

Leading the way

Nicaraguan excursion prepares teacher for altruistic missions



Corpus Christi teacher Laurie Clement works on constructing the wall for a new play structure at a school house in a remote village of Nicaragua. This December she'll head to South America for another altruistic mission.

(Windsor, Ontario, Aug. 7, 2015) – A summer excursion to a distant central American village has provided an elementary school teacher with the insight and experience she'll need to help lead students on even more altruistic missions.

"I feel like there are a lot of kids who would like to get involved with these kinds of initiatives, but don't really know what to do," said Corpus Christi Catholic Middle School teacher Laurie Clement.

As part of an outreach effort through Free The Children, Clement recently returned from a training trip with 14 other educators from around Canada and the U.S. to El Trapiche, a remote village in central Nicaragua. Besides getting involved with a playground construction job at the village school, part of the trip's aim was to familiarize people like Clement with how to lead similar excursions.



Laurie Clement

This December, during Christmas break, Clement will travel with her husband, several other WECDSE teachers and students on a trip to Ecuador. Although they won't learn their exact destination and mission until several weeks before they depart, she knows the trip's goal will be in keeping with Free The Children's objective of supporting impoverished villages with the resources they need to becoming self sufficient communities.

"It's not about giving them what we perceive they need," she said. "It's all about them taking ownership and determining for themselves about what resources they need."

Education, improving access to clean water, and helping encourage people to develop alternative sources of income are just a few of the intentions to which Free The Children aspires and sending people like Clement and her students to under-developed nations to support them is a an experiential way of supporting those goals.

"As Catholic educators, we teach our students about the benefits of helping others, but actually living it provides an understanding that we cannot teach in the classroom," Clement said. "The goal is that students will come back feeling empowered and find their own personal ways to give back."