

# GUATEMALA 2015-2016

## MEET THE PEOPLE



### DEBORAH SIMON

Deborah Simon, daughter of American parents, was raised in rural Guatemala where she witnessed the effects of extreme poverty on health and education of the people in her community. Desiring to be able to impact this, she studied nursing at the University of Oregon. Upon completing her studies she moved to New Mexico where she worked as an administrator of a non-profit home health and Hospice organization in Spanish speaking communities. She spent vacations working with medical-surgical teams providing care to indigenous Mayan populations in the central highlands of Guatemala. In 1996, while on a medical team in Uspantan Guatemala, she was approached by the town's mayor and the hospital's medical director with a request for assistance in procuring clean water for the town of 6,000 people. The Uspantan hospital had a

ward with 14 cholera cots in frequent use due to the contamination in the water. Upon her return to New Mexico, she took on the responsibility of raising funds and writing a grant for the construction of a clean water system. The impact of this first clean water project was remarkable. The rate of gastrointestinal illness in the town decreased dramatically and the hospital currently has only one cholera cot and it has not been used in many years.

Once the other villages of the Uspantan region saw the impact of having clean water on both their health and on the ability of girls to attend school (since they were no longer hauling water) Deborah received many more requests for water and sanitation projects. To date, Deborah has coordinated 14 additional Rotary grant projects, including 4 global grants in Uspantan. Each year she takes volunteers to Guatemala to ensure sustainability of the past projects and do on-site feasibility assessments in the villages that are requesting assistance.





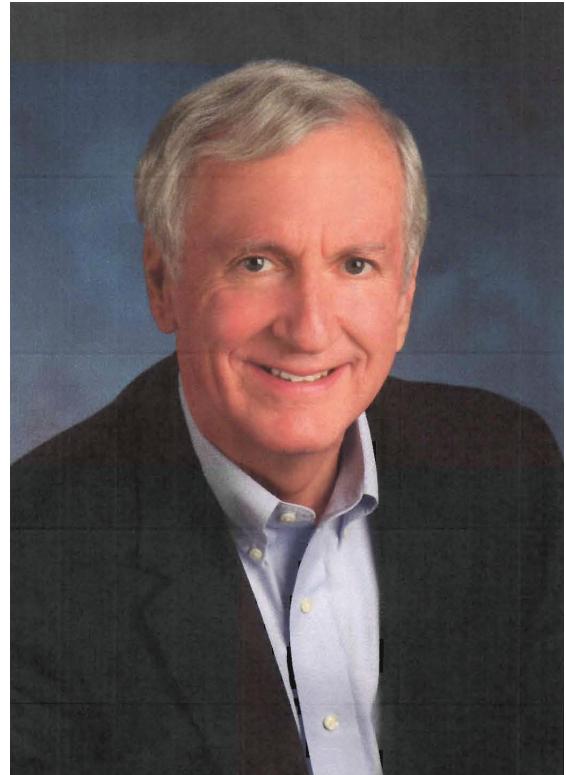
Since her first Rotary water project was approved in 2000, Deborah has been responsible for bringing water & sanitation to 22 villages. It is estimated that over 20,000 people have clean water due to her efforts.

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## ART ZEITLER

Art Zeitler is currently serving Rotary International as Assistant Regional Rotary Foundation Coordinator for Zone 21. He served as District Governor for the Rotary year 2014-15 for District 5930. He is a business, real estate and estate planning attorney with a regional practice and offices in Corpus Christi. He is a graduate of the University of Texas (B.A.) and Southern Methodist University School of Law (J.D.). He is Board Certified in Commercial Real Estate Law by the State Bar of Texas.

Art became a Rotarian in 1993 and is a member of the Rotary Club of Corpus Christi. He organized and has chaired his Rotary Club's Water and Sanitation Committee and administered its Humanitarian Grant Project in southern Honduras. Art and wife Carol helped lead the project related work-study team trip to Choluteca, Honduras in January, 2011. This project resulted in the installation of water filters and latrines and provided hygiene education for 180 families in five villages in partnership with the Rotary Club of Choluteca, Honduras.



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