



Heart-Links

Our Mission

To link Peruvians and Canadians through friendship and support for mutual growth and enrichment

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2007 Annual Report

Message from the Chair

“Caminante, no hay camino; se hace camino al andar”

“Wayfarer, there is no way; you make a way by walking.”

Antonio Machado (1)

Our human family is connected by the same desires. The desire to survive, to live without fear, hunger or suffering. The desire to witness our children and grandchildren's future as bright and prosperous knitted together with love, health and happiness. We are wayfarers together.

Our corner of Ontario has had years of connection, of wanting to walk with rural communities in Northern Peru and it saddens us that for many there continues to be a daily struggle just to survive. Rural women are the worst affected. The majority of rural women in Peru are poor and nearly 70 percent of them are extremely poor.

As Canadians and global citizens we have signed on to move forward on the path of reaching the UN Millennium Development Goals. Our connection to Heart-links lets us know that we are playing a part and because of our support and involvement we are specifically engaged with two of the Millennium Goals: 1) to eradicate poverty and hunger and 2) promote gender equality and empower women.

This past year has been one of trust as we let go of a centralized management style for our projects in the Zaña valley and witnessed the strength displayed by the women in rising to their growing responsibility for *comedor* (community kitchens) operations. The women of the *comedores* continue to “make their own way-by walking”. Heart-links is committed to supporting community efforts to empower rural women as an essential first step to eradicating poverty

We have supported the importance of participatory methods in planning, implementing and evaluating all our programs. Two of our Board Members, Nuccia McGrath and Christine Troughton volunteered to further their training in these methods and with Sheila Horrell they went to Peru to share some of these tools with our partners. It was an inspiring and encouraging visit.

We are very thankful to have such a committed team of board members and committee volunteers. It helps to ensure the success of our fundraising efforts that through carefully planned events such as our annual bazaar and dinner and hours of volunteer help to prepare these events and our mail campaigns we continue to meet our targets for fund-raising. We are very grateful and dependent on our loyal donors since we do not receive any government support.

We know we are on an unmarked road and that we live in a culture that is full of demands, distractions and endless ways to feel “too busy”. If we can “walk and look” at a pace that promotes solidarity with the poor perhaps we will be able to let what we see change us and further this partnership with the communities of Northern Peru.

Patricia Howe

(1)I thank Sr Janet Zadorsky for this quotation. At the start of every Board meeting she kindly shares a reflection and it is always thoughtfully prepared as a light for our way.

Work / Awareness Trip

Once again during July 2007, the people of Zaña, Aviacion, Mocupe, Reque, Chiclayo and Cajamarca warmly welcomed the 7 Canadian participants of our Work/Awareness trip. This year's group included Barbara Boles Davis and Gordon Price who are active volunteers with Heart-Links and Anna Maria DiPonio, who has contributed so much to Heart-Links over the years through her committed participation in these visits. New inductees to Heart-Links included Jennifer Slauenwhite, Linda Manitowabi, Dean Kelly and Alona Black. Heart-Links has organized Work/Awareness

trips since 1998, helping to provide Canadians with perspective and sensitivity to the realities facing the people of our world's developing countries. Our trips have also enabled enduring friendships between Canadians and Peruvians. During 2007, our board of directors accepted a plan to conduct a full review of our Awareness program this coming year, deferring any further trips until after the review is complete. During 2008 we will work with our board and our partners in Peru to brainstorm a vision and action plan for future awareness opportunities that will help us achieve Heart-Links' mission.

Peru Projects

Mandate: *Giving priority to the empowerment of women and sustainability, to promote development in Northern Peru through community initiatives in the sectors of nutrition, health, education and income generation.*

Comedores (Community Kitchens) in Zaña, Aviacion and Mocupe

Of the many exciting advances and achievements in 2007, some of the most notable concerned the mothers of the three *comedores infantiles* or community kitchens that Heart-Links supports in the Zaña Valley. Through the three *comedores*, 46 mothers organize collectively to provide nutritious midday meals each weekday for over 100 children aged 11 and under and almost 30 indigents. These meals are critically important since, when the weight and size of the children of the *comedores* were measured, it was found that 4 out of every 10 children were malnourished and the rest hardly met the normal nutrition level. In fall 2006 Heart-Links engaged a community consultant, Violeta Nauca, to reinforce the internal organization of the *comedores* and assist the mothers to put work plans in place enabling them to attain concrete achievements. They learnt budgeting, to make purchases according to a budget, to prepare financial reports, research child nutrition, choose nutritious foods and to

create and cook balanced menus. The executives of the three *comedores* met together once a month as a Coordinating Committee ("CoCo") to evaluate progress, distribute tasks and share experiences and problems. During 2007 also the mothers reviewed and revised the "rules" of their *comedores*. They even found time to have workshops on topics such as Free Expression, Breastfeeding, and Family Relationships and, during the summer holidays in February, to take their children to have fun at the seaside.



