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Mainers To The Rescue!
Local effort replaces school roof in Guatemala

Living in Maine this winter, students certainly got their taste of snow days. Imagine if your child could not go to school for weeks at a time because of the weather? In Village Concepcion, a small Mayan Village in Guatemala, this was the case for the local student body. Each rainy season, which last approximately from April to October, the school would close for weeks on end because the dilapidated roof filled the classrooms with rain water and mud from the wet earth.

A team of locals from the Kennebunk area joined forces to replace the roof in that far away village school. The Kennebunk Rotary Club, the Church on the Cape in Cape Porpoise and THRIVE, a family foundation with local ties, pooled their resources and raised \$9000 in record time for the project. The group worked with Partners In Development (PID), an international nonprofit based in New England that works with the extreme poor in Haiti and Guatemala.

Since the funds were raised in January, construction has begun and half of the new roof has been completed. The city's mayor is so grateful for the help in the community, he has pledged to work with Partners In Development to make more improvements. Already, a full-time crossing guard has been hired to help children from the neighboring village cross the country's main highway that runs next to Village Concepcion so they can attend class. Each year numerous children were killed crossing the highway so many parents opted to not send their kids to school. Agreed to just last month, they are going to build a road into the Village so supplies can be delivered with ease and public transportation will be more readily available. Partners In Development also built a stone wall around the perimeter of the school to keep the children on school grounds during the day and to make the property safe for resources such as computers. School attendance has increased twenty-six percent since Partners In Development began its work there. In fact, they have renamed the school the Gale V. Hull Escuela, after Gale Hull, Partners In Development's President.

Members of the Kennebunk community just returned from a trip there where they were able to see progress on the roof and work with the children who attend the school. Richard, Ruth and Julia Merriam, Kerri Lovejoy of Kennebunkport and Susan and Amy Stedman of Cape Porpoise spent eight days in Guatemala with Partners In Development last month. Partners In Development recently started at Maine PID Committee to enhance the energy and support in York County. If you would like to get involved, contact Lisa Lassey, Director of Program Development in Kennebunk at (207) 467-3270 or email her at pid603@earthlink.net.

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For the past 17 years, Partners In Development (PID) has been serving the poorest of the poor in the developing world. Through child sponsorships, small business loans, housing opportunities and medical care we aim to transform communities so they can be self-sufficient. We serve over 4,000 people each year in Haiti and Guatemala who are determined to break the cycle of poverty for their families.