



Report from our mission to Honduras

March 09 to March 22, 2011



Teaching at the Red Cross

I just returned home from Honduras a couple of days ago. It is good to be back, but I already miss the people of Honduras. The mission was very successful, and my work began as soon as I arrived in the capital city of Tegucigalpa, when I delivered donated medical equipment to the Red Cross. On day two in Tegucigalpa, I provided some Emergency Care training to a group of local Paramedics at the Red Cross Base 2. The training was on International Trauma life support and a session on emergency child birth.

After two days in the capital I traveled to the village of Jesus De Otoro where we would conduct most of our activities for the remainder of the

mission. The day after I arrived, my first order of business was to go to the local Orphanage/day care, which we have been working with for the past few years. I delivered some supplies that I had purchased in Tegucigalpa at a large super market (something like Costco). My delivery arrived just in time; I was told by the director "we just used the last of everything Healthy Horizons had provided last February". She even showed me the empty containers of soap, rice bags and so on! I told her these were just some basic essentials and asked what else was needed to keep the place going. After we made a list, I hung out with the kids and had some great fun with a bubble maker! When I returned to drop off the food and supplies they needed, I explained that this was provided for the Orphanage by donations we collected in Canada. The director said to me, with tears in her eyes "I can't believe that people from so far away, care this much". These are the moments that put everything in perspective for me as a charity operator. Being able to extend the goodwill of Canadians to those living in poverty is a privilege, and I want to say thanks to the people who have provided us with donations of money for this mission.



A dinner of fresh vegetables, meat and rice served to the kids at the orphanage.



Medical exam for child at orphanage.

Another important way we supported the orphanage/daycare was with the help of a friend of mine, Dr. Carolina Hernandez. She is a local medical doctor and graduated from Medical school in Cuba 2 years ago and returned home to Honduras. We also provided all the children with a medical assessment, de-worming medication and a year's supply of children's chewable vitamins. Many thanks to our vitamin donors here in Canada "Natural Factors" a Canadian company from BC!



First day of medical brigades.

One big part of our mission was to provide medical care to the people in the region of Jesus De Otoro. This was conducted over a three day period with the help and support of the local people and organizations.

Plan Honduras had indentified the people most at risk of malnutrition and needing medical care in the remote mountain villages. We provided medical care in conjunction with 2 local doctors. These doctors donated their time to help us, and did a great job! I would like to mention that Dr. Carolina was with us every day that we provided medical care. The

Hondurans understand that we are a Canadian organization that comes to help their people and we can't do it alone. They worked with us by providing their expertise and we provided the medicine needed to treat the people we saw. Over the three days we saw and treated over 550 people. Dr Carolina has agreed to care for any of the children from the orphanage at no charge for the next year. We also left the extra medicine with her and she also agreed to use it to treat patients that will come to her clinic and have no means to pay for her services or buy medicine.

The local Red Cross also helped, they provided transportation for the brigades up in the mountains. One of the villages we went to help was extremely remote. It was by far the worst road I ever traveled on in all the years I've helped in Honduras. The people who inhabit this remote place are the native people of Honduras. They were extremely happy to see us and very thankful that we had made the trip to care for them. We were the first medical brigade to ever come and see them.



Physician's Travel Packs and Natural Factors vitamins



Medical brigade in the mountains

The village has about 30 families totaling 115 people all together. The common medical problems were respiratory issues, GI problems and malnutrition. We were able to treat all the people and provide vitamins to all the children and thanks to our donors we provided the 30 families with food care-packages; filled with rice, beans, corn and sugar. We know these packages are very basic and will only provide enough food for a family for a few weeks, but at least they are getting a break and can focus on getting their food planted and so on. We believe that we made a difference in that small, extremely remote village and we look forward to return to it on our next mission to Honduras.



Waiting in line to receive food packages

While in Jesus De Otoro I also provided some training sessions for the local Red Cross Emergency Team and local police. The course was given over 3 evenings at their base. I also did a small training session in health and safety at a local school, for the teachers, students and some parents.



Training local police force in CPR

Over all, I believe we have accomplished the goals we had set for this mission. All that was done and accomplished was due to the cooperation and support of many people here in Canada and most importantly the people of Honduras. The people and organizations we worked with in Honduras facilitated the opportunities for us to help, without them I don't think we could do much. The people of Honduras are willing to help themselves and others that are in even greater need. I spoke to them about what was happening in Haiti, they were very understanding on why so much help may have been diverted there this time around by so many international organizations. They were even asking if they could help in any way. The people of Honduras are a caring people with big hearts and are doing what they can to help themselves. I believe that many organizations that work in Honduras should form a partnership with local organizations and work closely with local people. They know the needs of their community and what should be done to really help them!



Tom and I on day two of Brigades

I would like recognize a few of the people that made this mission such a success. First, my dear friend and representative of Healthy Horizons in Honduras, Mr. Tom Hebert. Without him we could not have accomplished so much. Tom has lived in Honduras for the past 20 years and truly loves this country and serves it well! Tom is our man on the ground who we rely on to organize things for our brigades and meetings, he also serves as our translator for the medical brigades and when I teach. We thank you Tom, for your help and support with this and all of our past missions. Finally, all of this could not have been done without the help of our donors. We are lucky to have the support of Natural Factors, thank you for providing such a generous quantity of vitamins, the children of Honduras truly need them.

Thanks to Dr. J. Bly, for purchasing the Physician's Travel Packs, they contained enough medication for our medical brigades. We also want to say thank you to American Airlines for providing the shipping of 700Lbs of medicine and medical supplies to Honduras at no extra cost, Niagara Emergency Medical Service, Medtronic Canada, Philips Medical Canada, McDonald Restaurant Niagara Falls and of course all of our individual donors large and small, every dollar helped us help others and without it we could not do much at all!

Last but not least, here is the highlight of the trip! Some of you will remember last fall when I contacted many of you for an urgent donation of money for a little girl name Paola. She was in urgent need of open heart surgery. The donations came in, so we could buy the supplies needed and my dear friend Dr.Hugo Orellana, Cardiac surgeon in Honduras, performed the operation with his team at no cost. Paola did well and is now back at home in Jesus De Otoro, and I got to visit her. What she said to me was "I am so happy that you and the people of Canada helped me and now I feel so much better, I can play and run and feel good". I also would like to say thank you my friends for donating to this cause and I am so grateful to have been able to be with Paola on my last visit!



Paola and her mom, brother and I at her home in Jesus De Otoro

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"It is not how much we give, but how much love we put into giving" Mother Theresa