



John & Jean Partington

AT 80 YEARS OLD, dairy farmer John Partington chuckles and says, “I’m getting on. I can’t mix cement very well anymore.” Yet, what he does do shames many of us half his age.

Consider that while he may not stir building materials or haul shingles up a ladder, he still travels to faraway places with his wife, Jean, from their home in Creston, British Columbia, to help those in need. In the past decade, they’ve gone twice to Guatemala to help with building projects. And last year they traveled to Honduras to view similar efforts and assist in packaging and delivering school supplies on behalf of their local Rotary Club.

They’re also working on several Central American-focused efforts from their home—including sponsoring a mother and her children who would otherwise not be able to attend school, and helping to raise funds for high school building projects.

For the better part of the year, the Partingtons are semi-retired, but lend a hand when needed to the youngest of their three sons, Robin, who now manages the 75-cow dairy. Yet John explains in

his trademark humility, “I don’t do anything really all that extraordinary. There are others who do so much more.”

One might expect such a comment from someone who spent part of his childhood escaping the bombing of London during World War II, then moved to Canada in his late 20s and started a dairy from scratch. From his perspective, it’s just what one does to make ends meet and help make the world a better place. “I’m a Christian,” says Partington, “and I believe that I should offer help to those in need.”

“It’s probably the most satisfying thing we’ve done in our lives,” explains Jean, who along with John plans to travel to Honduras in early 2013 for another round of volunteering. “It’s just so satisfying to make even a teenie weenie bit of difference.” Their reward, says Jean: “The joy on the faces of the mothers and the children we help.”

“We’ve seen some heartbreaking things doing this work,” adds John. “But we’ve enjoyed most of it, and we’ve had some wonderful experiences.”

—Story by Richard Banks; photo by Will Stillman