

## **Algonquin College School of Social Work / SalvAide Delegation to El Salvador**

**February 2007**

Hi everyone, the study tour for the SSW students is going really well.

We started in the capital city of San Salvador and met with two agencies.

We went to the botanical gardens where there are some rare and ancient species. We went to the public university, the Jesuit university, to the Chapel where Monseignor Oscar Romero was killed by the death squads 26 years ago while he was saying mass. He had been speaking out for the poor during the civil war. We also saw where the 7 Jesuit priests were killed at the university.

We are in the rural area now called Bajo Lempa, near a river that comes through Guatemala and the whole country of El Salvador. We are staying at an Eco Hostel in cabins on the river. The cabins are located 800 meters from the Pacific Ocean and we can hear it from our spot.

We have been meeting with people in the rural communities and seeing livestock and house building projects. This morning the area we visited has a very serious problem with the water, as it is contaminated with DDT.

We met with war injured and war amputees yesterday and had a very moving presentation and about their situation.

We visited the CIDEP college which started two years ago in a rural area. They are running short courses on metal fabrication and carpentry.

We are so lucky in Perth to have what we have!!!

This afternoon we meet with the seniors and will be presenting financial donations from supporters at the campus and a lot of the things that people brought in like medicine and arthritis rubs. Thank you to all of you guys in the Office Admin program that especially supported this. Thanks to Bracken Begley for spearheading this and for Ann MacPhail for her support. Dave Osborne, your penny jar came to \$23 and we are giving the money today.

We have enough money for two high school scholarships and for three guitars for the youth group. We present them tomorrow.

We found out that there are 5000 families with 4-6 kids each that need a high school scholarship of \$400 Can per year. 66% percent of the kids are not going to high school in this region of the country because of economic conditions. They do not have the money for transportation, books, uniforms and if the teenagers do not work, the families do not eat.

We send greetings to the first and second year SSW students, and to everyone else.

Lisa Shaw-Verhoek