Preparing a nutritious meal at the Mocupe comedor

Comedores Adolescents program

At the urging of the mothers in these 3 small rural communities a new program was introduced for the adolescents of the three *comedores*. In cooperation with Centro Esperanza, a year-long project began whereby 8 UNEC (*Union Nacional de Estudiantes Católicos*) university students from Chiclayo volunteered to meet weekly with the adolescents to give them the opportunity to communicate with each other and develop their self-confidence and leadership skills. Every 6 weeks the separate groups from the 3 *comedor* communities were brought together to share their achievements. Thirty-five adolescents participated regularly all year. The goal is that they will ultimately form and lead their own permanent adolescent groups.



Some of the participants in the three adolescent groups share their dancing skills

Family Worker in the Zaña Valley

Drawing on her long experience of social work in the Zaña Valley, Deli (Irma Delicia Romero Ampuero), the Family Worker, continued to support the *comedor* mothers. She provided counselling and support to other community members as well, mainly around health needs, identity documents and family violence. A large portion of the Emergency and Contingency Funds she disbursed went to help with medications and travel to obtain health care. A disturbing trend in 2007 was the high incidence of tuberculosis, bronchitis and other respiratory tract ailments. As a member of *la Mesa de Concertacion de Zaña*, a government-sponsored round table, Deli works together with other community and government personnel to analyse community problems and find solutions.

“Cernidas” Project. Rural Libraries Network of Cajamarca

The Department of Cajamarca occupies second place in Peru in extreme material poverty. It has one of the highest illiteracy rates in the country. For 35 years the Rural Libraries Network has assisted remote Andean *campesino* communities to generate their own systems of literacy with community members helping each other to learn to read and write in their own contexts. To provide literacy materials accessible to women and children, the “Cernidas” project is producing edited versions of 20 of the most popular volumes in the “We the Cajamarcans” series in a small easy to handle format. Heart-Links is supporting printing 1000 copies of each volume. The new series will be distributed through the network of over 710 rural libraries in remote Cajamarcans communities.

Children’s Leadership Project. San Martin de Thours Parish, Reque

Reque is a small city in the northern coastal region of Peru. Over 60% of the population are aged between 13 and 30. In one third of families the father is not present, either because of working elsewhere or through abandonment. Many people are unemployed. The Children’s Leadership project, run by the Parish, is supported by the parish bakery operated cooperatively by a group of women, the metalworkers program and by a variety of other volunteers including teachers of group dynamics, dance, art and handicrafts. In 2007 the number of children in the urban program rose from 36 to 48, mainly because a new group of younger children aged 5–7 years was established to run concurrently with the existing leadership group aged 8-14 years. In 2007, in addition to workshops on values, language and literacy and different types of art, dance and handicrafts, the children went on trips to places of cultural interest. Their sense of responsibility and leadership was fostered through planning and implementing activities and snacks for a large group of younger children on Saturday afternoons. In 2007 also, a rural component was added and now fifteen children aged 8 – 14 who live in Calera

20 km. from Reque are engaged in similar activities to those in the city. Both sets of children have benefited from interacting together from time to time.

Metalworkers Project. San Martin de Thours Parish, Reque

In an area of high unemployment where the precarious economic situation prevents most young people entering higher education, a workshop where they can learn a marketable trade is vitally important. This is what the Friends of Peru Metalwork Shop in Reque provides. The workshop is a micro-enterprise providing permanent jobs for some workers and a place of apprenticeship for others. To be competitive, the young metalworkers needed training in the theory as well as the practice of professional metalworking. The Parish negotiated with the prestigious *Universidad Nacional Pedro Ruis Gallo*, which provided its 185-hour Metalwork Technical Specialization course in the community at the metal shop in Reque for a special basic price, funded by Heart-Links. After every unit the participants had to have a minimum grade of 14 out of 20 to continue. All of them passed and all of them now have a University certificate. When the shop does not have work they study management and marketing.

