

Amextra,
A.C.

Transformation in Process

Newsletter No. 3

September 1, 2003

DID YOU KNOW? THE SAVINGS AND LOAN PROGRAM IN THE VALLEY OF CHALCO HAS:

Solidarity Groups	131
Individuals Saving	1458
Women Involved	991
Active Loans	737
Total Savings	\$129,116
Active Credits	\$316,143

A few words from the director . . .

During Jesus' ministry there is a very important moment in which he feeds 5 thousand people (not counting women and children). On this occasion two points can be highlighted: the town with a great need to be fed and the challenge that Jesus makes to his disciples in feeding them.

The disciples were unable to respond to this need and it was a boy (who was not even counted) who gave the bread and fish to Jesus so that he would bless them and therefore satisfy the needs of the town.

I have seen a similar miracle in the Valley of Chalco. When we arrived 17 years ago to this region, we found that 70% of children under 5 years old were in a state of malnutrition. Jesus' response came through the women of the community. They discovered their flavorful giftings in the kitchen, and developed a ministry for mothers of the children to

learn to feed their children with nutritious soy recipes. 10 years later, 70% of these children are no longer malnourished. This has been an enormous blessing which has impacted the life of the community.

Three years ago in the same Valley we went through another development stage. On this occasion the problem was due to lack of employment opportunities and the low economic resources of the families. It is in this context that the savings and loan program was organized. It brings together groups of 20 which save their money together. They can then take out a loan to help meet health or educational needs, as well as support entrepreneurial ideas which have generated many job opportunities. Jesus asked his disciples to organize the people into groups, and after praying, he distributed the food among the people and there was

more than enough! In this program there are also organized solidarity groups (transformation units) and with the savings (bread and fish) God multiplies this blessing to help many people.

The Lord continues to respond to the necessities of this town today through the commitment and talents of his disciples. I give thanks to God for all the women, men and children that serve him in the Valley of Chalco.

- Eugenio Araiza

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Administrative Offices have New Address

Amextra's administrative offices have moved to a more centric and economic location close to downtown Puebla. They are excited about the change due to its close proximity to banks and other necessary locations. Please remember to mail any future correspondence to the new address. Aside from the move, the administrative office has

been busy taking care of their normal responsibilities which you can read about at www.amextra.org. Please read the "Straight from the Heart" column to the left to find out more about how the Puebla team continues to maintain their transformational perspective amidst all the busy-ness and paper work.

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STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART:

I began working with Amextra four years ago; I had recently become a widow and was left alone with the responsibility of raising three daughters. I needed to put my studies as a bilingual secretary and technical accountant to use once again in order to surpass these difficult times, but I did not have enough self-confidence or initiative. This is when Amextra gave me the opportunity to work as a volunteer for 6 months. I firmly believe that God brought me here with the objective of developing character, gifts and abilities that I never imagined I had, best of all is that He gave me the opportunity to put them to use in serving Him.

Today I can say that Amextra has contributed to the lives of three little girls, as well as allowed me to grow personally and professionally. I am currently the Accounting Coordinator. I know that there are other women in similar situations to mine who are also in need of an opportunity like the one Amextra has given me. -Pati Escoriza Delgado

Money can't buy happiness . . .

But maybe tacos can!

The statistical information from March of 2003 is evidence of the success of the Chalco Valley Savings and Loan program. However, I want to focus more on the leadership team in the office that makes it possible to obtain these results. The team in this area is made up of four women. Each one of them carries out a significant function in our program. Thaphat has been with us since January of 2003, and has the responsibility of coordinating the savings and loan program in the Valley of Chalco. Her support and experience as an accountant is invaluable to the program's operation. Her contributions as coordinator of the different areas has been extraordinary and we congratulate her for this tremendous effort. Claudia coordinates our team of promoters. Before taking on this responsibility she worked in the field as a promoter for one our solidarity

groups. She has added her personal touch and talent to this coordination and is a great support to all the savings and loan groups. We also recognize her support to the team in the office. Our Program in Chalco also has a collections area which is run by Irma. She has been with our program the longest and previously collaborated with Amextra in other areas. Her knowledge and experience are aspects that allow her to provide excellent support in this important area. Karla works in the accounting area. She has a great understanding of how the daily operation of our program works and does not restrict her responsibility solely to her specific area, but also carries out additional responsibilities in the office which, on occasion, forces her to sacrifice family time. We recognize and express our gratitude to this amazing feminine leadership team in the Valley of Chalco. On another opportunity we will celebrate our team of ten promoters who make it possible for us to maintain



Chalco microfinance promoters enjoy a delicious taco lunch during an all day training seminar.

communication with all of the members of groups who participate in the program.

Go to www.amextra.org for more information on how Amextra's Savings and Loan Programs work.

- Amado Sánchez Moreno

General Coordinator of Savings and Loan Programs in Amextra, A.C.

Continuing Transformation in Chalco . . .

It's summer! And the Chalco Valley Community Center has been graciously supported by young students who work with junior high and elementary students throughout the vacation season. These young people are showing an increasing interest in becoming part of the community center's activities and serving with us as teachers. Beginning guitar, computer, drawing, dance and jazz classes have kept us all artistically enriched and up to date as to the likes and dislikes of our children.

The community center continues to work alongside a Mexican Educational Institution to provide an adult education program in

the center. The institution provides the official authorization for the program while helping to fulfill mutual goals with Amextra. The adults have the opportunity to enroll and study either elementary or junior high level courses. We also sponsored four volunteers for three weeks who gave English classes in the center and in a neighboring community.

We are delighted to announce that our folkloric dance group has restarted and is available to perform upon request. They dance for visiting groups or for project events and have just experienced great success in performing for our end-of-the-year daycare celebration.

Donate on the web!

Did you check out our web page yet? New information and updates have been added to the web, as well as a feature we have long been awaiting. You can now make small donations to Amextra online! You can specify whether you wish the money to go directly to a specific program or into a general fund. Please go to www.amextra.org for more information.



www.amextra.org

How can you pray for Amextra?

- Rest and refreshment for the staff teams after these busy summer months.
- New project possibilities in the Valley of Chalco.
- Implementation of new fundraising strategies.
- Ability to use the gifts of and see transformation in the lives of the volunteers we sponsor.

"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed . . ."

- Formal incorporation of Gender perspective in projects.
- Implementation of a new training area and programs.
- Continued improvement of relationships with local churches.
- Incorporation of new staff members to the Amextra family.
- Sufficient project funding.