

## Phase I Clinic Serves The Needy

How far is Honduras from Broadway, The Great White Way, The Big Apple, The City that Never Sleeps? Well it's pretty far! You could say that there is a Gulf between us – and in more ways than one. To the local Honduran, we are Norte Americanos, North Americans or gringos. SATC is located 100 miles south of New York City, in the idyllic setting of Chester County in South eastern Pennsylvania, far removed from the town of La Entrada. The Honduran town sits in the hills at the entrance to the valley leading to the Copan Region of the Country, which at one time was a hub of Mayan culture. Today its people sit and wait at the crossroads of the Pan American Highway and the main road North - three hours to the coast and the industrial area of San Pedro Sula. By its sheer geographical position, the La Entrada is poised for growth, but as yet, not much has come in the form of jobs, education or healthcare for the poor of this community. A majority of the people are trapped by the cycle of poverty.

In the Broadway play, The Man of La Mancha, song lyrics describe a dream – The Impossible Dream! For SATC and Manos Amigos, our NGO partner, the doors to our Phase I interim clinic have been opened for eight weeks now and we, along with some of the local citizenry are beginning to believe the dream – healthcare, backed up with medications have arrived in the community. The word is spreading that the clinic is intended for the poorest of the poor. We have already treated nearly 1,200 patients in those opening weeks.



also include the medication.

In the community, there are choices in clinic selection. There are private clinics where patients pay 50 limpera (\$3.50 US) to their personal physician for treatment, local government clinics charge 5 limpera, but have no medications, and our clinic charges 10 limpera for those in the lower socio-economic strata who have the means to pay (free to those who cannot) and we

The model SATC is following is one where our clinic is administered, run and staffed by Hondurans for the impoverished of the community. The Manos Amigas Board makes the decisions. Our role is to equip the clinic, get it up and running, supply the medications and help when asked. This way their leadership will participate in collective management, benefit from effective decision making and learn from mistakes.

Already we are seeing the impact of our stewardship efforts. In a society where lack of resources and personal survival prevail, helping your fellow neighbor has not been part of the culture. Nevertheless some remarkable events are starting to occur. Networking and volunteerism is taking place among the healthcare professionals; some local funds have been collected to assist with the clinic; the mayor is a generous supporter and advocate of the clinic; and barrio leaders are helping to identify the neediest families.

(Barrios are districts or wards). Manos Amigas Board Members are doing an incredible job visiting homes and identifying the needy - undergoing a personal transformation in the process, as many are seeing “up close and personal,” for the very first time the extent and level of poverty in their very own communities. In communications to us, they were astounded by what they had uncovered, reporting that “With our own eyes we saw so many sick children and very old people that need health care and now they know about the clinic. We are certain that we can provide the health care they need.”

