

Community of Casa Blanca, El Salvador
November, 2020

Background: After the Peace Accords were signed in 1992 the land reform began to be implemented. Large plantations were distributed to Cooperatives. These cooperatives then, over time, were breaking up into communities that would own their own portions of the cooperative (while still being cooperative members). The communities were organized into Boards of Directors or Community Development Associations. In the case of Casa Blanca currently there is a Community Development Association/ADESCO, which represents 4 communities of the La Magdalena canton.

When Casa Blanca became a standalone entity, it was deeded the land, but the water supply was located on the cooperative property. They are allowed to utilize the water supply irregularly, every other day. It has a 35-year-old distribution system that goes to 60% of the 300 homes (1,350 residents). Some of the neighborhoods do not have water going to the homes.

In 2019 the community was informed that the cooperative had grown and would need to utilize all of the water from their source and could not share the water with Casa Blanca after 2024 (??). This has created urgency in establishing a community owned source of water.

In June of 2019 at the request of ASAPROSAR (www.asaprosar.org) I visited some communities in the western part of El Salvador that had needs that would fit into one of the seven pillars of Rotary International. While there are many wonderful communities with needs that fit, the issue with Casa Blanca rose to the top of the list as they are facing a crisis that is solvable with the participation of the community, ASAPROSAR in developing community leadership, the Rotary Club of Santa Tecla to manage the project, and the Rotary of Shepherdstown, WV to lead in the raising of the required funds.

With the “team” in place ASAPROSAR worked through the COVID-19 Pandemic on organizing the community, strengthening the Board of Directors, promoting the organization of a water committee to oversee not only the project, but the on-going success of the water system. They have completed a community assessment and a MOU (memorandum of understanding) between all the entities. The Rotary Club of Santa Tecla had a hydrological feasibility study completed and works with the community and ASAPROSAR. The community purchased the land that the proposed well will be located on. The Rotary Club of Shepherdstown has begun getting financial commitments from their club and District (7360), the Rotary Club of Carroll Creek and District 7620.

We are looking for other Districts and Clubs to become partners in this project. (Draft GG#21210132). Assuming there will be a time for safe travels we will organize a visit to the country and the community. We hope you will join us in this critical project.

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