

Update on Mastate Charitable Foundation (MCF) Activities for 2005

Hello everyone! We wanted to take a moment to fill you all in on the wonderful accomplishments that MCF has made this year. Firstly, five young adults from the area received financial support to travel with students from the University of Washington and Solar Energy International on 3-8 day field trips to visit conservation areas in other parts of Costa Rica. You can find their photos and winning essays (in Spanish) on MCF's web site at www.mastate-foundation.org. Upon returning from their trips, the winners gave an oral report to the community in September of 2005. This was to fulfill their obligation of informing other community members about what they had learned on these trips. The presentation was well attended, especially by young adults, some of whom will be undoubtedly writing essays for the 2006 contest that was announced immediately following the talk.

The meeting took place in the community center, an unfinished building that also received support from MCF donations this year. In cooperation with University of Washington study abroad students, community members, mainly grade school and high school students, prepared the unattractive and bare cement-block walls for the start of their beautification project. We had some fun days of sanding, wetting and applying a thin layer of cement to smooth out the walls in preparation for paint. MCF helped to purchase the paint and community members showed off their amazing artistic skills by embellishing the walls with unique murals. It was incredible to see how the students' imagination and skill manifested themselves in the form of rainforest and other scenes on the walls. In the near future, you will be able to see some of their handiwork on our website at <http://www.mastate-foundation.org/projects.htm>.

Mastatal's most recently elected local government was saddled with a significant debt when they came into office in early 2005. This prevented any real substantive community development in Mastatal for the last many years. Although small by US standards the debt's high interest rates and the government's limited fund-raising opportunities stifled the local government's best intentions in planning new projects. In an effort to alleviate the cumbersome debt, MCF provided financial support for a major fundraising activity earlier this year, a regional Mother's Day Dance and soccer tournament. The community worked EXCEPTIONALLY hard to cook and clean for and organize the festivities. The event was an ENORMOUS success and resulted in a substantially reduced debt load on the local government. As a result of the government's accomplishment, they were able to renovate the entrance to the community center. The government's increased optimism was palpable throughout the community and stimulated interest for more community improvement projects.

In addition to the aforementioned activities, MCF has also been actively looking for supplementary sources of funding. We have applied for three grants in hopes of raising funds for the library and to help finance the training of locals to become volunteer park guards. For the latter, we would utilize a successful model that currently exists in Costa Rica called COVIRENAS. Using this model we would help train locals about the rules, regulations and procedures for spotting and reporting environmental law violations from

poaching wood and animals to illegal gravel mining. We hope we can report successes on some if not all of these funding requests next year. In the meantime, MCF continues to seek support from individual donors.

Thanks to everyone who supported MCF this year. Your help was greatly appreciated by everyone at MCF and in the communities around La Cangreja National park. We look forward to another wonderful year of working with the locals on enhancing the community and its environs.

If you haven't made a donation yet and would like to, you can go to <http://www.mastate-foundation.org/contactUs.htm> for more information on how to help. You can donate via PayPal or you can send a check made out to the Mastate Charitable Foundation, to:

Mastate Charitable Foundation
411 25th Ave East
Seattle WA 98112

And in case you forgot, we received 501(c)(3) tax exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service, so your donation is fully tax deductible. Please see our website for details.

Muchas gracias,

Susan Bolton
President
Mastatal Charitable Foundation