

Rotary District 5160

Report on the Uniendo America Project Fair, 2019

San Jose, Costa Rica

General Information

Two clubs in the District were awarded Project Fair Attendance Grants to attend the fair—Lamorinda Sunrise and Redding West. The Rotarians who attended were:

Skip McCowan, Lamorinda Sunrise; jackbmccowan@gmail.com

Kerry Caranci, Redding West; kerry@shastarcf.org

Becky Dominguez, Redding West; bdominguez@sfymca.org

The Uniendo America Project Fair took **place in San Jose, Costa Rica** from January 24 to January 26.

What is a Rotary Project Fair?

Project fairs are regional events hosted by Rotary districts to encourage International friendship and collaboration. Fairs give Rotary clubs a chance to showcase their service efforts to potential global partners, and they give international visitors the chance to find a project that meets their club's goals. Fairs typically run two to three days and may include site visits to service projects as well as opportunities to experience the local culture. These activities help visitors learn about the community and build long-lasting relationships with their international hosts.

What is the Uniendo America Project Fair?

The phrase "Uniendo America" means "Uniting America." The Uniendo America Project Fair has taken place annually for more than twenty years and rotates between various Central American Countries. This year it was held in San Jose, Costa Rica from January 24 to January 26. The purpose of Uniendo America Project Fair is to encourage Rotary Clubs from the United States and Canada to support projects presented by Central American Rotary clubs, both financially and in other ways. Projects must be presented and supported by a Rotary club and can receive support either in club-to-club or Global Grant formats. The latter involves making a joint application to the Rotary International Foundation for additional funding in accordance with carefully drawn rules. This January, Rotarians from Costa Rica, Honduras, Guatemala and Panama, from Districts 4240 and 4250, met with Rotarians from clubs from the United States, including clubs from California, New York, Oregon, Washington, Montana, Kentucky and other states.

The fair started Thursday evening with a reception where members of the various clubs could rekindle old friendships made at previous fairs, and make new friendships. On Friday, until noon, Central American Rotarians were stationed at tables in the hotel conference room where North American and Canadian Rotarians

stopped by to learn about the projects each of the Central American clubs are pursuing. Friday night, attendees had dinner on the slopes of a volcano, and were treated to typical Costa Rican cuisine and music. Saturday morning, training sessions and workshops were held. Saturday afternoon was set aside for free time to enjoy San Jose and surrounding areas. The fair ended Saturday night with a closing ceremony and dinner.

Extra Fair Activities

Many attendees took advantage of their travel to Costa Rica to extend their stay either before or after the fair to enjoy what Costa Rica has to offer visitors. Some left San Jose for trips to other Central American countries to visit projects that their clubs are supporting. Some planned on attending the project fair in Colombia. A group of about 10 attendees were invited by a San Jose Rotarian to visit her family farm that grows sugar cane and coffee. They were treated to a tour of the onsite sugar cane refinery.

Becky and Kerry took advantage of a few of the package tours to take in some education and culture. They first toured the Doka coffee plantation, a third generation family-owned farm and home to the oldest “wet mill” in the country. There they learned about sustainable coffee farming, fair trade and labor practices, and the incredible care and pride that Costa Rica puts into its agriculture. They also tasted great coffee! Later on the same tour they adventured around some of Costa Rica’s beautiful cloud forest at the La Paz Waterfall Gardens and Animal Preserve, seeing the biodiversity of Costa Rica, a sample home from early settlers, and of course, lots of waterfalls! The second tour took them west to the Pacific side of Costa Rica, where they took a boat cruise to Isla De Tortugas, or Turtle Island.



Kerry at the coffee plantation, and Kerry and Becky at La Paz Waterfall Gardens and Animal Preserve



The beginning of the tour of the sugar cane refinery



A visit to the sugar cane farm of one of the San Jose Rotarians



Dinner Friday night on the slopes of the volcano

Photos of the Fair



Skip and new friends at the Thursday night welcome reception



Julio Avila from the Usula Rotary Club presents his club's projects with Kerry and Becky in the background



Central American Rotarians describe their projects



Mark Rohweder of Kalispell Rotary Club and Dr. Gustavo Morales



Riley Huberto Nuñez from the Usula Rotary Club provides details on club projects
Participating Central American Clubs and Their Projects

Usula Rotary Club (Club Rotario Usula); District 4250.

