projects including building a center for malnourished children, bringing a school up to 21st century standards and delivering a load of wheelchairs. This mighty little club has members who have a can-do attitude and the know-how to create international partnerships that benefit the whole community. Their next endeavor is to create a safe water system in the city.

After a great tour of Mayan ruins and the area called Rio Dulce we were ready to teach solar cooking. We shopped at the Mercado (an indoor permanent farmers market of sorts) and planned the class for the next day. Twenty-three women came to the class (a little late since we were on Guatemalan time). Bricia, a physician from Mexico, talked about nutrition and hygiene while Teri (also from Mexico) taught how to prepare the food to cook. The day was sunny with clouds, but good enough to cook a chicken and prove that the sun really can cook your food.

We had two days of sun and three days of rain which is not great for a solar cooking class. There was plenty to do though. Everyone made their own solar cooker and hay basket. Herminio (Mexican team) taught them how to make rocket stoves of all shapes and sizes. By the end of the week there were 17 rocket stoves that were made and we used them all for cooking!

Every day we ate a nutritious Guatemalan lunch prepared by the women in what we would think of as primitive or camping conditions. We even made

tortillas and tamales. The women (and a couple of men) were very excited about what they were learning. We later found out that some of the women walked for an hour and a half to get to the class each day so we understood a little more about "Guatemalan time".

The week's class culminated with a Fiesta in the plaza attended by dignitaries and complete with a Marimba band from the city. The women were dressed-up, excited and proud of what they had learned. Carlos our host from the Guatemala City club made the event memorable with dignitaries and speeches. He was so enthused himself that he taught visitors how to solar cook at the Fiesta.

Our heads are full with our impressions and experiences but the wonderful part of this trip was connecting with other Rotarians to do something for people to make their lives better. Rotary truly is a force for the good in the world and is respected everywhere.



Rotarians from Gualan, Guatemala City, Oaxaca & Fresno
At the Mayan Ruins



On the Rio Dulce Boat Ride with our hosts



Rotary Meeting in Gualan



Rotarians Alberto (Gualan) and Kathy
Wage (Fresno) present school supplies
To the Principal of the Elementary school



Elementary School Class Room



Discussing Set Up on first day



Rotarian Benta Fries prepares a salad
For the class



Carlos Galvez (Del Este Club – our host)
Helps with set up



Carlos introduces the class



The meal is cooking



Walt Parrish begins class on making Solar Cookers with local supplies



Diane Parrish helps with hands on instruction



Gualan Interact Club making Solar Cookers



Teresa Domingues (Salina Cruz) teaching Hay Baskets



Rocket stoves from El Salvador Factory



Rotarian from Gualan helps cut wood into small pieces to demonstrate how little wood is needed



Herminio demonstrates different types Of Rocket stoves using local materials



we traveled to the countryside to explain how much wood Rocket stoves would save At this tortilla factory



The class built 17 rocket stoves using the design they liked best

Graduation Day and Informational Fair



Carlos explains Solar Cooking



Walt Parrish and Kathy Wage Demonstrate WAPI's (water pasteurization indicators)



Solar Cooker exhibit



Carlos begins the Awards Presentation



Certificates are presented to each class Participant



Diane and Lorna help with presentation



Our Graduating Class