



## Happenings on the Sarapiqui: From Ruth Clowater

I am very grateful for the many ways that Beaver Dam has supported our ministries, both through budget and designated offerings. So here are some of the ways that those contributions have been put to use:

**Rama scholarships.** Quite possibly the best way to help the Rama is to make it possible for their own young people to receive a university education, and without the scholarships it simply would be impossible. It has been a challenge; they faced setbacks because of political unrest two years ago, and now the pandemic. We have one student that has not returned to school due to family obligations, but three others are getting ready for the upcoming semester. We have had two graduations thus far (2019), and two more students will be starting their final year of classroom studies in February. After that, they are required to do field work for another semester, so we may not have any more graduates until next year. Without the scholarships, it simply would be impossible.

**Christmas Fiestas cancelled, but ...** We have had to make a lot of adjustments because of the pandemic. Who hasn't? Christmas fiestas were cancelled (no church services, no gatherings) and we have not done much traveling beyond our village. Public schools resume instruction in two weeks, but in-person classes have been postponed for the foreseeable future. We are, however, in the process of preparing back-to-school gifts for the children (school supplies, reading books, and small toys) and will deliver them to the teachers, who will distribute them when the children come to pick up their weekly assignments. We are happy to help in this way, but disappointed that we cannot do it in person.

**Asylum Seekers.** In Tijuana, we have formed partnerships with some very capable individuals, who hosted turkey dinners in three migrant shelters, provide food packages to families and gifts to about 40 young children, as well as hygiene kits and blankets (nights especially can be quite cold in Tijuana, even during summer months). We also were able to help a Russian asylum seeker post bond to be released from a detention center along the southern border. I had met Denis on my trip to Tijuana in 2019. He had recently arrived after having fled Russia. He was a political candidate with the opposition party who was seeking municipal office, and he campaigned with Alexei Navalny, who has been much in the news. Around the time that Navalny was arrested (before being poisoned), a warrant to arrest Denis on "fraud" charges was also issued, his assets were seized, so with the help of his mother (he's young, maybe 30) he fled to Mexico in the hopes of seeking asylum in the US. We were able to help raise bond money and he is now living with a pastor in Pennsylvania while he waits for an immigration hearing.

Other than that, Carlos and I plan to take cattle to auction in two weeks, and also start buying construction materials to start on our house in the fall. Carlos has already built a rather large workshop (about 28 x 32 ft) and has done a lot of welding (working on his degree from YouTube University), so it is my turn next.

May 2021 be a year of positive change, a time of healing, an end to the pandemic, and a time to work together for the kingdom of God.

Ruth

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Ruth Clowater

SIGA Ministry Partners

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