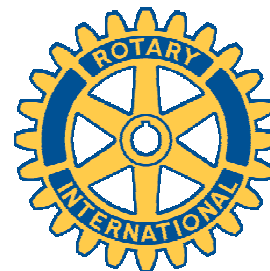


District 5730 Group Study Exchange



Week One in Brazil

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Boa tarde! We arrived in Brazil on the morning of the 2nd of May and have been on the move since then. Although we arrived in Cuiaba, our visit there won't be until the end of the trip. We spent our first night in Cuiaba and arose the next morning to be delivered to Lucas Rio Verde. Lucas is about 300 km north of Cuiaba. The first part of the trip went well, but afterwards, one of the two drivers decided to take a shortcut without discussing it with the other driver. The miscommunication cost one part of the team two or three hours as their driver tried to determine what was going on.

The people of Lucas were ready for us. They had never participated in the GSE program and were worried about putting the program two and one-half day together. The program was packed and they provided vocational visits for everyone as well as some extra opportunities to visit schools. At some point, we were all asked to address either a high school or university class.

A transportation snag was developing because of a blockade by farmers who are protesting the lack of government price supports in a devastating year of low soybean prices. A decision was made to go to Sinop by bus since the farmers were letting buses through on the highway.

The personalities were different, but we found two committed Rotary clubs that have been delightful hosts. The vocational visits have been on a group level

instead of personal level. They've also provided us with some leisure activities. The team members have been blessed to stay with very nice families in both Lucas and Sinop.

From Bill Morris: It's fun to be in front of a Rotary club again! Translators have been supplied for each meeting and that certainly simplifies the process for us. Going into this trip, I knew I had a great team to work with and that becomes more obvious by the day. Each team member brings distinctive talents to make us a well-rounded team.

From Dwayne Paschall: I have learned two things about Brazil so far: the people are wonderful...the roads are not! It is amazing to see such stark contrasts in a beautiful country. And to see first-hand how bustling cities with 10,000 to 30,000 inhabitants have grown up out of the jungle in as little as 15 years.

From Janna Holt-Day: It is very exciting here in Brazil! We are busy and seeing many wonderful sights. We have seen some monkeys playing in trees and a few parrots flying around free. Our next stop will be Alta Floresta on Monday and we have been told that we will see much more wildlife because we will be on the edge of the Amazon. We are hoarding our bug spray for that "other" type of wildlife the, muito inseto!

Elizabeth Sharp reporting: Today I found myself in the middle of a "grande" soybean field with Pedro, yesterday I cracked Brazil nuts in a factory, Thursday, I spoke in front of 200 junior high students, and Wednesday, I learned the samba.



I've done all of this with knowing less than 20 words in Portuguese! The Brazilian folks have been amazing in helping me navigate this "bonita" (beautiful) country; they are kind, welcoming, generous, and humorous! Muito obrigada for this opportunity.

From Jorge Ramirez: Five days, and the trip has been all I expected. I have met with various international traders and learned a great deal about the economic and trade obstacles that the Brazilians are facing. Major among those is the lack of good public infrastructure, and most especially the lack of good roads to transport goods and raw materials. Earlier today, we were on the only highway that traverses the country from the Amazon in the north to the country of Uruguay in the south. The road was no better than the worst of our farm to market roads in Texas!

Hopefully the next volume is just a week away!!