Usula Rotary Club is from the town of San Pedro Sula, in Honduras.

Representative who attended the project fair:

Julio F. Avila Mejia

Email: julio.f.avila@gmail.com

Club website: <https://www.usularotary.org/>

Summary of the projects presented at the project fair:

1. La Cumbre Village Water Project

The project will provide a new water delivery system that will operate by gravity. The water source is now contained by a dam in the village of Las Pernitas Arribas, which is the current source of water to the community but it does not meet the required consumption needs. The zone is economically sustainable with agricultural crops, including pineapple, coffee and other vegetables. The project will provide for home connections for each lot and future lots. The population to be served is 842 people. The estimated cost of the project is \$40,500.

2. La Virtud Water Project

This project involves the construction of a new system to supply drinking water to the community of La Virtud. The project involves the construction of a small dam in the nearby mountains, a sand trap and the supply of a 20,000-gallon tank with a hypochlorinator. A pipeline from the source to the tank (2.4 km) and a distribution tank to the community are included. The population to be served is 780 people. The estimated cost is \$64,000.

3. Classroom Construction at Las Brisas del Cacao School

Las Brisas del Cacao School serves 426 students from grades 1 to 9 in the village of Santa Martha. There currently is no classroom for the 9th graders. This project will construct a classroom on an existing foundation made of concrete blocks and a metal roof. The floor will be smooth concrete and the windows will be aluminum frames and glass. The estimated cost of this project is \$15,261.

4. Kitchen and Dining Room Addition to Las Brisas del Cacao School

At the present time, due to the lack of kitchen and dining room half the students attend school in the morning and the other half attend in the afternoon. There is no place to prepare or eat the student snack. The construction of a kitchen and dining room is proposed. The estimated cost is \$26,353.

5. Center for Services for People with Downs Syndrome

This center which serves ninety people has adequate facilities. However, it can be more effective by the addition of the following items:

a. Acquisition of a folding curtain: To improve the use of the exercise area and to produce two usable spaces the project is to place a folding vertical curtain in the room. The estimated cost is \$6,445.

b. Acquisition of an air-conditioning unit: In the summer months the dining room is very hot. This project would add a 36,000 btu air conditioner. The estimated cost is \$1,333.

c. Provide for a dedicated computer lab: Currently, the principal's office is used as a makeshift computer lab. This project would build a wall dividing the room in half so that half of the room could be used solely as a computer lab. To build the wall and to provide a 12, 000 btu air conditioner would cost approximately \$3,913.

6. Additional Projects for Consideration

There are a number of other needs in the community, including the addition of a Kindergarten at a cost of approximately \$13,200; providing desks for 400 students at a cost of \$10,000 in San Pedro Sula at a cost of \$10,000; and providing backpacks with school supplies for 400 students at a cost of \$4,000. For details on these and the other projects, contact Julio Avila.

Rotary Club of Tegucigalpa South (Club Rotario Tegucigalpa Sur); District 4250 The Rotary Club of Tegucigalpa South is located in Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

Representatives who attended the project fair:

Rene Angel Velasquez

Email: angel_reve@yahoo.com

Club website: <https://www.rotarytegucigalpa.org/>

Riley Huberto Niñez

Email: rhng91@gmail.com

Summary of the projects presented at the project fair:

1. Revitalizing Recycling Economy in Utila, Honduras

Utila is a town on the Caribbean coast. It has a population of 4,160. It has 30 kilometers of coastline. The Caribbean Sea is the world's second most polluted sea. The world's second largest coral reef extends through Utila. This project is designed to support the people who manually remove plastic waste from beaches to process it into various items, such as desks, houses, fences and other products, that are sold commercially. The goal of the project is to organize the workers, maximize the revenue of the workers, increase the variety of recyclable products, create eco-friendly products made from waste plastic and to protect ecosystems and the environment.

