

Les Ailes de
L'Espérance50 ans
d'implication
au Pérou

1971 - 2021

Newsletter

To mark the **50th anniversary of Wings of Hope**, we have published an electronic book tracing the history of the organization from its founding to the present day. We sent it by email to all the people who gave us their address. If you did not receive it and would like to receive it, please send us your address by writing to : adelestre@ailsdelesperance.org. You can also browse the book by clicking on the book in the 50th banner on the home page of our website www.ailsdelesperance.org. For the moment the book is only in French version.

The adventure of Wings of Hope begins



Me Jean Lambert

Fifty years ago, I was a young notary, newly sworn in and also a private pilot for 6 years. It was during a courtesy flight that I met Lionel Couture, with whom I quickly became friends.

Lionel, as everyone called him, had his offices in the same building as Noël Girard, a seasoned life and health insurer. A negotiation between the two men for a protection plan for the members of the association that Lionel headed, was in a way the **spark plug** for

the creation of *Wings of Hope* in Québec.

Lionel had persuaded me to join the core group of founders, all driven by the desire to provide an **emergency medical air service** in the Peruvian jungle. A group of very religious Americans were already providing this service under the name of *Wings of Hope*, with two Cessna aircrafts, one based in Iquitos and the other in Satipo. They were getting old and were looking for a group to take over. I don't know if it was the Franciscans working in Peru, including Monsignor Laurent Guibord, Bishop of Indiana (Iquitos), who made the connection with Noël Girard. Five Québécois, Lionel Couture, his brother Jean-Guy, Jean-Guy Lauzon, Marcel Pépin (not the one from the CSN) and myself, under the direction of Mr. Girard, officially formed the organization *Wings of Hope (Québec) Inc.* The young notary that I was, then took in charge of obtaining its legal existence by Letters Patent, a document that we refer to today as the Articles of Incorporation.

If I remember correctly, the assumption of the Peruvian operations followed a few months later. During the first thirteen years, I assumed the task of corporate secretary of the organization and I can without hesitation testify to the

intensity of the commitment of the administrators of the time who had to take up unprecedented challenges and not the least of them, to manage air operations remotely, to ensure the shipment of engines and other replacement parts in the jungle, and this, by overcoming the hassles of an administrative bureaucracy located at the antipodes of the North American culture. But the greatest challenge, and it was a nagging one, was to continuously raise enough funds to pay pilots and ground crew on time and all other related expenses to avoid paralysis of the operations that had been expanded to embrace the **socio-economic development** of these peoples.

As one of the survivors of the early days, I conclude by paying tribute to all those who made the success of this charitable mission possible. I would like to mention only two names: the founding president, Noël Girard, and his successor, Lionel Couture, who has invested himself in an exceptional way for many years.

Jean Lambert, notary



Noël Girard



Lionel Couture

William, a water warrior



William Cerron Aguirre 1959-2021

On February 2nd, a call from Lima announced the shocking news that engineer William Cerron had just passed away from Covid-19 in a hospital in the capital. He was only 62 years old. This news caused consternation among his family and the entire Wings of Hope team in Peru and in Montreal. We all appreciated him as a person and as a professional. The communities and his close collaborators mourn him.

During the week of January 18, William was visiting the ongoing projects in the department of Ayacucho when the first symptoms appeared. We know

that he was extremely careful in all his travels in the Amazon, in the Andes or on the Pacific Coast. He was the one who elaborated the sanitary protocol that we put in place in the villages. Unfortunately, he was contaminated by this virus very close to his home and his condition became more complicated.

William had been part of the team since 2015. Over the years, he had become a **true water warrior**. He never hesitated to take long, uncomfortable trips to answer the call of remote communities in need of clean water. In all these communities, William is remembered as



William with a family from Nuevo Progreso

a respectful man, attentive to their needs and also as a professional concerned with doing things in a correct and sustainable way.

All of us on the team recognize that the best way to honor William is to stand together and continue to deliver on clean water projects. To do this, we had to move quickly to replace him. Since mid-February, two engineers have been sharing the work: Nicanor Vidalón, a former colleague of William's, and William Manuel, William's son, a 29-year-old engineer. Nicanor agreed to be the mentor of the latter.

"He valiantly carried the cause and mission of Wings of Hope with all his professional knowledge and sensitivity to the different cultural environments he served. We lose a humble servant on whom we could always count." (Sylvia M.)

"He leaves a precious legacy and his memory will be honored each time a child grows up healthy thanks to drinking water." (Françoise G.)

Marie-France Raymond Fund

After two long years of a relentless fight against cancer, Marie-France passed away last April, surrounded by the love and affection of all those who had accompanied her during her long and painful illness. Marie-France left us an admirable lesson in life and resilience. What can we say about the inexhaustible

energy she never stopped giving us when we were with her, even in the worst moments of her suffering.

A psychologist by profession, Marie-France had, among other things, worked for many years with the Aboriginal people of Northern Québec. During a trip to Peru in the early 1990s, she learned about the Qosqo Maki organization that supports child workers in Cuzco. Marie-France offered her support to Isabelle Baufumé, the founder. She did not hesitate to ask all her friends every year to support this work. Qosqo Maki has developed a program that is admirably adapted to the needs of working children.

It is in this context that Marie-France came to know *Wings of Hope*. In writing her last will and testament, Marie-France wanted to extend her support to these children and to make a donation to the cause of access to water for remote communities in Peru. She therefore

bequeathed a significant amount of capital to the **Marie-France Raymond Fund** that she had created within *Wings of Hope*. Year after year, the income from this fund will ensure the continuity of her support. Thank you Marie-France.

André Franche



Marie-France Raymond



Projects on the way

Despite all the constraints imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic and the repeated confinements, the realization of projects continues. The members of our Peruvian team must sometimes find strategies to go to the villages and answer the call of the communities so enthusiastic at the idea of finally having access to drinking water.



In Rayme Alto

The women, having suffered all their lives from the absence of drinking water in their village, quickly mobilized with great enthusiasm to undertake the realization of the water system. The project is progressing very quickly and is taking shape more quickly than expected. The water will be pumped, thanks to solar energy, from a tank built at the bottom of the village and then directed to the reservoir perched on the hill above. From there, the water will be delivered to the sixty houses of this Andean community for the great happiness of these brave mothers.



In Peñico

The presence of archaeological traces in the ground obliges us to redo the plans and the layout of the water pipes. Indeed, this village is in the perimeter of the site of Caral, the oldest civilization of the Americas.



These brave women never shy away from hard work



While digging, this farmer found a beautiful heart-shaped stone. Who did he give it to?

In Occo Chirura

Work has just begun under the direction of *maestro* Teodosio. Deprived of access to water since a huge landslide washed away the entire spring infrastructure in 2019, the peasants are working to capture a new spring and install a long water pipe suspended above the crater. All materials must be transported to the catchment site on the backs of people walking on a very treacherous path. Not recommended for those who suffer from vertigo!



The elderly put their fingerprints as a signature

In La Ramada

After double-checking the performance of the artesian well dug in 2020, the workers are installing the new water pipe and the solar panels and pump. The anticipation is high for the entire community.



