

Bread Crumbs

A newsletter providing information on activities designed to help alleviate the pain and suffering of the people in La Entrada de Copan, Honduras
Published by Serving at the Crossroads, a 501 (c) (3) corporation providing dental and medical assistance for the impoverished in Honduras

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Words of Encouragement

Lisa Armstrong, a young, American nurse and missionary who runs a rural, mountain clinic an hour and a half from La Entrada sent us the following letter:

Thank you so much for your letter. It was very special to meet all of you. I had a truly wonderful time while your group was here. I wish that I had words to express my most profound gratitude for what you are doing for the Honduran people. I have seen so many projects that have been dedicated to the "good" of the poor but have so often been disappointed when I found them to be self-serving, self-glorifying and dependency oriented.

It has been so refreshing and inspiring to see your group work hand in hand with the people of La Entrada in the hopes of simply providing adequate support to help them realize their dreams for their own people. Not many are willing to work so selflessly. I have a friend who is a singer/songwriter whose name is Bryan Sirchio. He sings a song called "Being a nobody for Jesus". Thank God for people like you, who are willing to be a "nobody", quietly working behind the scenes to help one's fellow man, all for the glory of God. I feel it is an absolute privilege to be of assistance to you in any way that you might find helpful. Please know that I desire to help because I believe in what you are doing.

Lisa's mission, sponsored by Fellow Man International, is to work with those who are impoverished in body and spirit. Members of our team had met and gotten to know her during previous visits.

News and Views – Clinic Building Underway

By Robert L. Sumner,
President SATC

I was amazed at what was accomplished during my latest trip to La Entrada, Honduras.



We had several meetings with our partnering foundation (*Manos Amigas*), which included physicians, dentists and the local government. Dr. Beckmann had meetings with local physicians to learn, first hand, about their approaches to medical care and how they serve their patients in private practices. I worked with the dentists who will staff the clinic to get their input, answer questions and give advice when appropriate.

See *Clinic Underway*, p. 2

A Community of Have's and Have-Nots

Poverty is widespread in La Entrada. In this part of Honduras, a 45-minute car ride from Santa Rosa, a bustling former colonial capital city, there is virtually no middle class segment of the population. Of course there



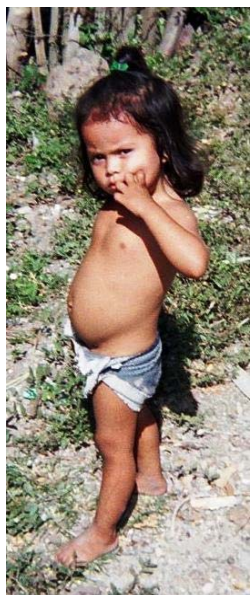
are local garage repair shop entrepreneurs, shop owners, small business proprietors along the main road, a few dentists and physicians who reside in La Entrada de Copan, but their numbers are miniscule when looking at the town's population. See *Have's and Have Nots*, p.2

Clinic Underway (from p. 1)

Deliberations were ongoing with various entities, working on the design and layout for the interior of the clinic. The dental clinic will have the equipment and facilities to provide fillings, oral surgery, prophylaxis, fluoride treatments and some prosthetics.

The highlight of the trip was a groundbreaking ceremony for the new clinic. *Manos Amigas* and the Municipality brought in a tent and erected it on the 10 acres that will be deeded to *Manos Amigas*. There were 250 in attendance and we had speeches, food and drink. The Mayor, Dr. Bustamante, and I laid the first block. The ceremony was filmed and telecast on Honduran National TV.

Because of the logistics involved and the skilled labor required for setting up equipment, Dental Services will begin in Phase II when the new building opens up in 2005. The Medical Practices group opens in Phase I in Fall 2004 at an interim clinic location.



Have's and Have-Nots (from p. 1)

The resources and riches of this Copan region of Honduras are concentrated in the hands of the government and wealthy landowners, but the majority of the people live in unimaginable poverty. Over 50% of the country's population live in rural areas and more than half of them are 18 years of age or younger.

By American standards, the crossroads of La Entrada would be characterized as a "depressed" community. Except for coffee growing and storage, no industry or manufacturing exists in the town, so many men leave their families behind for months to work in San Pedro Sula, two hours by truck to the north east.

Honduras is about the size of Pennsylvania. If we compare it with one county in the state - Chester County, where *Serving at the Crossroads* is headquartered, we have the following demographics:

| Chester County | | La Entrada |
|----------------|---|------------|
| 457,393 | Population | 23,000 |
| 4.8 % | People living in poverty | 90+ % |
| 1.3% | Children living in poverty | 90+% |
| 0.4% | Homes lacking complete plumbing | 95% |
| 0.3% | Homes lacking complete kitchen facilities | 95% |
| 14.6% | Households earning less than \$25,000 | 99% |

Statistics are hard to collect in La Entrada. Complete records are not kept and even in those areas where a census has been taken, there are many inaccuracies. Consequently, estimates are used.

In this part of the country, birthing is done in the home by midwives, children are not named for one or more years because their death rate is high; plumbing is almost non-existent; privies are common; kitchens are equipped with pilas or clay sinks; and the stove is an open fire or wood burning oven with a metal cooking surface. Houses are built of clay or block, wooden twigs laced around pieces of stacked stone, tin or cardboard.