Women's Production Project. CEFOPROH (Centre for Training and Promotion of Humanity) "Santa Angela", Chiclayo

The majority women participants in this project are migrants from the mountains with little formal education who eke out an existence in the slums of the large regional city of Chiclayo. Most are single mothers who, abandoned by the fathers of their children, and must raise families on their own, washing clothes or finding other ways of working out of the home in exchange for small payments for their services. They are prey to sexual abuse and violence. Their goal is to form their own micro-enterprise through which to sell their sewing and knitting products. From August 2006 to March 2007 Heart-Links funded 20 women to work

together towards this goal. They built their self-confidence and learnt how to select and market their products and how to manage a business. Throughout the 8-month period they met for 3 hours twice a week to create product inventories and improve their sewing and knitting skills. This time together was an important source of friendship and mutual support. At the end of the project, fifteen of the women committed to forming the micro-enterprise. The others will continue to sell their products individually. Obtaining legal status for the micro-enterprise and additional business management and marketing training are planned for 2008.



At the Reque Friends of Peru Metalwork Shop

Promoting the Non-violent Treatment of Children in the Families of the NE Zone of J L Ortiz District. CEFOPROH "Santa Angela", Chiclayo

Close to 90% of girls and boys in the area where Centre "Santa Angela" is located are mistreated in homes and/or schools. As a response to this situation a two-year participatory project was launched in May 2007 to sensitize and involve children and their parents in the fight to reduce child violence. The first year concentrated on building the children's self-esteem and their knowledge of their rights and duties and on promoting attitude change on the part of their parents. The 58 child participants attended 23 workshops addressing Self-Esteem, Social Abilities, Rights and Responsibilities and Leadership. Thirty-eight parents participated regularly attending 9 workshops on Self-Esteem, Child Psychology, Handling Emotions, Child Discipline, Child Rights, Living the Values of Love and Respect. The

96 girls, boys, mothers and fathers who attended regularly during the first stage are very committed to part II where they will lead actions for the prevention of child mistreatment in their community.

Self-Help Project for Women Suffering from Spousal Abuse. Centro Esperanza, Chiclayo

Spousal abuse is a persistent problem in Peru, as it is in Canada. In the barrios of Chiclayo it is exacerbated by the hardships and insecurities of extreme poverty. This 2-year project began in April 2007. The goal is to provide women with the mutual support and the skills they need to move from being

“passive and helpless victims” to a situation of empowerment. The main tools for this transition are self-help groups and the continuous support of a lawyer and a psychologist. Through these vehicles the women learn to recognize the roots of domestic violence and to have solidarity with other women in similar situations. The groups are structured to build the women’s self-confidence and to give them the information, understanding and strength to address and ameliorate their situations. The self-help group format is quite experimental and is adjusted according to the needs of the participants. The process is documented so this new model can be shared with others.

Public Engagement

The Public Engagement Committee continued to participate in its valued links to other small non-governmental organizations in Southwestern Ontario. We partnered with Save the Family Plan for a display table at the Regional Social Forum held in London in June. We attended monthly meetings of the Ontario Council for International Co-operation – Southwestern Ontario, a great forum for information sharing and volunteer development initiatives. We are updating our

website, an important vehicle to inform the we support in Peru. We responded to requests to give presentations at schools and the Huron College and University of Western Ontario International Development event. We set up tables to display and market Peruvian handicrafts at different venues throughout the year, attracting interest and questions about the programs we support. Finally, we have continued to keep everyone informed about Heart-Links through the newsletter.

