



Informational meeting with parents



Christmas Fiesta



Centro Comunitario
Santa Elena

2020 Annual Report for The Santa Elena Mission Creel, Chihuahua, Mexico

February 24, 2021



Rayito teaching



Rayito and Amelia preparing
lunch in remodeled kitchen



Christmas Present



Reading Workshop in new porch extension



Students study where they are comfortable

Santa Elena Steering Committee based at the Community United Methodist Church, Ruidoso, NM



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February 24, 2021

The Santa Elena Steering Committee provides this 2020 report of the activities, capital improvements, future plans and financial considerations of the Santa Elena Mission.

The Santa Elena Steering Committee -

The Steering Committee members, from four churches in the New Mexico Conference, meets monthly to support the Santa Elena Mission. The committee provides overall guidance, oversight, fund raising, planning, financial control and supervision of the Mission Directors. The committee also normally organizes and executes mission trips to Santa Elena several times a year. The committee is based at Community UMC in Ruidoso, New Mexico.

Our Mission –

Our mission continues to provide a Christian Mission to the Tarahumara Indians of Mexico's Copper Canyon Region, to improve their lives through education, their health through better diet, medical care and sanitation. We endeavor to enable them to become more self-sufficient and prosperous while retaining their cultural identity.

Mission Operation –

In a normal year, the mission provides room and board for up to 15 children from Monday morning until Friday afternoon so they can attend the nearby public school. Our mission directors, Manolo and Rayito Guerrero, care for the children when they are not in school. The Guerrero's supervise the children, teach them life skills and provide Christian instruction and supplemental instruction in their school subjects. All children receive 3 meals each day, have recreation time and stay in comfortable dormitory rooms. The mission has restroom and shower facilities for use by the children.

The year, 2020, was far from normal for Santa Elena. In mid-January, one of our mission directors, Manolo Guerrero was hospitalized in Cuauhtémoc for several days and has recovered. Shortly thereafter a snowstorm followed by bitter cold closed the mission for over 3 weeks. After resuming normal operations in mid-February, COVID 19 entered Mexico and the mission

was ordered to be closed to control the virus. The Mexican health authorities have closed the elementary schools and student dormitories like Santa Elena. Since the COVID shutdown, the public schools have been having virtual classrooms. Elementary instruction is provided on special TV channels while secondary schools are using the internet with virtual classrooms. To continue the education of the Santa Elena children, we have made investments in technology to provide access to the Mexican public education system. A more reliable and high-speed satellite internet service was implemented in August so that junior high and high school students can study online at the mission. Inexpensive cell phones were purchased to be used at the mission by the students as computer terminals. Additionally, a satellite TV service that broadcasts the elementary school channels has been setup so that these students can participate when they return. The Guerrero's have been visiting the children in their homes to maintain communication with the children and provide information to the parents.

Scholarships to RAHOBI –

We normally serve children off-site by providing full scholarships to Complejo Educacional Bautista or RAHOBI (Rancho Hogar Bilingue Indigena) school. This is a boarding school in nearby Bocoyna that provides 3 years of 'secundaria' and 3 years of "preparatoria" education. Unfortunately, the RAHOBI school closed in March due to COVID. After several months it was announced that the school would not open until the fall of 2021 at the earliest.

The Guerrero's met with public school officials and arranged for the 7 students to participate in the public secondary educational system virtually. A program "Study from Home at the Mission" was initiated. The mission paid the tuition and enrolled each student. Manolo and Rayito setup a schedule for the children to come to the mission and communicate with their teachers via WhatsApp on the internet. The students come to the mission 3 or 5 days a week in compliance with the government allowed COVID practices. The children have been trained how to use the internet to obtain their assignments and submit their work. The Guerrero's serve as tutors for the children and serve the children breakfast and lunch.

The four students attending Secundaria classes were: Israel, Misael, Jose Alfredo, and Jesus Alfredo. The three attending Preparatoria were: Imelda González, Norma Isabel and Adilene.

This year has been difficult however it has provided an opportunity for the Mission Directors to assess what these children have learned and concentrate on improvement in some areas. The Guerrero's have also worked with the parents to encourage their involvement in their child's education.

Bible Study

In 2019 a monthly Bible Study was initiated to serve the residents of the Santa Elena community. While this was a successful program involving about 25 persons, the social distancing requirements of 2020 have required that the program be deferred for a while.

Mission Expenditure and Giving for 2020

Our Lord blessed us with exceptionally generous supporters 2020 even with our curtailed operations. Support for the mission was from individual parishioners or congregations. Mission supporters have been from inside and outside of the New Mexico Conference.

