

CAROLINA HONDURAS HEALTH FOUNDATION

Newsletter – May 30, 2017



Dear Friends of CHHF,

How does one evaluate the impact of a mission program? In my household, we do so by noting the number of messages of thanks for medical care received, or the stories of how medications shared with the government clinic benefited patients when our teams were not there, or the number of volunteers who, after hearing of a mission trip from a friend, request information so that they too can join a team. We value the stories from mission volunteers who send fantastic reports of all that occurred during their week and the difference made for patients and for themselves. Certainly, this evaluation is non-scientific, but all the messages and stories do provide motivation for diligence in this mission.



Facility Improvements - The months of May and June will see significant improvements in the facilities at the clinic. On May 15 David Hendon and his wife JoAnne arrived in Limón, one week before others on the mission team of Lou Altman. Months earlier, David had volunteered to reconstruct the outside stairs at the clinic, a much needed project. In preparation earlier this spring David shipped some supplies on a container; he ordered the needed sand and rock to be at the clinic when he arrived. Church members from Northside Baptist Church in Jasper, Alabama, raised the needed funds for the project. He had a complete “plan of action.” Upon arrival at the clinic on May 16, accompanied by Honduran Director David Kelly, they began work so that much progress could be made before others on the team arrived. With the help of some local workers, the two Davids made significant progress and were then helped by others on the team for the completion of the stairs.

In early June, on the mission team of Richard and Sharon Bowie, a construction group will tear out and construct a new island in the kitchen where termites caused significant damage. Steve Rowe and crew made the plans before leaving the States; they will purchase all needed supplies in La Ceiba and transport them to Limón. Hopefully, the project will be no more than one week’s work.

A big THANK YOU to all those who are making these improvements reality!

Community Development - In order to effect true improvement in the health of people of Limón, CHHF realized that whole community involvement was required. Sending medical teams to the clinic 19 times a year indisputably treated the illnesses seen at the time and provided education of patients regarding the control of diabetes and hypertension. However, more was needed. Thus, in 2016, Gladis Aquiriano was hired as Community Development and Education Coordinator. Gladis grew up in the area and attended Modesto Community College in California. Well-respected in the community, she is a thoughtful person, one who can both identify issues and suggest solutions.

For over a year, Gladis has been working with a committee of leaders in Limón. Recently they planned for and held educational classes in the public schools and at the local orphanage. She and Juana Nidia, the nurse at the government clinic, visited the schools to speak on topics of health, hygiene, and disease prevention. They also shared information regarding tuberculosis and prevention. Also this spring, working with staff from the government health clinic, an adult community workshop was held where topics of interest including diabetes and hypertension were discussed. As a courtesy, they provided glucose tests, checked temperature and blood pressure.



In July, a special class for soon to be new mothers has been planned by Team Leader Gail Gillis. Nurse Juana Nidia and Gladis will share information about childbirth, about caring for the new baby, and will present each mother with a gift bag containing prenatal vitamins, baby clothes, diapers, blankets, and other baby gifts.

Joshuar's Journey - Our clinic welcomes many patients who travel for hours seeking medical care. Each team has stories of the patient who walked four or six hours to find medical care. However, the recent story of 16 month old Joshuar and his family probably reflects the longest of journeys.



On March 21 little Joshuar and his family left home in La Mosquitia (far east on the Caribbean Coast) at 3:30 a.m. traveling by dugout canoe down a swift river in pouring rain. At 7 a.m. they arrived at the place where they could get a ride in a truck which would take them to the beginning of the main road. There they took a bus to the crossroad for Limón where they disembarked and walked the final 5 miles. Total journey = 7 hours! Mother and Father knew Joshuar needed to see a doctor, and this was the closest clinic.



In actuality, this story began in March 2016 when the family made the same trek to the clinic and Pediatric Nurse Practitioner Beverly Coleman recognized that the child Joshuar had a bloated tummy. After talking with the father, she learned that Joshuar had a diagnosed kidney blockage but the family had no funds for the required surgery. Thus, in 2016, the CHHF Medical Referral Program sent the child to a pediatric urologist in San Pedro Sula for surgery and removal of the blocked kidney.

When the family came this year, Joshuar had additional urological issues. Once again, these issues required advanced treatment not available at our clinic. Knowing that father had an appointment with the urologist in San Pedro Sula two weeks later for the child's one year check-up, the decision was made to ask the urologist for treatment. On April 12, with travel funds from CHHF Medical Referral program, the family set out for San Pedro Sula. On the way, an unexplained occurrence caused the bus driver to remove everyone from the bus. All passengers were then required to take an additional bus, paying the fee once again. This meant the family would not have enough money for the return trip.

At the scheduled appointment, the doctor's report was a good one; however, due to Holy Week, the additional surgery could not be done until the following week. The family now had only a portion of their return transportation money. Banks were closed; CHHF could not wire money. Being as frugal as possible, they used return transportation money for food and for shelter at a center provided by the hospital at a nominal fee. On Easter Day the father called the Medical Referral Coordinator to say he had depleted his money; all he had was 10 lempiras (\$0.38). Upon request, a friend of CHHF in San Pedro Sula volunteered to deliver money to the father. On Monday, April 17, CHHF wired money for the return trip. Finally, surgery was done on Friday, April 21. By that time, father had once again used a portion of his transportation money for food and shelter and for medications required for Joshuar after the surgery. Because the family had enough money to travel from San Pedro Sula to La Ceiba, they began the return journey. On April 23 Honduran director David Kelly met the father in La Ceiba and gave him sufficient funds for the remainder of the trip home - ten more hours.

What seems simple in the States can be monumental in Honduras. Joshuar's 2017 journey, which began in late March and ended in late April, was only possible because CHHF has a Medical Referral Program with funds to assist families who have no hope of receiving medical care without financial assistance. Donations to the Medical Referral fund are donations for miracles.

CHHF is extremely grateful to the many who donate their time and money to help those in need in Honduras. Our work is even more critical today as cost-cutting efforts of the Honduran government are making it more difficult for those in poverty to receive the health care they need. This has become apparent to our Medical Referral Coordinator as unexplained delays in health care become more and more frequent. Without our foundation, those in poverty in the area we serve would find it impossible to overcome the many obstacles being confronted in receiving care. Thank you for providing the resources, and thank you for your prayers as we continue in partnership with you and many in Honduras.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. K. Hook, Jr.'.

N. K. Hook, Jr.
President