

Tradition continues as local volunteers head to Honduras

By Denise Allabaugh
Citizens' Voice Staff Writer

A group of Northeastern Pennsylvania volunteers has an annual tradition of traveling to San Pedro Sula, Honduras, to improve the quality of life of orphans and other people living in that area.

This year, they plan to do it again.

The group, known as Operation Honduras, will travel to Honduras Feb. 12-19 to renovate an orphanage, to donate technical equipment and badly needed medical supplies, and to provide medical services, including hearing exams.

Volunteers Jim Weaver, John Prokopchak and Jim Davenport traveled to Honduras in October to plan these projects.

Davenport, who is president of Operation Honduras, expects 20-30 volunteers will travel to Honduras in February.

"The orphanages we have been

introduced to have tremendous economic need," Davenport said. "Our method of giving is labor and money to purchase the materials that we use with our own hands."

Operation Honduras began seven years ago. During previous trips, volunteers provided hearing exams and donated hearing aids to needy patients.

In many cases, these hearing aids allowed children to hear for their first time.

Last year, volunteers completed a vocational building at a quickly growing orphanage outside San Pedro Sula.

This building was dedicated to those who lost their lives in the space shuttle Columbia disaster.

In 2002, volunteers completed a residential facility for sick children, many of who are HIV positive.

In 2000, teams built a 1,200-square-foot school for the orphanage Albergue De Ninos El Refugio.



This Operation Honduras photo was taken Feb. 19, 2003. Local volunteers include: Brian Martin, John Prokopchak, Jonathon Prokopchak, Steve and Beverly Solfanelli, Rose Ann Gaetano, Steve Davenport, John Johnson and Jim Davenport.

Davenport, who was a former Peace Corps volunteer in Africa, has seen first-hand the need for and rewards of international service.

"There is such a high degree of poverty in Honduras. Our goal is to partner with the Hondurans to improve the conditions of the orphanages and to improve the quality of life for

needy Honduran children," Davenport said.

Sponsors of the group include Westminster Presbyterian Church, Church of Christ Uniting, St. Mary's/St. Joseph's Church and local clubs including Rotary.

Monetary contributions are being accepted at St. Mary's/St. Joseph's Church, 134 S. Wash-

ington St., Wilkes-Barre, 18703 or Westminster Church, 2 Lockhart St., Wilkes-Barre, 18703.

Hearing aids and medications also are being accepted.

For more information about Operation Honduras call Davenport at 970-0650 or e-mail ophonduras@aol.com.