2020 Expenditures			
	Budgeted Items	\$44,266	
	Fireplace in Apt.	\$492	
		Total	\$44,758
2020 Giving			
	Contributions from Congregations and Individuals	\$41,520	
	Literacy Library	\$1,000	
	Christmas Gifts	\$3,438	
		Total	\$45,958

The New Mexico Annual Conference -

There was not an opportunity to make presentations to the New Mexico Annual Conference this year. The Santa Elena Steering Committee with the Guerrero's will have a booth and present information about the mission when social distancing conditions allow.

Activities of the mission's Mexican nonprofit "Manos Cristianas en Acción" -

Manos Cristianas en Acción (Christian Hands in Action) is our Mexican nonprofit entity that owns the mission. We continue the long process of working with our accountants, lawyers, and the Mexican authorities to be in complete compliance with Mexican tax laws. This has been an exceptionally long process over several years however our accountant and legal advisors indicate this is likely to conclude in 2021.

Mexican law requires that the Manos Cristianas en Acción Board of Directors members be Mexican citizens. Our Board of Directors are: Jenny Ivette Reza, President; Inés Resendiz, Secretary; Ernesto De Santiago, member; and Olga De Santiago, member. Jenny and Inés are from Cd. Juarez while Ernesto and Olga live in Creel.

Our Mission Directors -

Manolo and Rayito Guerrero have had a particularly challenging year and have adapted to the conditions with loving effective management of our mission. They have worked with

government officials to develop alternative programs for the children. During this year they have maintained and improved the mission facilities. They have both had health challenges this year and the health insurance provided was immensely helpful. The sixth year of contribution to the Guerrero's pension plan was completed.

Capital Improvements in 2020

The Guerrero's took advantage of the time with no children and remodeled the kitchen. A new arrangement and new cabinets have been installed. New security cameras were installed outside of the building. The exterior stucco repair was repaired. Several of the dormitory rooms were repainted and new quilts are being made. Several rock paved areas have been added around the building to minimize the areas of dirt and mud. Many "cleanup" projects have been done around the shop and orchard areas.

The mission was most fortunate to receive a Literacy Grant from the Roswell, NM Altrusa chapter. This grant will fund the establishment of a reading library at Santa Elena for use by the community. It is to encourage all ages to enjoy reading. The grant will provide for books, bookshelves and a checkout system to be administered by the Guerrero's. It is anticipated the library will be operational in 2021.

An attractive fireplace was installed in the mission director's apartment to minimize propane purchases. This improvement was made due to a specific donation for this purpose.

Mission Trips in 2020 –

All mission trips planned for 2020 were cancelled due to COVID travel difficulties. Trips were planned for April, August, and December.

The Program to provide Hoodies, Christmas Gifts and Food Pantries in December was successful even though there was no December mission trip to deliver the presents. Hoodies and some gifts were shipped to Cuauhtémoc for pickup by the Guerrero's while the toys and food were purchased locally. Over \$3400 was raised from participating churches to fund gifts for 55 children and 50 food pantries for the Santa Elena families. Over 100 community members came to the mission to accept the gifts in a socially distanced limited Christmas Fiesta.

Looking Ahead to 2021 -

Initially we are hoping the elementary children can come to the mission on a limited basis to participate in the TV public school instruction. We will continue the virtual schooling of the secondary children until RAHOBİ school reopens in August. We look forward to resuming the program of boarding students when it is permitted.

We are developing an outreach program where committee members will present a program describing the Santa Elena Mission to churches or groups that are interested in learning more about Santa Elena. Please email us at santaelena@ruidosocumc.org should you be interested in a presentation.

Mission Trips Scheduled for 2021.

We have made no concrete plans for trips in 2021 due to the COVID uncertainties. If conditions permit, we will likely have the two trips listed. If interested please email us for more information.

Tentatively August 2nd to 7th, 2021 – Project for nearby community and Vacation Bible School

Tentatively December 6th to 9th, 2021 – A Christmas trip to distribute gifts and celebrate Christ's birthday.

Thank You

Thank you for all your support in 2020. You have blessed the mission and your continued support is greatly appreciated so that we can continue this much-needed mission. Please join us on a 2021 mission trip and Google "Santa Elena Mission" or visit us at <https://ruidosocumc.org/mission-outreach-ministry/santa-elena-mexico-mission/>. To sign up for our newsletter, send your email address to Editor: santaelena@ruidosocumc.org.