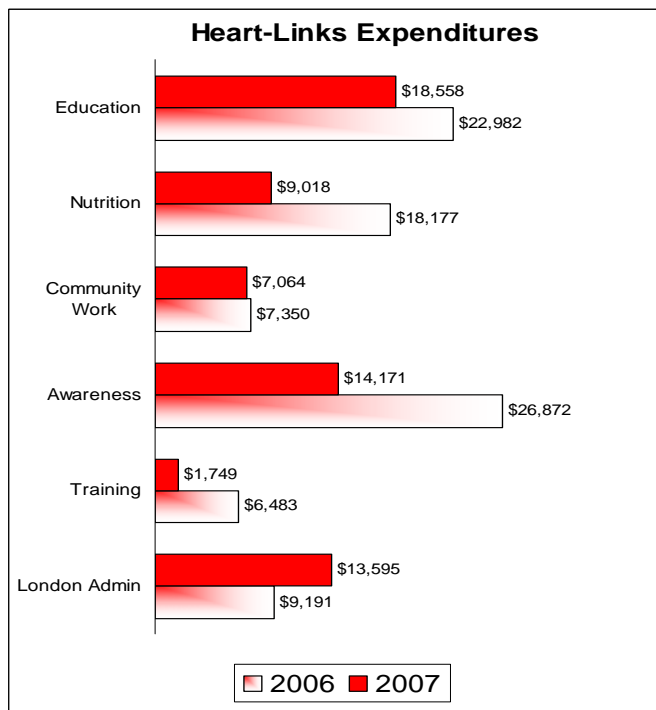
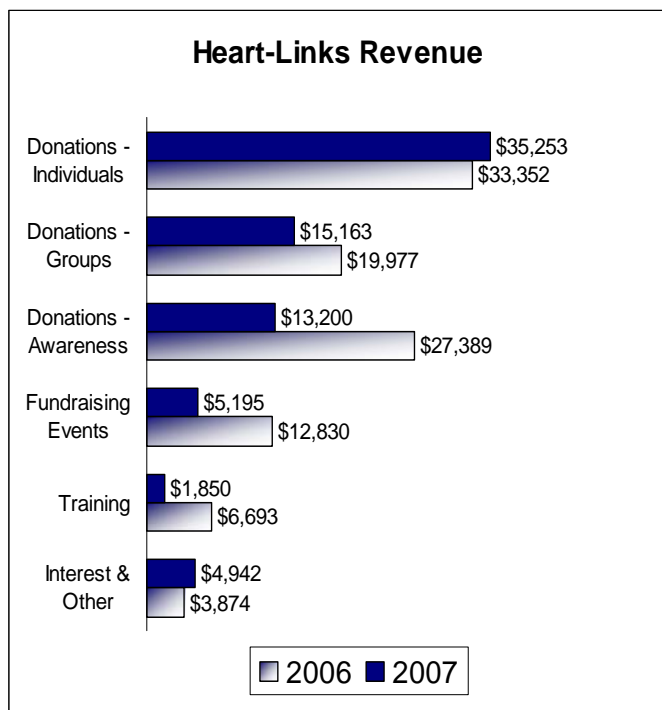
Fund Raising

2007 was an exciting year for the Fund Development Committee. In addition to the annual spring and fall campaigns, a special appeal was made in September to prominent business women in London. The response to this mailing exceeded our expectations but more importantly allowed us to reach out to individuals who had no previous history with Heart-Links. The two achievements of which the Committee is most proud are the implementation of a donor database and a monthly giving program. The new database, which was designed and developed by Chuck Van Den Corput, and provided to Heart-Links **at no cost**, is helping us to get to know our

donors better while streamlining the receipting process. We also provided our donors with the opportunity to make monthly donations by direct withdrawal from their bank accounts. It’s an easy, effective and low cost way to make donations. Not only does it save Heart-Links administrative costs, it provides a stable and reliable source of funding so that better planning can take place to meet the future needs of our Peruvian friends. We are grateful to Bank of Montreal (BMO Financial Group) for providing this service to our donors **free of charge**. At the same time, the Special Events Committee organized initiatives that as well

as generating income were equally important in bringing members and friends of Heart-Links together. 2007 began with a Palace Theatre night in March. We appreciated the support of London Community Players. Our most popular and largest fund raising event, the annual Heart-Links Bazaar in April, was very successful. As always it is impossible to list the many volunteers involved but of

special mention are Sarah Lucier, the bake table convenor, and the generous donations of baked goods from St. John the Divine Parish. A new format was introduced for the Annual Dinner held at the Marconi Club in November. Income tax receipts were issued for the donations portion of the tickets and items made in Peru were available for sale.



This information is based on unaudited numbers. To request your copy of our Heart-Links audited financial statements please call 519- 645-2845 or send an email request to: info@heart-links.org. Please provide us with your name and mailing or email address.

Sincere Thanks

We wish to express our most sincere thanks to all of Heart-Links' friends, including our trusting partners in Peru, and our generous donors, hard working board and committee members, and dedicated volunteers in Canada.