2. Lomas Limpias Public School, Jacaleapa

Lomas Limpias is a public school with 58 students through the 11th grade. This project's goal is to supply the school with computers and to teach students basic and intermediate computer skills. The total budget for this project is \$37,463.

3. Horizontes Dilatados, Honduras

This program supports 203 students with scholarships in the Eastern Honduras. There are four schools that are the target beneficiaries, Yamaranguila School with 51 students, Garcias School with 39 students, La Union School with 108 students and Santa Rosa School with 5 students. The goal is to provide students with school uniforms, meals, school supplies and medical attention. The total budget is \$82,000. The breakdown is \$16,000 for uniforms, \$41,500 for meals, \$6,700 for clothing, \$5,800 for school materials, \$8,300 and \$3,000 for medical supplies.

Rotary Club of San Jose, Northeast (Club Rotario San Jose, Noreste); District 4240

The Rotary Club of San Jose, Northeast is located in San Jose, Costa Rica.

Representatives who attended the project fair:

Carlos Hernandez, PE

Email: ceh890@gmail.com

Club website: <https://www.facebook.com/Noticias.CRSJNE/>

Melania Pacheco Pinto, DDS

Email: melapacheco@gmail.com

Summary of the projects presented at the project fair:

1. Strengthening Democratic and Social Institutions of Costa Rica

The general objectives of this powerful program are to teach, promote and disseminated, among youth groups, knowledge and tools for leadership, conflict resolution technics, communication tools and soft skills, familiarity of rule, regulation and the law and practice democratic values. The goal is to advance these qualities so the young people can become facilitators and active agents in the solutions for the problems of their community and country.

Despite the fact that Costa Rica has a long history of a stable democracy, the Rotarians who have developed this project have seen the rise of political and social symptoms that trouble them. The political symptoms include breakdown and collapse of the traditional parties, the rise of populist movements, intolerance and radicalism, attacks on institutional bastions, democracy and traditional symbols, threat of a theocratic system and a very fragmented antagonistic legislature.

Social symptoms of concern include insecurity, violence and drugs, corruption and influence peddling, disenchantment with politicians and the system, disillusionment with the judiciary, fiscal deficits and debt, and economic model favoring few and leaving out many.

Who will the project will accomplish its goals? The project will teach, promote and disseminate, among youth groups, ages 15 to 30, all of the skills referenced in the first paragraph. This will be accomplished through workshops for young community leaders, short videos and other tools (blogs, chats, motion graphics and innovative ideas) for social networking, and an APP educational game.

The sponsors of this project expect it to take 36 months to start showing measurable results. They plan fund raising, focus groups and workshops, project design and campaign design to take up the majority of the time invested in the project over the next twelve months. They have developed very impressive plans and a timeline for accomplishing their goals. They have developed a very specific budget estimating the total cost of the project at \$150,000.

They have an impressive Power Point presentation that can be obtained through Skip McCowan or Carlos Hernandez. It shows “next steps” as develop strategic alliance with NGOs, identify young community leaders, conduct focus groups, calibrate content, train group of young leaders to conduct workshops, organize and conduct workshops, develop and manage on-line program and multiply effect through friendships among youth community leaders and NGO contacts.

The hope of the Rotarians in this San Jose, Costa Rica club, is to develop a program that will not only ensure their country’s democracy for the future but to provide tools for other Central American countries to advance healthy social and democratic principles.

Rotary Club of Guatemala Sur (Club Rotario Guatemala Sur): District 4250. The Rotary Club of Guatemala Sur is located in Guatemala City, Guatemala.

Representative who attended the project fair:

Francisco Viau

Governor elect, 2019-2020 of District

Email; fviaue@gmail.com

Club website: www.rotariosguatemalasur.com

Summary of the projects presented at the project fair:

Like many clubs, the focus of Guatemala Sur is water and sanitation. We were not able to collect enough information on this project on which to report.

