

“They can stay in their homes, the kids can stay in school, they have a livelihood,” she said. “They can stay (in Comotancillo) and work. That’s huge, really huge. That’s impacted hundreds of families. You’re educating the kids and the women have the self-esteem of being able to provide a living for their families.”

Diane emphasized that the key component, a single factor that is helping turn this dream into reality are the members of the Dalesburg Lutheran Church.

“It’s a tiny little church, but it’s had a huge impact on that community,” she said.

Dalesburg Lutheran provided \$6,000 for the weaving center. That amount was matched by a benefactor, bringing the total donation for construction of the center to \$12,000. One of Diane’s next projects will be to figure out financing to purchase new looms. Currently, the looms available in Comotancillo sit outside, with just a tin roof over them.

“The looms are rotting, and when you’re weaving, and there’s something wrong with your loom, the fabric is going to have flaws. But now we’ll have the looms inside, and we’ll get them all fixed up and we’ll be able to go.”

She notes that the trip she’s planning in June will have a new adventure nearly every day for her and those who accompany her from the Vermillion area. On the way to Comotancillo, the group will stop at a glass cooperative and watch workers recycle and blow beautiful glass products that ultimately are offered for sale by Sharing the Dream. They will also visit an elder center in Santiago, Guatemala.

“That’s where we feed 65 elders three times a week, and the elders also take food home to eat on the days it’s not being served at the center. They also receive medical care there.”

There is housing available on the second floor of the elder cen-

ter that is rented out to tourists and other visitors to help make the elder center sustainable.

“The elder center is dear to my heart, because these are people who have nothing. I mean they have nothing. A lot of times in Guatemala, there are children’s projects, and everybody wants to help kids. Nobody helps elders; they are often forgotten.”

The group will also visit a new school in Guatemala that Sharing the Dream helped finance by purchasing the land for the building and furnishing all of the desks for 225 students, compliments of Calvary Lutheran Church in Rapid City.

Sharing The Dream has also begun other work in the Central American nation. The organization hopes to place a full-time Guatemalan doctor for the Casa Guatemala orphanage as well as 14 nearby jungle villages.

“That’s taking us a long time. The people in the villages are very, very poor. There are no latrines, no clean water. Things are tough, but we’re starting to accomplish some things there,” Diane said.

She is pleased that Sharing the Dream is having an impact on people living in several different regions of Guatemala.

“I don’t think people realize, in Vermillion, South Dakota, that this goes on,” Diane said. “And we don’t sell most of the products made in Guatemala at our store here. We sell them all over the United States. It’s getting bigger and bigger, and that’s good.”

“It’s a lot of fun and it’s rejuvenating,” she said.

■ by David Lias

■ Photos by Jackie Williams

For more information on Sharing the Dream you can check them out online at www.sharingthedream.org.

Celebrate the Sounds of Your Life





Hearing loss is the 3rd most common problem in the U.S. More than 1/2 of all hearing impaired persons are under the age of 65. Hearing difficulties are often unrecognized by the person involved and most people wait 7 to 10 years before seeking help.





During Better Hearing Month this May, Ear, Nose & Throat Associates, P.C. encourages you to visit our audiologists, Dr. Beth Beeman and Dr. Todd Farnham to have your hearing evaluated. They can determine the type and degree of hearing loss and offer treatment options that are right for you.



We're H"ear" For You!

EAR, NOSE & THROAT ASSOCIATES, P.C.

409 Summit Street, Suite 3200 • Yankton • 605-665-0062 • 1-866-665-0062





Beth J. Beeman, Au.D.
CCC-A



Todd A. Farnham, Au.D.
CCC-A