

## How Do You Measure “Worth It”?

By **BRENDA MELANCON**  
*GasserOnline Columnist*

Rotarians **David Peterson** and **Ben Windham** have measured and determined that drilling water wells in Nicaragua is “worth it.” We have just returned from the annual trip to Nicaragua. For those of you that have traveled there before, you know what I am about to say. For those of you that have not, close your eyes and imagine.

Where you live the floor is made of dirt, the walls are made of plastic, cardboard and wood (small pieces). The roof is tin and the only thing keeping the roof from blowing away are the large rocks anchored on top. You have no water.

These are the living conditions we witnessed in the most remote villages in Nicaragua, over and over again.

These are the very same conditions and needs former Rotarian **Bob Scroggs** witnessed in 2000. He was moved to share this with the Rotary Club of Tulsa. Little did he know that was the beginning of the Nicaragua Water Well Drilling Program.

On our trip we visited many villages where we previously drilled potable water wells, drastically changing lives in these villages.

We visited the village Emanuel in San Benito where we have drilled 4 water wells. The people of the village came out to greet us, pump water from the well, and receive the gifts we had brought for them. **Linda Bradshaw** asked one of the village women (with help from interpreter **Alan Weyland**) how things were now and what they needed. The woman answered, “I have no greater blessing than the



gift that water brings. I need no more." The gratefulness of the people was overwhelming.

Another day we visited the village "Breeze of the Ocean" in Leon, where we had previously attempted to drill and experienced difficulty bringing the well in due to saltwater. It was determined that the well would be drilled, one mile from the village, on the property of **Roberto Reyes**, a Rotary member from our partner club in Leon. He would supply the pipe to get the water to the village on one condition, which **David Peterson** posed to the villagers - all of the men would help dig the trench for the pipe to the village. One of the men began crying, shook his head "yes," they would be willing. Upon our arrival at the village this year Rotarians who had visited previously were amazed. Not only had they dig the trench, but they had made water available to each individual home as well. Flowers and vegetables were growing. Rotarian **Tina Miller**, who has visited and photographed this village both years, said, "It's amazing to see the difference in the village from last year to this year."

We observed pride in ownership at its best! The people of the village are thinking ahead and talked with Rotarian **David Standlee**, a member of the Rotary Club of Huntsville about the Rainbow Network\* possibly constructing "permanent" housing for their village. David said they would consider it on one condition - the men of the village had to help construct the houses. Without hesitation, they said "No problema!"

We left that village knowing our efforts to drill and provide potable water had significantly changed and enriched their lives, and will continue to do so.

That is the reason we continue to work hard to keep this project going, continue to ask for donations to support it, and continue to have hope for the less fortunate people of Nicaragua.

Next year when you have the opportunity to take this trip, say "yes" to a life changing experience for you and the people of Nicaragua. And don't forget to thank **Bob Scroggs** for giving us all the opportunity to answer the question, "How Do You Measure 'Worth It'?"

2009 Participants included Tulsa Rotarians Linda Bradshaw and spouse Wayne; Greg Kach, spouse Connie and son Conner; Brenda Melancon; Tina Miller; Tom Payne; David Peterson and spouse Elaine; and Alan Weyland. Also on the trip were Rhonda Ellisor and David Standlee, both of the Rotary Club of Huntsville, TX; and Tad Andrews of Tulsa, OK.

*\*Rainbow Network was founded in 1995 and is an inter-denominational Christian ministry working in rural Nicaragua with some of the poorest people in the world. Rainbow Network focuses on five areas to help carry out God's rainbow promise to God's children who live in*

*desperate poverty. The five areas are: nutrition, healthcare, education, housing, and micro-loans.  
For more information visit: [www.rainbownetwork.org](http://www.rainbownetwork.org).*