

A Norwalk effort makes its impact on tiny village

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We are all aware of the many worthy charities that appeal to us daily for monetary help to meet a particular crisis, to solve a debilitating disease or to cope with a major social problem. As we said, they are all worthy.

There is one low-key, home-grown charity that is doing its good work in Guatemala, called Education and Hope.

It was founded by Norwalker Julie Coyne in 1997 in the village of Quetzaltenango to help children get to school.

She did not start a school but provided the necessities to get to school -- clothing, books, registration money for so-called "public" schools. Monthly scholarships provide the means to an education that would otherwise not be available.

With a \$250,000 grant, Education and Hope was able to purchase two buildings of its own. It is the first property it has owned and serves as the center of its program, including after-school activities for 85 of the 185 children it serves.

Coyne has set a new challenge for her group -- a library. To this end a group of teenagers and adult chaperones from Builders Beyond Borders came to the tiny town to start the beginning of what it is hoped will be a real library. The total cost is estimated to be \$44,000.

This organization relies of donations -- many of them from Norwalkers -- to keep this modest operation running on the front line of poverty.

Providing the means to an education and creating a library may offer the way out of grinding poverty in this tiny village where illiteracy is the norm.

For more information on Education and Hope, visit www.educationandhope.org.