

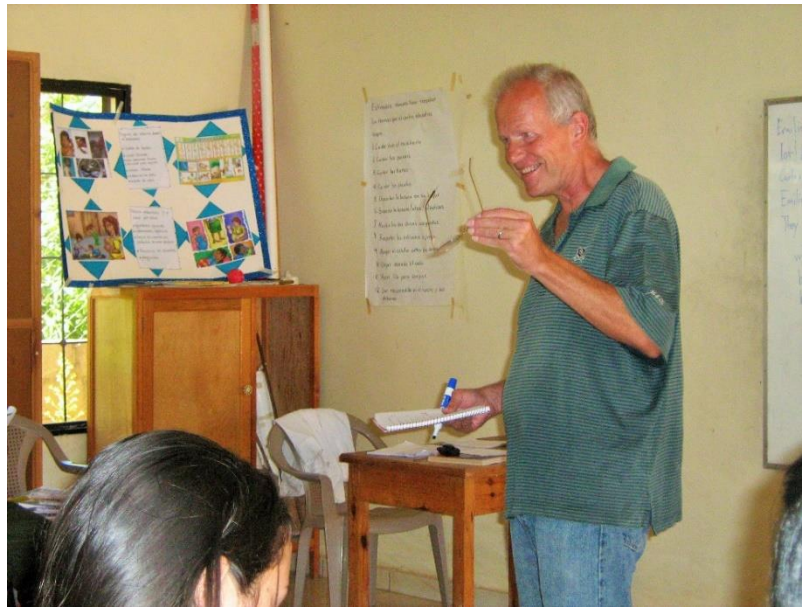


El Maestro en Casa, Inc.
ADULT OUTREACH EDUCATION
Ciudad Cívica, Intibucá, Honduras
501 (c)(3) Public Charity EIN 26-3900669
<http://lencaeducation.org>

22 August, 2014

Dear friends and generous supporters,

Hope you're enjoying the dog days of summer! I certainly am. This has been the most relaxing, stress-free summer I've had in many years because I now have two wonderful long-term volunteers working with my teachers in Honduras. Since May, Laura and Paul Manship have been lending a hand wherever needed,



Paul in one of his high school classes

gradually defining their role in our very loosely organized organization. Their contribution has been immense, stretching from the mundane—like correcting homework, reporting grades and gathering the student information and photographs now required by the government in the new on-line reporting system—to the extraordinary—like teaching high school classes and writing grant proposals. How awesome is that! They are professional social workers by training and experience, and are dedicating at least a year to our program. I can't tell you how grateful we are to have them, not just for their much needed labor, but also for their fresh perspective. They not only have great ideas—they have the time and energy to carry them out.

Just before Laura and Paul arrived, Nathan Villatoro ended his 3 months with us. Nathan spent most of his



Our enthusiastic volunteer, Nathan

time working on our second greenhouse, using Honduran tools and learning Honduran construction practices, which require enormous patience! He now understands why we have programed 6 months to build it. He also taught extra-curricular English classes, which we like to offer whenever we have volunteers.

Around Aug. 21 another volunteer, Violet Castor, will be arriving. She's a recent graduate in electrical engineering and will spend about 3 months with us before she returns to graduate school. There will be plenty of projects waiting for her, but first and foremost will be fixing up our dormitory to make it available to volunteers and travelers. This was my

intention when we first built our school, but the construction and electrical installation was so shoddy that we

never followed through. Except for the 9 months we housed the pregnant women while the hospital guest house was under construction, our dormitory has seen little use. Hopefully Violet will be able to solve the



As tomatoes are harvested from the bottom, the vines are lowed as they continue climbing up the cables

electrical problems and she and Laura and Paul will be able to make it a more attractive rental unit. We also have her scheduled to give more English and computer classes. Besides providing a bit of income for us, these two subjects are vital for leveling the employment playing field for our students, which is one of our biggest challenges.

One of our two planned greenhouses is up and running; in fact we've been harvesting tomatoes since April. It's been a slower start than we had hoped, but we've worked out most of the kinks and our staff has had an amazing education in commercial agriculture. As the rainy season progresses, our sales will climb as open-air producers see their harvests diminish from rain damage. We remain convinced that this will be a viable source of

income for our program, and once we are able to finish and plant the second greenhouse, I know we will feel much more financially secure.

Academically it has been our most challenging year. At the end of last year the education minister told us we



7 graders practicing "mindfulness" exercises during class

could no longer register students under the age of 16, which is normally a big chunk of our 7th grade students. This was to encourage more students to register in the public schools, which are now required to offer 7 – 9th grades. But since the economic situation in Honduras continues to worsen, rural families still need their children to work in the fields instead of attending daily classes, and our program, with weekly classes, continues to be a necessary

option. The minister changed his mind in February, but since classes were scheduled to begin, we began the school year with about 50 fewer 7th-grade students than last year. However, since our younger students tend to drop out at a higher rate, we're hoping that a larger percentage of this year's older 7th grade will continue next year.

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Computer class

The education minister also established the schedule of classes for all schools, public and private, with a set curriculum and grading system. We had to scramble to adapt our program to fit all the requirements, especially since we now must use the machine-graded tests

issued by our parent institute. Thankfully, the tests are only 30% of the grade so we still have some room to focus on student learning rather than just the rote memory strategy emphasized by the Honduran education system. I understand that the minister is trying to establish discipline in a terribly corrupt and inadequate system, and hopefully we will soon see some improvement. But until the preparation of teachers is vastly improved, we can't expect much. Secondary teachers are now required to have a university degree, but the teacher's college is little more than a diploma factory.

However, there are always exceptions. Our administrator and teacher, Bertha, has spent more than 7 years



Bertha hard at work

traveling weekends to attend classes and spending her nights studying, but she will finally receive her degree in Spanish education. While she admits there was really very little of value in most of her course work, she did learn a few new things and has quickly put them into practice in our program. She is an extraordinary young woman who has made huge sacrifices to get her degree, and I am extremely proud of her dedication and perseverance. Congratulations Bertha!!

I head back to Honduras Sept. 15 to wind up the school year and begin planning for 2015. As always, I am indebted to all our friends and supporters, some of whom, like Wendy Elliott, the Brandon Congregational Church, and Cup for Education, have

been with us for many years. Each year brings us new challenges, but with your support we'll continue until we're no longer needed.

Saludos,
Susan