Rotary Club of Guatemala Vista Hermosa (Club Rotario Guatemala Vista Hermosa); District 4250.

The Rotary Club Guatemala Vista Hermosa is located in Guatemala City, Guatemala.

Representative who attended the project fair:

Julio Grazioso

District Governor, 2017-2018

Email: julio@presto.com.gt

Club webpage: www.vistahermosarotary.org

Summary of the projects presented at the project fair:

The projects of this club aim to massively impact an area with water and sanitation improvements. During the fair members of the club highlighted the progress of their project, which has built hundreds of latrines and hand-wash stations and trained thousands of influential educators about the importance of hand-washing as well as toileting and feminine hygiene.

1. Water project for Escuintla National Hospital

The Escuintla National Hospital does not have a clean water supply. It's water supply comes from two wells that are contaminated by the waste from multiple nearby neighborhoods. The supply of water currently can only be accessed for 20 minutes and then there is a 3 to 4-hour period with not water until the pumps can produce water for another 20 minutes. The hospital has 250 beds and it services both adults and children. The Pediatric Department treats 1,200 children per month in the Emergency Department and 800 children per month in the outpatient clinic. In all, the hospital treats over 24,000 patients a year. The project is to drill a 500-foot well and to provide the necessary ongoing maintenance of the well to provide clean drinking water for the hospital. Feasibility and water quality studies have been completed. Funds are needed for the design and construction of the well and training of individuals who will operate and maintain the pump. The total estimated cost of the project is approximately \$183,000. Multiple sources of funding are being pursued.

Rotary E-Club Lake Atitlan

The Rotary E-Club of Lake Atitlan is located in Panajachel, Guatemala on the banks of Lake Atitlan. The members meet every Thursday at 1:00 p.m. at Hotel Fonda del Sol, Calle Principal 2-17, in Panajachel. One can join the meetings by going to the club's website and follow the instructions in the GoToMeeting section.

Representatives who attended the project fair:

William Boggle, DC

President

Email: chapterpresident@atitlanrotary.org

Club website: www.atitlanrotary.org

Summary of the projects presented at the project fair:

The club is especially concerned with supporting projects providing clean drinking water, sanitation, and any work that will help the water quality of Lake Atitlan.

1. Tule reforestation

A few years ago Lake Atitlan experienced an unusually fast increase in water levels that destroyed much of the tule forests. This dealt a severe blow to the lake's ability to heal itself from the constant inflow of chemical fertilizers and raw sewage. Tule is a native plant that aids in nutrient removal and water filtration.

Rotary E-Club Lake Atitlan and Rotaract Guatemala de la Asuncion participated in a weekend of direct impact measures in the ongoing efforts to save Lake Atitlan. By helping to restore the tule along the shores of Lake Atitlan they help promote the lake's ability to cope with environmental contamination.

2. Clean water projects

A large capacity commercial filter was installed by Aguas del Pueblo at the San Luca Toliman Parroquial Hospital. The primary sponsor of the project was the Santa Clara, CA Rotary Club. The Pentair nano filter is a non-chlorine system that will supply clean water to the hospital and the community of San Lucas Toliman, a town with a population of 22,000, for ten years.

The Santa Clara Rotary Club is also installing a potable water project near San Lucas Toliman in Sanik-Ya, Chitulum, Parroquial Colegio, and Quixaya.

3. Solar energy to light a school and computer lab

The objective is to provide 1,200 un-electrified rural villagers with access to electricity and computer lab to reduce the economic and social isolation of their growing population. The plan is to install 1,200 watts of solar power and a small computer lab of 10 used laptops at Montemaria's community organized public school. The budget for the project is \$9,450. For more information and a detailed budget, contact John Barrie at john@apptechdesign.org.

