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Dear Friends,

We write this newsletter to you with a heavy heart this time. Surely, most of you know of the recent passing of Dorothy D. Lemke. Dorothy was and still is the heart and soul of the Merida Foundation. It is her interest in the plight of the Mayan people that led to the establishment of the Merida Foundation and later expanded to providing schoolchildren with a nutritious meal each day.



Dorothy D. Lemke died May 25, 2019 after suffering from Alzheimer's disease for several years. A Missouri native, she grew up in Fortuna, MO and graduated from Tipton High School. She was a beautician and later an Optician. She owned and operated Classic Optical in Jefferson City until she retired in 1997.

Dorothy's greatest life achievement was proving that one woman can make a lasting difference to thousands of people in the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico. We, of the Foundation, are committed to ensuring that Dorothy's work of providing eyeglasses and feeding hungry children will continue.

We often have mentioned Luis and Genny in our newsletters. Both Luis and Genny contributed stories to share at the prayer service for Dorothy. We would like to share those stories with you here.

Luis tells the story of a time when he and Dorothy and Rudy were seated in the "boardroom." This is an open-air area of the Hotel Colon with chairs and such. Those of us in Merida at the time would often meet there to discuss the happenings of the day and make plans for the following day.

Dorothy was telling Rudy about the way Luis always called her "Madame."

Luis realized that every time he called Dorothy, Madame, she would smile at him in an unusual way, but he never understood why. Luis was never courageous enough to ask her why she smiled like that when he called her Madam. So that day, he finally decided to ask her why she smiled that way when he called her Madam. Luis tells us now that he used to think of himself back then as kind of a classy guy calling her Madam.

When he asked her the question, Dorothy said, "Well Luis, it happens that "Madame" is that kind of lady . . . well you know . . . a night lady."

Luis said that he felt his face melting off, but Dorothy laughed and patted his back and said "Don't worry Luis; I know exactly what you meant." Then we went, as usual, to have their supper.



Genny wrote a letter to the Foundation.

I am very sad I can't be with you in these moments. She (Dorothy) was my Grandmother. She was a great woman with a lot of goodness and is no longer with us. She was a great woman who gave me the opportunity to get ahead. A very kind woman

Thank God I had the opportunity meet her. She is an example for me to follow. She is no longer here, but she still lives in my heart.

I want to tell you that I am already working on my own. No more boss! I am very excited and wish you could see how the business is growing. Well you are

very important to me, you gave me the opportunity to study clothing fashion. My life will never be enough to thank you for giving me the opportunity to improve my life.

Dorothy has meant so much to so many people both here in Jefferson City, in Merida and the surrounding Mayan villages. She has and will continue to positively impact the lives of thousands of people in the Yucatan Peninsula. There are not enough good things to say about this wonderful woman. Dorothy will be sorely missed by all of us.

Earlier in May, board members Greg Mihalevich and Anne Durbin Scott traveled to Merida to distribute glasses and check in on some of the school nutrition sites.

We were in the villages from Saturday, May 11 through Tuesday, May 14 and we gave out a little more than 800 pairs of glasses in those 4 days. The temperature exceeded 100 F every day. The worst day was approximately 107 degrees in the shade. It was so hot that we were concerned about the car overheating so we turned off the air conditioner and lived with the windows open, the air blowing over us to keep us cool while we were driving in town. Out on the highway it was safe enough to run the air conditioner. We never knew that it could be too hot to run the air conditioner. Something just does not seem right about that.



We went to the village of Tixpehual the first morning. Unfortunately, they already were having some kind of all-day health fair at the municipal building. We try to set up in the villages' municipal buildings as they are centrally located in the village and often provide us with tables and chairs. But since they were busy, we told them we would come back the next day. We asked that they let the people in the village know that we were coming on Sunday and that we would be handing out glasses.

So we drove to another village by the name of LePan. LePan is a relatively big village and has an egg factory. Genny was with us this day and was invaluable help in translating for us, as well as keeping the glasses organized for us.



The next day, Sunday, we went back to Tixpehual and set up to give out glasses. Genny's brother Sandro was there to help us and did a great job of translating and fitting glasses! The line formed right away and we kept busy for several hours. Working in that type of heat is exhausting so by the end of the day, we all were ready for a cold drink and some of us, a nap!

One person of note that day was an older gentleman who had his son with him. The son said that the man could not see. I picked out the strongest glasses I could find and tried to hand them to him to try on. His hands just kind of grabbed at the air around the glasses. Obviously, he could not see them. I put the glasses on him and it

appeared that he could see a little but not very well. I remembered seeing a different pair of glasses earlier in the day that were a least twice that strong. Sandro helped me find those glasses and when I put them on the gentleman, he could see! He smiled great big and looked around. He saw his son and grabbed and hugged him. Then he hugged me. I do not care how many times I have had that experience fitting eyeglasses, it always gets me. I was goosebumps all over.

Monday, we were in Xcanchakan. Xcanchakan is a small village where the Foundation supports a kindergarten with food. It has been several years that we have worked with this school and the principal of the school is always glad to see us. Again, Sandro went with us and was a tremendous help. There was a crowd waiting for us when we got there. We set up in one of the classrooms of the kindergarten and there was a steady stream of

people needing glasses most of the day. For once we actually made it all the way through the line and satisfied all of our customers.



We still had customers left in Tixpehual, so Tuesday we returned there. Once again, Sandro was able to go with us and was such a big help again! It was another hot, but successful day. Tixpehual is a very big village and we worked for several hours before the line died down. Despite the fact that it was hotter than hot, the people waiting for glasses were in good spirits, talking and joking with their friends and family. To the person, everyone was thankful for the glasses and appreciated us being there.

Many thanks to you, Merida Foundation family, for your continued support. We need your support now, more than ever, as we hope to open at least one more and maybe two nutrition sites when the new school year begins in September!

Thank you,
Merida Foundation

Founders: Dorothy and Rudy Lemke

Board Members:

Mark Saucier, President
Anne Durbin Scott, Vice President
Greg Mihalevich, Secretary
Larry Lewis, Treasurer
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