



*Karen Murillo Casaca*

**Career advancing opportunity offered to receptionist -  
*Karen Enrolled in Optometry School***

Clinic visitors and medical teams who were accustomed to seeing Karen Murillo Casaca behind the reception and registration desk will have to get used to dealing with another person working in that capacity in the future. Karen was able to take advantage of a new opportunity that has emerged as a result of the SATC Board decision to offer Manos Amigas the opportunity to host specialized surgical eye teams from the States. Karen, who has been the visitor's "go-to" person at the clinic for almost everything that takes place there, has elected to enroll in Optometry School in El Progreso. This is a career changing position for her.

With Karen's desire to help people and her command of English, she eagerly accepted the scholarship provided by Serving at the Crossroads to take on this two-year program of study and specialized training to become an ophthalmological technical assistant. She has been granted a leave of absence by the MA Board and in April she moved to El Progreso to begin her new adventure. At the completion of her course work and practical studies, she will return to the MA clinic where she will do consults with patients who have eye problems. During the coming months, she will learn to detect diseases like cataracts, glaucoma and other serious eye conditions that contribute to poor vision. She will also be trained to do refractions, vision acuity testing and patient dilation. As her training progresses, she will spend time with ophthalmic brigades and make visits to smaller villages, where she will assist ophthalmologists with patient exams and then become the physician's extra "right hand" person when surgeries are required.

Although the course work is fast paced, Karen is a fast learner, who over the years has demonstrated in many ways she can work effectively with people from various backgrounds in resolving seemingly unsurmountable problems. She is dedicated to helping people and very deserving of this educational opportunity to improve her career prospects at the clinic. She will become an increasingly valuable professional asset to the visiting surgical teams and to the community when she applies her newly acquired skills to servicing their needs.