



Community members with the new tanks that store the rainwater.

## LET LOVE FLOW IN GUATEMALA

by Lisa Rothenberger-Winter, World Relief Officer ABC-USA

**W**ater. It is so much a part of our daily life; at times we hardly think about the ease with which we access it. In 2020, COVID-19 reminded us of one of the many reasons water is so important—to enable us to wash our hands frequently. There are so many other reasons we need water—to drink, to prepare food, to do laundry, and to use the bathroom. Water—or the lack of it—plays a pivotal role in a community's health and welfare.

There are many communities around the world for which access to clean water remains a luxury. The village of Volcancito in Guatemala was one. Despite repeated requests to the local municipality, a system to provide water to homes and the school remained out of reach. The community had already held reforestation days, planting over 140,000 plants to counteract the deforestation that has taken place from increased logging activity in the area. In addition, a large-scale silver mining project

has left the groundwater contaminated with arsenic and heavy metals. When the water from the springs is contaminated, and the amount of water in those springs is limited because of deforestation, where do you look? To the skies—for the rainwater. But the village lacked a system to harvest the water when the rains came—especially important during the long dry periods in the summer.

In 2020 the community was introduced to the Water for All project designed and led by International Ministries' Global Servants Rev. Ricardo Mayol-Bracero and Rev. Dwight Bolick. Water for All is about rainwater harvesting and so much more. The project seeks to use the strengths of the community to learn about the care and best use of freshwater supplies. Techniques of rainwater harvesting are explored in a participatory way to arrive at what will work best for the community.

A year later, life in Volcancito has indeed changed—for the better! At the school, four large tanks collect up to 2600 gallons when the rains come. The water is stored to provide for the school's bathroom and kitchen—enabling 70 students and their 3 teachers to study at the school. The water used to prepare the daily lunch is recycled and used to flush toilets. The new rainwater harvesting system is working so well, the rainwater collected at times overflows from the tanks!

One Great Hour of Sharing has indeed Let Love Flow at the school in Volcancito. But the love won't stop there. The system used at the school now serves as a model for the 60 homes in the community as they seek to meet their own basic needs for hygiene and water for their homes.

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