

2023 Rotary Integrity Award

Background: It was 2009, and a group of 8 Edmontonians purchased 35 acres of land in Honduras with a dream of creating a place to demonstrate sustainable agro-forestry practices and to build a facility to provide junior high schooling for children wishing to continue learning beyond grade 6. Creating employment for rural people, in a country wracked with poverty, unemployment and violence is a huge challenge. Since then, the farm has expanded beyond their wildest dreams. The land has been developed into orchards that grow a wide variety of fruit and spice trees that can provide much higher levels of income for local farmers. The nursery has produced over the past few years more than 150,000 trees from seedlings that are planted in reforestation projects throughout the region. There are currently 2 junior high schools established and a sewing program designed to teach local women new skills to increase employment opportunities or earn income by starting their own small businesses. Future plans are to develop a water project to supply water to many people who do not have consistent access.

Contributions: Bruce and Janet would be the first to say that this is not an individual award. It has been earned by the dedicated group who shared the dream. All partners have travelled often to Honduras and have developed contacts with the Rotary Clubs of Edmonton Mayfield and El Progreso, Honduras, as well as the Municipality of Santa Rita, the District School Division, the Department of Forestry and other non-profits. In addition to working with the rural community in Honduras, they fundraise in Edmonton to expand their operation.

Rotary Relevance

The project falls within 4 of the Rotary Areas of Focus: Economic Development, Environmental Sustainability, Education and Water and Sanitation. Throughout the process they have followed the Rotary test 'Is it good for all concerned' through continuous community engagement to ensure that their ideas meet community needs.