

Richfield Friendship City Commission

Annual Report 10/11/2011

Greetings from our friends in Costa Rica and especially in Heredia, Costa Rica. Last year was a year of preparation for the commission for a trip to visit our friends and see what changes have been made in the lives of the people of Costa Rica. We sent a delegation of twelve on this trip in March, six of which were new visitors to Costa Rica. My wife and I were two of the newbies. Our visit involved staying in homes of six families to get the real taste and flavor of the culture that was new to me.

To make it easier on our host families, we traveled some during the week. We visited a school that was damaged by the earthquake in 2008 and for which we raised funds to assist in their rebuilding. We saw nature at its best. Birds, holler monkeys, a volcano and many countless varieties of beautiful flowers. We brought gifts to the adult day care center; gifts of sweaters provided mostly by Gramercy residences who we have hopes will adopt the day care center as a project in the future. We brought items to the Children's library at the University and my favorite was the soccer association we have gotten to know. We brought 24 pairs of soccer shoes and some soccer balls as gifts. My wife saw a small boy on the field playing soccer in rubber boots and he was so happy for the shoes his family probably could not afford.

We also met with Guillermo Hernandez the sculpture of 'Alianza' which is in the Kirschbak Sculpture Gardens. He plans to have another work completed in the next year or so to add to our collection.

This trip marked the 20th year of our relationship with the people of Heredia and was celebrated by a meal, cake and speeches with the Heredia City Council and all those who attended the meeting.

Just for information sake, all travelers paid their own way for all travels and no monies were paid by the City of Richfield as we are an unfunded commission. For the most part gifts taken on this trip were donated by many sources and we thank them all. We are hopeful to invite visitors from Heredia next spring or whenever, when a rededication of Heredia Park date has been determined. Please keep us in the loop on this.

Our commission is small and currently consists of three appointed members. We would like more members as ideas come with numbers. We do have a good number of Costa Rican people living in Richfield and a greater number of people who have traveled to Costa Rica for business or pleasure. We hope to tap these resources for commission members in the future.

Thank you. -- Roger Swanson Chair FCC