



Guatemala Service Trips 2020

This past February, two groups of 30 students, were given the opportunity to travel to Guatemala to participate in the annual CDSBEO exposure trips. The students spent most of their time in Guatemala in a small village called Anibal Archila, working in the community. Over the course of their stay, the students did work to help support the community, including assisting with the construction of a road with interlock stones, which will help to reduce mud in the wet season and reduce dust in the dry season.

Though both groups essentially had the same itinerary each student came back with different life changing memories and newly developed values. Catholic Student Trustee, Josephine Purcell, who also participated in the experience, provided details to the Board.

"The main goal was to begin building the final roads in the village and to paint the over one hundred houses for the habitants of the village," explained Trustee Purcell.

"Each group brought along plenty of donations which were used to make care packages to share with those in the village that need it the most."

Students from the Eastern secondary school group also visited the Church that the habitants of Anibal Archila have built. Students from the Western secondary school group visited a small medical clinic which, if expanded, could provide more care to a larger group of families.

"The students and supervisors decided to bring some of their money together and make a donation which will help improve the clinic," noted Purcell.

Unforgettable relationships were formed between the students and the families in Anibal Archila from locals who demonstrated sincere gratitude for the work being done.

"The minute we arrived we were welcomed with a great celebration that included music, refreshments, and fireworks. They willingly shared many parts of their culture with us even though we had just met them."

Trustee Purcell explained that leaving the village was an emotional day, but that it proves how impactful the experience is, because of the bonds made with the people of the small Guatemalan village. A video was shown which included additional testimonials from many students who expressed their gratitude and described the positive experiences in Guatemala.

"On behalf of everyone who participated in this trip, we would like to give our thanks to the many staff of CDSBEO and One by One, that made this incredible trip possible," concluded Trustee Purcell.

"It is clear that there are so many benefits to providing students with this enriching opportunity," concluded Chair Lalonde. "Thank you for sharing your insightful and moving stories with us."



CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF EASTERN ONTARIO

Board Meeting Highlights
From the meeting held May 19, 2020



A copy of the video, which includes highlights of the experience and student testimonials, can be found on the CDSBEO News Blog at www.cdsbeo.on.ca.