



MEMO

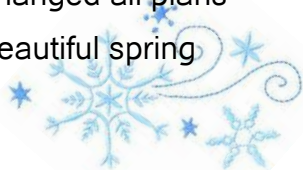
Autumn Reflections

2016



REFLECTING

LAST evening I re-read my last report to you and chuckled as I read the opening line and recalled the sudden snowstorm that changed all plans people might have had of a beautiful spring weekend.



Well, here I am sitting down to write at the end of a record breaking warm autumn as the remnants of a severe winter snowstorm have the plows out to clear our streets. Once again, so much for the plans of man! This is when MEMO takes comfort in the fact that there is a Plan and we must learn to be flexible as we follow it.

Lately a number of people have asked, just what MEMO *does* do? We ship medical equipment and other supplies used in clinics, nursing homes, children's centres, rehab centres, orphanages, even schools. How is all this accomplished? Where does all the equipment come from, how do we know who needs it and how do we get it there? This is where the phrase "MEMO Miracles" comes in...and we believe it *is* a miracle! MEMO does not pay any staff or pay for advertising and yet it all seems to continually expand by word of mouth. The equipment we receive would all be heading for a landfill in our wasteful economy, but is extremely valuable in other places in the world.

Most people like to help others and so they respond. For this reason there is a constant stream of donations from our city and surrounding region being picked up or delivered to our warehouse. It is impossible for me to list them all (I thought about it) but it does include hospitals large and small, school boards, medical centres, even an ostomy organization in Ottawa.

We have had (for the last 3 years) a wonderful, spacious warehouse where all these supplies are deposited and face the attack of our volunteers. They are a motley crew of willing workers of all ages with good hearts, who sort, repair, paint, pack, label, and create an inventory of all that we have in storage. One thing we have learned in



Volunteers build a packing case.

shipping is that there are many complicated import laws. Every country has its own import and customs regulations which may change at a whim and not necessarily for the benefit of all citizens.

Before shipping, the agent requires a detailed inventory of the contents of the container or it won't be accepted by the receiving country. In Cuba the government now requires a list of what we plan to put in the container. We must remove from the list what the government refuses. Our volunteers, as they are able, come out every Monday, Wednesday and Friday morning to pack, move, sort, and number hundreds of items to prepare for each shipment.

And that brings us to shipments. My last letter ended as I told you we were sending a container to El Salvador on April 23rd. We mentioned that our missionary contact, Cecilia Huezo, had introduced Jerome to a new (and most deserving) hospital. This container met a lot of their needs.

What has happened since?

June 8th Jerome and Dave March were invited by Steve Neufeld, EFCCM director in Latin America, to visit the Good Samaritan Home for the Aged in Vincent Guerro, Mexico. They met



Juan & Lupita Cruz;
founders of Good Samaritan Home.

with Juan Cruz, the director, who explained that it all began when he noticed some abandoned seniors left

downtown, confused and lost. He started bringing them home. His wife finally said "Why not buy the house next door and care for them?" The government gave them land to build a home. The home is a 24 bed residence but they need help

with furnishings and supplies. They also set up a community medical clinic. A container full of furnishings, supplies of several thousand adult diapers, disinfectant, feeding chairs, wheelchairs etc. is ready to be shipped from Thunder Bay. We are completing the customs arrangements to ship all of this shortly.

June 18th we shipped a container to Nicaragua where missionaries with the EFCCM working with the poor in smaller, rural areas to develop community sustainability, heard what MEMO does. They needed supplies for a four room clinic and a 12 bed seniors' home with plans to expand to 30 beds. They have the staff and we were able to send all the equipment needed. They sent pictures of the donations in place earlier in November as they expressed their gratitude.



Receiving a new wheelchair in
Nicaragua.

Because we have to vacate our warehouse premises shortly, we were concerned about finding new homes for the vast quantity of inventoried equipment in store. Once again we were directed to another mission. The Zimbabwe Gecko Society is run by a senior couple in B.C. They had a half-full container available for shipping from Toronto and needed us to fill it. We were able to provide them with 20 pallets of valuable equipment including four renal dialysis

units and teleconferencing equipment for a teaching hospital. This had to be palletized and trucked to Toronto to continue its journey.

September; a new development occurred when we received a call from the Disabilities Coordinator for the Nokiiwin Tribal Council. She wondered if MEMO could provide a walker for someone who fell through the bureaucratic cracks and did not qualify for government aid. We were happy to help. This was followed by a request for commodes, wheelchairs etc. Often the problem occurred not because a person did not qualify for assistance, but because the need was immediate, not 6-12 months later when all the paperwork was done. Then a request came for an electric



Chief Wayne enjoying his new scooter with Lisa French & Jerome.

scooter. We had a number of them but usually by the time we receive them the batteries need to be replaced. To sum it up, we provided the scooter; Nokiiwin found the money for batteries and scrubbed that scooter until it shone like new. A resident of Pic Mobert became a happy, mobile resident. Thus MEMO has developed new friends; check out www.nokiiwin.com. The Tribal Council was invited to our fundraising dinner and generously sponsored a table.

October 15th: another shipment went to El Salvador.

October 28th MEMO had its annual fundraising dinner and had as guest speaker, Cecilia Huezo, from El Salvador who is an EFCCM missionary. What an amazing evening that was! Cecilia was a



refugee from the eleven year war in El Salvador, escaping with her family to Thunder Bay, Canada in the

early 80's. She attended and graduated from St Ignatius High School. Work and further studies in theology followed, culminating in the knowledge that God wanted her to return to El Salvador to help her people. Just at the time MEMO first went to help Shalom Clinic in El Salvador; Cecilia arrived at Tutultepeque, a few hours' drive from Shalom.

She quickly developed a working relationship with MEMO and has been the recipient of equipment to assist with health care, education, bicycle repair, sewing, childcare etc. We even sent a



Mike Serediak teaches bike repair in Tutultepeque.

container now converted, half to a sewing shop and half to a bicycle repair shop for training people in her community.

As she shared her story at the banquet she was speaking to some people who have known her, some who have prayed for her, some who worked to pack and send equipment to her. It was another MEMO Miracle.

The financial results of the evening exceeded our expectations enabling us to ship another container to El Salvador November 26th, complete the Mexico shipment and then plan for Cuba in the New Year.

As I began, I mentioned our first and quite impressive snowstorm of the winter, reminding us that Christmas is approaching.

As we celebrate this season and remember God's Greatest Gift to us, let's rejoice in the lights, the music, the good food, freedom and peace and seek out ways to share generously with others as we hear of so many opportunities.

Blessings & Merry Christmas to all,

Maureen 

for
MEMO

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