Although some indoor plumbing exists, it is more likely to be a gravity-flow hose rather than pipes. The river is used for bathing, laundry and the source of domestic water lugged in jugs on the head of women or by pack animal.

Skilled laborers earn \$6.00 per day and most families live on \$2.00 per day for food. It is not unusual to see starving children dying in hospitals and families having to choose between feeding the family or paying for medication and a clinic visit. Eating three meals per day is beyond the means of many families.

Clinic Dedication

A crowd of approximately 250 gathered under a tent in the hot August sun to celebrate and launch the construction of the new clinic that will open in 2005. Dr. Robert Sumner, President of SATC, leveled the first block and balloons were released into the air in celebration!



Dr. Bob Sumner....

“It was a wonderful feeling to see them working together. I have been told each time we go to Honduras, we set an example of love and sincerity and this spirit helps break barriers that have existed in their culture.”



Marcio Vega Pinto, Mayor of La Entrada....

In his speech, the Mayor said “History is in the making, to have the professionals and Government working together for the common good of the people.”



Dr. Sonja Bustemonte, President, *Manos Amigas*....

(in white blouse on left)

“We see what you are doing for our people and recognize that we should be doing more. Working together and volunteering is not part of our culture so change isn’t easy.”



Our Vision

From little acorns, mighty trees must surely grow

Land has been dedicated and construction has begun for the new Medical and Dental clinic in La Entrada.

As a 501(c)(3) Non-Profit corporation, **Serving At The Crossroads** is partnering with *Manos Amigas*, a Honduran foundation composed of physicians, dentists, governmental officials, and church leaders to create a multidisciplinary approach to treatment and care in medicine, surgery, obstetrics and gynecology, pediatrics, dentistry and minor emergencies. The clinic will have the capability of handling approximately 250,000 visits in this impoverished nation.

The clinic will have a full-time administrator, physician, dentist, secretary, medical records staff, several medical and dental staff and a security officer. The Board of Directors of *Manos Amigas* and full-time Honduran staff will run the clinic with our help. We will also partner with local physicians and dentists to provide special care opportunities for their patients.

The building will be about 11,000 square feet, of which 8,000 square feet will contain modern facilities for various kinds of basic medical and dental care and 3,000 square feet will be dedicated to training. We will have mammography, x-ray, ultrasound and 5 medical examination rooms, 4 OBGYN rooms, 4 dental suites and an urgent care area.

We are seeking an ultra sound unit and are looking to partner with a donor who can change this expectation into reality. The addition of this equipment would make us a top-flight medical facility, as there are only two other ultra sound units in existence in the entire country.

The clinic will have a satellite hookup so that teleconferencing and the transmission of digital x-rays can take place on a daily basis. Not only will this capability be of value to interns, visiting staff and for consultations with experts in the US, it also creates the opportunity for an institutional learning and continuing educational center for the clinic’s medical and healthcare professionals.

THE FAMILY ON THE HILL — June, 2004, *La Entrada de Copan, Honduras*

Mother holds one of the younger children- thirteen at last count. Two families have joined together for survival. Her oldest daughter, 13, holds her own, new 7-day old daughter- as yet unnamed, since about 50% of the children do not survive their first year.

Father is away, working, it is hoped.

By their standards, *The Family* lives in a mansion – one large and two small concrete rooms. They have a tin roof but no windows or doors. Cooking is done outside over a wood fire, with the top of a discarded waste can used as a cooking surface. Their latrine is down the hill; water must be carried every day from the river. They possess little furniture and even less food.

They have a well-worn Bible and a few books which father reads every night. They are lucky – they have their new home, built by a Mission group for \$1,300, replacing a dirt-floored shanty made of scrap wood and tin.

Their combined income is less than 5,000 Limpera a year (about \$250 US). Food is relatively basic - tortillas and some beans or rice once a day, but not always. They are fortunate because they each have a set of clothes and shoes.

When illness strikes, they hope it leaves quickly; if not, they will try to visit the public clinic. But the wait is usually a day and the clinic has no medicines, so if they were seen, the prescription is useless since there is no money for medications anyway!



Can you provide a helping hand to THE FAMILY ON THE HILL and other families like them in La Entrada de Copan?

Serving at the Crossroads, has partnered with a Honduran foundation, **Manos Amigas** to offer hope and help in supplying some of the local needs:

Groundbreaking has taken place for a new **Medical and Dental Clinic** that is expected to open in late 2005. Phase I will begin in November of 2004 with the opening of a Medical Services practice that will occupy an alternate location in town until the new clinic building is completed. The Family on the Hill, along with others will be able to receive:

Free Medical Care for mom, dad, children, and grandchildren

administering treatment for an urgent illness as well as preventative care such as annual exams, immunizations and screening for illnesses

Free Dental Care in Phase II for mom, dad, children, and grandchildren

not just extracting decayed teeth that are beyond repair, but also providing fillings, root canals, and restorative care!

Free Medications

for treating existing conditions and to promote good health.

Free Community Resource

to access information about jobs, food-stuffs, transportation and potable water. Create opportunities to meet with neighbors and to develop a sense of community instead of remaining a hostage of poverty, isolation and despair.

So, how can you help? **Serving at the Crossroads** is a non-for profit corporation and donations are tax deductible! Monetary contributions or equipment and services from physicians, dentists and other healthcare professionals are always appreciated.

Donations of any size will help. Contact: Crossroads1@comcast.net, or call 610-793-1851