

Delegation From La Entrada Travel To West Chester, PA To Study Community, Public and Private Sector Partnerships

A group of six Honduran visitors to Chester County had an opportunity to spend time with the Board of SATC planning operational aspects of the new Medical and Dental Clinic and to gain additional ideas for longer range strategic plans to benefit their local community.

Making the trip from La Entrada, Honduras was the Mayor, Marcio Vega and his wife Mayra along with *Manos Amigas* officers - Dr. Sonia Bustamante, a dentist and President of the organization, Misael Coto, Secretary and local businessman, Findo Villanueva, Treasurer and Vice Mayor of La Entrada and Dr. Obed Rivera a practicing physician. Citing personal examples, some quite emotional, each member offered perspectives on how their organization and the planning for the new clinic has already started to impact their lives and how it will change the lives of those whom they will serve.

Local dignitaries from West Chester included Mayor Richard Yoder, who presented the Keys to the City to Mayor Vega and arranged a special luncheon for him, and Andy Dinniman – one of our County Commissioners, presented our special guests with momentos from the County. Andy also took our visitors to a County Commissioner's meeting to see how local municipalities and government officials work together for the betterment of the community.

Our Honduran guests were able to gain experiences and insights from visits to the Thomas Jefferson Medical School, Albert Einstein Medical Center in Philadelphia, medical and dental clinics in West Chester and Kennett Square, municipal and county government in the greater West Chester area along with visits to tourist attractions like Longwood Gardens and small business enterprises serving our local community. Our area is not too unlike their home region where the SATC sponsored clinics will be located.

La Entrada is situated at the entrance to the Copan Ruins, a national historic and tourist site with a museum and archeological preservation of Mayan culture. A large hospital, about a one-hour truck ride away for those fortunate to have transportation, is located in the colonial capital of Santa Rosa. Because of the actions of *Manos Amigas*, working with local government, resident physicians and dentists, the national health authorities have begun to take an interest as well in bringing improved healthcare to the local area. The need for sustained quality health care is certainly there and the means by which the community can benefit still remains to be worked out through cooperation between all parties in the immediate region.