



Xeabaj Centro Joyabaj, Guatemala

Why I Chose to Serve with GPRW

By Margaret Ward, Board Member

Many years ago, I went to a meeting with some GPRW board members and was asked to be a volunteer. Initially I expressed hesitation to become involved. Because there are so many needs in the Milwaukee area, I was not interested in committing time and energy to an organization that worked overseas. One board member wisely reminded me that people everywhere are all God's children. I am very grateful that I was moved by those simple words.

My involvement has increased, and I have been a board member for several years. I see most of our activity as raising money to provide tangible benefits to people in Latin America. I am always amazed at how far U.S. dollars go in developing countries. The relationships that GPRW has developed with our partners have ensured that our monetary resources reach our intended targets.

To know that with those resources we are changing lives in the present by providing potable water as well as educational and health support is affirming and inspiring. That said, I wonder how far into the future those benefits will reach!

Project Updates

In 2025, we were fortunate to have enough donations to install water for five villages! We partner with an organization, ASUVI, which is a non-profit organization dedicated to community development projects in Guatemala. Our engineer, Jorge, works with local teams for the project planning and completion. This photo shows the team hard at work assembling the water faucets for the homes in **Xeabaj Centro Joyabaj, Guatemala**. The project is estimated to be completed at the end of January 2026.

If you want to see one of our water project sites, visit Guatemala with us! We still have room on our March trip! It is life-changing to learn about the difference it makes for an individual, a family, and a community to go from having no running water to having safe, clean, running water right there in their homes.

Quantifying the Benefits of Clean Water

By Dr. Andrew Zaeske, Water Economist, Board Member

One of the less obvious benefits to a water project is time savings. Trips to collect water often involve carrying heavy containers long distances over difficult terrain. Without running costly surveys, computing the actual time savings is difficult. This is the perfect situation to use benefit transfer, an environmental economics tool that involves finding values someone else has collected and adapting them to fit our context.

Guatemala's Instituto Nacional de Estadística occasionally runs time use surveys, referred to as ENCOVI. Generally water collection time is not recorded as a separate category, but at least for the year 2000 edition, the World Bank was able to use the source data to compute the average time to collect water.

By eliminating long water-collection trips, one GPRW project gives families back over

100

days every year – time for school, work, and health.

The calculated difference in average time spent for rural households with and without modern water utility service is 221 minutes.

Taking this allows us to calculate a rough measure of impact, something to help us imagine the scale of benefits. With data currently in hand for 6 of 7 projects funded in 2025, the potential yearly time savings would be over 106 days. For every project GPRW has ever funded, an estimate for the total time saved is 51.64 years!

SSND Ministry Connection

Global Partners: Running Waters is an affiliated ministry of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, meaning that staff and administration demonstrate fidelity to the SSND charism. Leadership and governance structures may, but don't necessarily, include sisters.

An important part of the SSND community is Associates, lay people (women and men of any faith) who feel called to live according to the values and mission of the Sisters, but who do not take religious vows.

On December 16, Dr. Andrea Stapleton, Board President, became an SSND Associate at a covenanting ceremony at Trinity Woods in Milwaukee. The ceremony included a beautiful prayer service attended by members of the GPRW board, many School Sisters of Notre Dame, the Provincial Leader, S. Deb Sciano, several Associates, and other colleagues and friends. The theme, chosen by Dr. Stapleton, was "Revolution of Love: We Are God's Hands." For Stapleton, being an Associate fulfills her life-long vocation of service and advocacy to the world's most vulnerable. She is grateful to have been welcomed by the SSND community and have opportunities to serve in two ministries at Global Partners: Running Waters and as the Vice President for Mission and Justice at Mount Mary University.



She is among three other Associates on the GPRW Board: Heather Thomas-Flores, Jim Gill, and Grace Perez-Avila.

When Water Changes Everything

By Perry Nigh, Board Member

Picture all the sources of water you have in your home: kitchen sink, dishwasher, bathroom sink, bathtub, shower, toilet, laundry room – all with instant hot and cold running water. Now suppose all that were to disappear, and you were left with one spigot on your patio. If you want hot water, you need to carry it in and heat it on the stove. How life altering would this be for you?

In many places in Guatemala having that one spigot for water on their patio is their greatest hope. No more spending hours doing the back-breaking work of trudging down to a river or waterhole to carry back every drop of water that their family needs for cooking, cleaning, bathing and drinking. Water that carries diseases and pollution sickening them and their children.

Clean water means better health for them and their children. It's hours of extra time to study and earn money to improve their futures. Some of the impact is immediate. Most changes take time. A visit to these communities five years after a water project will show surprising quality of life changes: improved health, greater educational achievement, greater per capita income and a more cohesive community.

The beauty of the program is in the community development. The community is involved from the inception. They must organize to request a project. They must commit to perform all labor involved in the carrying out of the project. And they must commit to the maintenance of the project after completion. They are left with a feeling of accomplishment and pride in ownership.

Bang for the buck: Our board at GPRW is 100% volunteer. Your donation goes directly to the purchase of construction materials. There are no labor costs – all labor is provided by the community. So what might be a million-dollar project elsewhere is realized for pennies on the dollar.



Upcoming Events

Annual meeting - February 21 at 10:00 a.m., in person at Trinity Woods Milwaukee Room or online. This is an opportunity to learn more about the mission of GPRW and see what excellent work we have done in the past year. You will hear more about our projects, finances, and other key performance indicators. We would also love to hear from you!

Contact Dr. Andrea Stapleton if you would like to attend in person or to receive the link to join online: email president@gprwaters.org

Travel to Guatemala!

Global Partners: Running Waters offers a tour of Guatemala, **March 19-30, 2026**. The trip includes not only some of the most beautiful touristic spots found anywhere in the world, but also a look at some out-of-the-way places seldom seen by outsiders. More information here:

<https://globalpartnersrunningwaters.org/experience-guatemala/>

To learn more or to reserve your space, email:

Perry Nigh, profep13@gmail.com

Save the date! World Water Day - April 18, 2026



How Can You Help?

Interested in serving on our Board or a committee?

Board members meet once a month, serve on a committee, and volunteer about five hours per month—helping us direct more of our funds to our mission. Committee members support a specific area of GPRW’s work without attending board meetings. Current committees include Finance, Development, Communications, World Water Day, and Trips.

We are deeply grateful for all our board members and volunteers, past and present, who continue to be ambassadors for our work and champions for equitable water access and education worldwide.

Our mission is to build relationships through collaboration on water, food, health, and education projects in Latin America.

Contact Information:

c/o Mount Mary University
2900 N Menomonee River Pkwy
Milwaukee, WI 53222

Email: info@gprwaters.org

