

CAROLINA HONDURAS HEALTH FOUNDATION

Newsletter – August 7, 2017



Dear Friends of CHHF,

As we reach the midpoint of the year, CHHF has sent eleven medical mission teams to Honduras. Thanks to the many volunteers who continue to staff the clinics in Honduras on a regular basis. But that is not the story I want to tell you today. I am writing today to let you know specifically that your donations are making a difference in the individual lives of patients who come to our clinics. As you read this newsletter, please hear the words of gratitude from both the patients and the volunteers. Without your support, this mission would not be possible. On behalf of the people in Honduras, thank you very much.

Meet Sabino Lopez Miguel, age 60 – For months at the end of 2016, Sabino knew he needed to see a doctor, but the Limón Clinic was closed for November, December and January. When his efforts to eat, to even swallow, became impossible he went to the hospital in La Ceiba where they diagnosed esophageal stenosis but provided no treatment or follow-up.



Dra. Diana and Sabino

In February when the first team of 2017 came to Limón, Sabino went to the clinic. Weighing only 87 pounds, he had become very weak. Neither he nor his family knew how to find or to advocate for medical treatment. Thankfully, Honduran Dra. Diana Alvarez was volunteering with the team of Dr. Joel Edwards that week. She wrote the medical referral and also provided valuable information as to what hospital in Tegucigalpa would be able to treat Sabino. In the meantime, a medical team took canned liquid nutrition so that he could get nourishment while awaiting an appointment.

In late March he was seen at the Hospital Cardiopulmonar in Tegucigalpa, a ten-hour journey on public buses. The diagnosis was esophageal cancer; he had a gastrostomy tube placement which has allowed him to gain more than 20 pounds and he has had several platelet transfusions. Now he is undergoing chemotherapy and must make the trip to Tegucigalpa on a regular basis.

With your support, funds are being provided to pay the transportation and some hospital expenses. Sabino sent this message to friends who have helped him, *“Thank you very much for all you have done. Without your help and support, I would have died. When I went to your clinic the first time, I was not eating at all. Then soon someone brought cans of a drink I could swallow and I could feed myself again. Then you helped me find the right doctors and the treatment which would save my life. I am so grateful to all of you. You are angels sent by God. I feel myself alive again. I can eat rice, beans, fish, and machuca [a dish made from fish, plantains, and coconut milk]. Thank you. Thank you.”* Your prayers and support will continue to sustain him as he struggles with this disease.

Help for Asthmatics in Village of Francia - Your support is providing treatment for asthmatics in the village of Francia where patients must hire a mototaxi or walk 10 miles to receive medical care. Teams who volunteer at our clinic recognize the severity and frequency of respiratory illnesses throughout the area. Recently you enabled us to partner with the Centro de la Salud (government clinic in Limón) to provide respiratory treatment for patients in the village of Francia. Because many asthmatics live in this area with no availability of emergency treatment, a nebulizer was given to a woman named Mari, identified and trained by the Centro de la Salud. Through your support nebulizer supplies will continue to be provided. She will be permitted to charge the villagers a nominal amount, and the villagers now have access to emergency treatment for asthma attacks.



Nebulizer treatment at Limón clinic

Making Physical Therapy Available - For the first time, patients are being referred for physical therapy at a clinic called CRICOL in Tocoa. Through your recent donations, three patients have been referred for therapy; the results are improved functionality for each of these patients.

Two year old Cristofer came to the clinic with his mother in March. The child could not hold his head and had many involuntary movements. With a diagnosis of cerebral palsy, physical therapy was recommended. Now, after several months of therapy, progress is seen especially in the strength of his neck muscles.



Cristofer

Leceny

Aleyda

Two year old Leceny’s mother brought her to the clinic because the child had no use of her left arm. She has been sent to CRICOL for treatment of brachial palsy, a condition in which nerves were damaged during childbirth. After two months of physical therapy, she has shown significant improvement.

Forty-four year old Aleyda came to the clinic in pain. Injured in a fall at the age of 12 and having never seen a doctor for the injury, Aleyda has a deformed right leg. The day she came to the clinic she told of considerable pain and difficulty walking. Now she has been going to CRICOL once a week since June; pain is lessened on her right leg, and she has much more mobility.

Comments From Our Volunteers – Hospital RN, Director of Surgery Victor McCane with the Altman team in May sent this story: *“Toward the end of the week, a woman came in with a serious toe wound. Having hit her toe on a tree stump, the toe was completely open and very dirty. She had to walk on dusty roads to reach the clinic, a trip she explained was ‘miles’. The team cleaned the toe and sutured it. Before she left, we found some shoes which would offer the foot some protection. This is one of several injuries we saw that week which reflected the determination and strength of the people there. Her smiling face after receiving a closed-toe shoe for her injured foot plus an additional pair of sandals just confirmed why we were given the opportunity to come to Honduras.”*



Victor with another patient



Greg at remote clinic

With donated glasses, many from Lions Club International, some teams are working to offer improved vision. Greg Gillis has been trained in the program Eye Doc in a Box and spent the week of July 1-8 fitting glasses at our clinics. Greg said, *“I was pleased with the reactions of patients who tried on glasses and quickly realized the glasses enabled them to see! This life-changing gift was wonderful to share. One lady in Feo repeatedly exclaimed “Gloria a Dios!” [Glory to God] followed by “Gracias. Gracias. Gracias.” I know that her quality of life was measurably improved, and so was mine. I cannot express the joy I felt in helping someone live a full life.”*

For several years through a partnership with Stop Hunger Now, food has been dispensed at the clinic to provide nourishment for malnourished children. Angela Moore, a volunteer in the pharmacy with the Gillis team said, *“One moment on the first day of work in Limón stands out in my memory. Boxes marked Stop Hunger Now were brought into the pharmacy. Not knowing what was in the boxes, I asked and was told it was food packages which we would dispense as prescribed for malnourished or hungry families. I was instantly overwhelmed by sadness. That week with my volunteer work in the pharmacy I did not see many of the patients, but knowing that I was a part of dispensing needed medications and even food was rewarding. I heard people talk about volunteering and changing lives. I can’t say for sure that we did, but I can say for sure that week changed my life.”*



Angela in remote pharmacy

The work at our clinic is changing lives of those volunteering, and it is making a significant difference in the lives of a multitude of people in Honduras. Finding healthcare is difficult in Honduras. As seen from the stories above and in previous newsletters, your donations are providing hope for those who are suffering and through this you are filling a void. And, equally importantly, the people of Honduras know that we care; they are appreciative of your prayers and the medical care you provide.

As of July of this year, the number of medical referrals has nearly equaled the total referrals for 2016. The 2017 medical referral program budget has already been expended. No patient in need is being turned away; referrals continue to be made. However, your financial support and prayers are needed so that medical care is provided both at the clinic and for those patients needing specialized medical care.

God bless,

N. K. Hook, Jr.
President