

Water Project – Concepcion, Bolivia

Because of the Club's success in water projects in and around Cochabamba in 2006, other Bolivian communities had contacted Club Member Stan Galanski about wanting/needing Rotary support for water projects. One such community was the small town of Concepcion, located 25 kms outside of Tarija, the southern territorial capital of Bolivia, known for its grape-growing and wine making industry. Peter Reichers, Napa Sunrise Rotary Club, Napa, CA. and Stan visited a school for orphaned girls in Concepcion, run by the Dominican Sisters ("Servants of the Lord"), who supported 250 young people with no fresh water source for their institution. Aligning themselves with the nearby Tarija-Aranjuez Rotary Club, and meeting with local engineers and geologists, Stan and Peter concluded that a water-well would be most appropriate for the Girl's School's needs. Stan returned to the U.S. in July 2006 to draft a matching grant for this water well project.

Unfortunately, by the time Stan had submitted the grant for the Concepcion Water Well, the deadline for matching grant approvals (for the Rotary Year) had expired, so its review was postponed until the next Rotary Year 2007-2008. Most of the delay was attributed to a restructuring of the Tarija-Aranjuez Rotary Club and lack of communication with the U.S.

Club President Geoff Atwater, Stan, and John Nodalski, Sugarland Rotary Club, Sugarland TX., visited Concepcion in June 2007 to assure the Sisters of their intent to generate a matching grant to build their well. Upon returning to the U.S., the water well grant was crafted, reviewed, published and approved (MG 64413). The funds were finally allocated and delivered into the Tarija-Aranjuez bank account in April 2008.

Right before the drilling contractor was to begin work on the Concepcion Water Well (April 2008), he made a final review of the local community records and found that several attempts had been made in the past year to drill water wells in that area only to come up dry. Hence, with this new and validated information, the Drilling Contractor retracted his proposal (so as not to waste Rotary's money). With this news, it was apparent that an alternative plan had to be put into place. Stan immediately got concurrence from The Rotary Foundation that the money could remain in the Tarija-Aranjuez account while a Plan B could be devised, and that the matching grant proposal could be amended if an alternative water project could be scoped for the Dominican Girl's School.

In June of 2008, Geoff and Peter returned to Concepcion to review the historical findings on previous water well bores and validated what the contractor had reported. They learned that a new water source was to be coming on-line in the coming year (channeled water from a fluctuating river) and that a Water Purification System would be needed. Hence, readings and tests were taken by Peter to determine if an existing (water purification) solution, deployed by Engineers Without Borders, would be viable for this community. They concluded that such a system was viable and could be deployed within a year, once Engineers Without Borders resources could be freed up to install the equipment. Hence, MG 64413 was to be rescoped and put on hold for 6 months, until technical supporting elements could be scheduled to do the job.

While all this was taking place, John Nodalski had convinced local Interact clubs to devise a sacrificial project that would allow high school students to raise money (in addition to the \$23,000 matching grant) for the Concepcion Water Purification System. This was most needed and welcome, since the matching grant could not pay for the requisite water tanks and piping system into the school dormitories.

