

The Rest of the Story - Food Assistance to Pala during the 2020 Pandemic

Patty Ajanel and Wendy Rodas have been interpreters for the KOK Guatemala mission team for multiple years and are familiar with KOK and Pala. Wendy and her husband Juan Pablo are independent missionaries who include KOK and Servants Hearts Ministries in their outreach. Servants Hearts Ministries (SHM) hosts mission teams coming from the US. With no US mission teams coming in, SHM shifted their focus to preparing food bags for distribution to the hardest hit communities. The KOK team saw an opportunity to get food delivered to Pala by working with Patty, Wendy and SHM. Donations from Hal Jordan and Barney Hale were used to start the project. Wendy, Juan Pablo and the SHM team purchased the food in bulk quantities and did re-packaging to create 45-pound bags of corn, rice, beans, oatmeal and cooking oil. Each bag is expected to feed a family of 4 to 6 for about 4 weeks. Patty and the library staff (Juana, Marta and Manuel) in Pala arranged for transfer of the food bags from the larger SHM trucks to smaller pick-up trucks that could make the final leg of the journey along the “road” that leads to Pala.

We targeted 75 food bags. This would not be enough for every family in Pala, but it would serve as a trial run. We assigned the library staff the task of identifying the 75 families in Pala with the most immediate need. This was an especially difficult assignment in a small village since the library staff would have to exclude some families. Still, they developed a list that seemed fair and reliable based on what we knew of Pala.

But with “bits and pieces” of supplies left over from previous SHM bagging events, supplemental donations, and the generosity of SHM, 130 food bags were prepared and loaded onto two trucks for the first leg of the journey. The food reached Pala and was distributed on June 22, 2020 with supervision and follow-up reporting being provided by the library staff. The library staff reported that 133 bags had been passed out, enough for every family in the village to get one, and that there were four bags remaining. Yes, we realized the number of bags kept increasing and without complete explanation. Combining this with the fact that there was more than enough to distribute and that there were four bags of “leftovers” makes this story remarkably similar to one we have heard before about loaves and fishes.

We have heard that the body of Christ has many parts. It is especially encouraging to see different people, different organizations, in different places work together to accomplish part of God’s plan for us all. It is also a wonder that the initial offering seemed inadequate, but with God’s grace, grew to become more than sufficient.