

Why should I sign up for this trip?

The Rotary Club of Milwaukee has been working with Mayan communities in the Guatemala Highlands for over a decade. We have invested in nearly 20 projects ranging in size from \$10,000 to \$200,000. We have built and improved water systems, constructed schools and pedestrian bridges and supported hygiene and agrarian training.

The success of our projects in Guatemala rests on five components:

- ◆ **Strong NGO Partner:** Engineers without Borders (EWB) has a strong presence in the Highlands of Guatemala; a member of the Rotary Club of Milwaukee is actively engaged with EWB in Guatemala; and several local EWB college chapters choose to work in the area.
- ◆ **Strong Rotary Club Partner:** We partner with the Vista Hermosa Rotary from Guatemala City which has a strong track record of successful and sustainable projects.
- ◆ **Strong Community Relationships:** The elected and community-based leaders have grown to trust us.
- ◆ **Diverse Funding:** Our larger projects are funded with contributions of a dozen or so Rotary Clubs, multiple Districts, Rotary International's World Fund and key private donors.
- ◆ **Regular Communication:** Every Wednesday morning we have a one-hour project management call with our partners on the ground in Guatemala.

These elements come together when members of our club



Community meets to discuss needs.

embark on an annual trip to the Highlands. These trips are a means of solidifying and honoring our partnerships.

These trips foster opportunities to build and celebrate essential relationships with Guatemalan Rotarians and community members. The Mayan villagers impacted by the projects greatly appreciate that we care enough to show up for them. And, we do our best to ensure the projects are needed and wanted by the community, not by outsiders, which is essential for the long-term sustainability of the work. We bear witness to the integrity of the work allowing us to assure the funders that the money was used as intended ---which also supports our future efforts to fund Global Grants in partnership with other Rotary Clubs.



Clean water flowing to a village

It is critical that we have strong and trusting relationships with the Rotarians in Guatemala—relationships that are best built face to face. Implementing a sustainable project is not for the faint of heart. The upfront work is formidable. We count on Guatemalan Rotarians to monitor on-going progress, pay bills and work implement monitoring and evaluation practices.



Fellow travelers find the experience of working alongside students and community members to be a very rewarding part of the trip, however, it is probably the least valuable of the contributions that we make to the community. The Guatemalan Highlands have plenty of able-bodied men and women to work. They need the funding and the expertise that we can provide.

That said, the projects undertaken by the EWB teams are very valuable learning experiences for the students. The students raise money, design projects and work alongside the community at various stages of construction. For many, these are life changing experiences.