4. Mayan Power and Light (MPL) Global Grant application

Growing local economies through women owned sustainable, profitable social venture businesses. MPL is an innovative non-profit/social enterprise program that educates both rural and urban populations about health, economic and environmental solutions. MPL works to benefit hundreds of women with science, technology, engineering and math education. The MPL Pilot Program was sponsored by a Rotary International Global Grant with support from the Rotary Club of Nelson, British Columbia. Rotarians are welcome to join the Rotary E-

Club Lake Atitlan and MPL to install solar power and provide demonstrations of clean cook stoves and water filters in rural Guatemalan communities. The club has hosted Interact teams to visit and work on the project. The estimated cost of this project is \$85,000.

Rotary Club of Mazatenango (Club Rotario de Mazatenango); District 4250

The Rotary Club of Mazatenango is located in Mazatenango, Guatemala.

Representatives who attended the project fair:

Gustavo Morales, MD

Email: gusemos@gmail.com

Club website: <https://www.facebook.com/clubrotariomazatenango/>

Mark Rohweder, PE

Rotary Club of Kalispell, Montana

Email: mark.rohweder@kjeng.com

Club website: <http://www.kalispellrotary.org/>

La Vega Project Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/Montana-Rotary-Coalition-La-Vega-Water-Project-586239401846644/>

Summary of the projects presented at the project fair:

To date, members of the Sustainable Global Coalition (a partnership of 10 Montana Rotary Clubs), have completed three water projects in Guatemala: San Juan May, La Asuncion School, and El Progreso. The most recent project, El Progreso, was completed in November, 2018. A 350 foot well was drilled, a pump and water storage tank were installed, and a chlorination injector attached to ensure a safe water supply. The other two projects involved drinking water distribution. The Coalition is currently working on two projects: Pasac and La Bega. Pasac is a coffee cooperative seeking assistance to capture more water for drinking and for processing their coffee beans. The community of La Vega would like assistance in constructing water and sanitation systems to improve the health and well-being of over 1,300 men, women and children. The coalition seeks financial and technical support from other Rotary Club members. Opportunities exist to help develop the grant application and the work that must occur prior to and after the construction.

The team has been busy since the 2019 Project Fair pushing the La Vega Water Project forward. Members of the Mazatenango Club have met with the leaders, residents and member of the water committee of La Vega. They are working on the many plans required for the Global Grant and the project. Progress has been made on the Global Grant application. Contacts have been made to the La Vega Water Project. They are over one third of the way to funding the project.

Anyone interested in more detailed information can contact Mark Rohweder. He has copies of the Business Plan, the Administration Plan and the Operation and Maintenance Plan available in electronic format.

Rotary Club of David (Club Rotario de David); District 4240

The Rotary Club of David is located in David, Panama

Representatives who attended the project fair:

Antonio M. Singh C.

President 2018-20

Email: clubrotariodedavid@gmail.com

Club website: www.clubrotariodedavid.org

Amilcar Cerrud Moreno

District Governor 2020-21

District 4240

Email: amilcar.cerrudo@gmail.com

Summary of the projects presented at the project fair:

We do not have details at this time of the projects for this club but they include projects involving the construction of stoves, education, clean water, mother's milk, and a farm for foster children.

Rotary Club of Escazu (Club Rotario de Escazu); District 4240

The Rotary Club of Escazu is located in San Jose, Costa Rica

Representatives who attended the project fair:

Esteben Echavarria

Email: esteben.echavarria@gptwi.com

Club website: <https://www.facebook.com/RotaryEscazu/>

Summary of the projects presented at the project fair:

1. H.O.P.E. (Healing our People to Excel)

The Rotary Club of Escazu has been collaborating with the family of one of its members for more than eight years. The family has been committed to support the vulnerable inhabitants of the street in the center of San Jose. They provide food for more than 300 men, women and children who come every Thursday at a location on 10th Street in the city. Rotary and Rotaract have joined forces to collect food from supermarkets and to provide labor to distribute between 300 and 500 meals every week. The goal is also to provide not only food but shelter and counseling for those people who are addicted to drugs, and job training to break the cycle of homelessness. The club hopes to make this a pilot program that can be adopted in other cities in Costa Rica. The project has four phases with estimated budgetary needs of \$69,000 for phase 1, \$29,000 for phase 2, \$85,000 for phase 3, and \$5,000 for phase 4.