



Partners in Health of Maine

Compañeros en la Salud

Volunteers sharing the gift of health

December 2015

Our Mission:

Partners in Health of Maine is a group of medical professionals and technical experts who have given their time and expertise to improve the health care in Central America. Since 1976 we have been providing medical care, equipment, education, and technical assistance to the people of this area. Our belief is that caring individuals becoming "Partners in Health" with their third world counterparts can foster long-term improvement.

Dedication



Dr. Manuel Salas

We would like to dedicate this edition of the newsletter to Dr. Manuel Salas, a Nicaraguan general surgeon who has been working with Partners in Health of Maine for many years. He is a very talented, well-trained general surgeon who is dedicated to his patients.

Dr. Salas helped to found the first medical school on the Atlantic coast and is now the assistant Dean where he spends a great deal of his time teaching and organizing the curriculum for the students. He has been a driving force in making arrangements for Nicaraguan specialists from the Pacific coast to share their knowledge and skills with their colleagues on the Atlantic coast. This has included gastroenterologists, orthopedic and general surgeons, and urologists who have performed many consultations, shared their knowledge, and taught many new procedures. This is a significant step in our mission of facilitating Nicaraguans helping Nicaraguans that will promote sustainability.



A lasting friendship

How Partners In Health has had a positive effect on his career and the hospital

"My contact with PIHOM started in 1998, on an afternoon shift at the medical emergency room of Nuevo Amanecer Nancy Bach Hospital while I was fulfilling my social service. I was honored to meet and talk for the first time with Dr. Bach – 'What specialty will you study?' 'Surgery' I answered. From this moment I became interested in knowing more about him and his team. They inspired me to pursue a model of service delivery for my community and reinforce my commitment to my people on the Northern Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua.

The unconditional support of PIHOM through Mrs. Jill Grant, Dr. Bach and all supporters who have made possible the strengthening of values, skills and competencies to perform my specialty as a general surgeon and teacher. Working closely with the rest of the

surgical team and hospital management we have succeeded in expanding the capacity of the Intensive Care unit and establishing services for endoscopy, arthroscopy, laparoscopic surgeries, and Palliative Care. Another major contribution has been the sending of large shipments of technical equipment to provide care to our patients.

In the midst of our limitations and difficulties complicated by geographic, cultural and economic needs of our region, PIHOM has been one of the pillars to continue offering health services to our people, many of whom live in the most remote and disadvantaged areas of our country.

A sample of this miracle and love of neighbor is seen in the many angels who have joined the team of Dr. Bach. Following his example of dedication they have come to share their knowledge, skills and resources with our people and us. These angels are Dr. Daniel Cassidy, Dr. Sameer Sbayi, Dr. Mark Grant, Dr. Richard Swett, Dr. John Bergfeld, Dr. John and Mary Benzigner, Jill and Ernest Grant and Dr. Sergio Zarate. There are many others whose names I cannot recall but who evoke fond memories."

(Angels not mentioned: Robyn Frick, Kathy McCarthy RN, Dr. Tom Cassidy, Karen Dow RN, Steve Johnson, James Remechates, Kelly Austin, Robyn Frick, Sharon Dow, Tiffany Carlisle, Dr. Moises Venegas, Molly Marston, Barbara Bach, Dino Aguilar, Patricia Ballesteros, Harold Oporpa, Melissa Kearns and Mr. Megan Jordan.)

Partners in Health Activities in 2015

Participation in a mission with the USNS comfort ship of the US Navy. It had to anchor four miles out because of the lack of adequate docking facilities and shallow water. Navy Personnel and patients were transported by helicopters with many surgeries and consultations being performed on both the ship and on land. Teaching was also a major component of their mission. Commander Brian King assisted Dr. Sydney Antonio in endoscopy in the local hospital for several days.



View of the USNS comfort from the Navy helicopter

The shipment of 16,000 pounds of medical equipment in a 40ft. container with equipment collected primarily from Eastern Maine Medical Center and surrounding hospitals finally arrived.



Shipment arrives in Nicaragua



Crates in front of our warehouse / volunteer quarters

Further training in laparoscopic surgery, directed by Dr. Mark Grant from Eastern Maine Medical Center and Dr. William Abdallah a well-known Nicaraguan surgeon.



Drs Abdalah and Grant

Dr. Abdalah assisting Dr. Salas

Projects

Completion of the first phase of the well, clean water and sanitation project involving ten communities along the Rio Cocco River that borders Honduras This is being sponsored by the International Rotary of Bangor under the leadership of Steve Johnson and Dr. Patricia Ballesteros in coordination with Rotary of Managua.



Making well



Finished well



Comforting the loss of her husband



A hospice home visit

Continued support of a newly formed Palliative-Hospice service in Puerto Cabezas fostered by Dr. Sydney Antonio and Alice Ramirez, RN. Continued support of the "Palliative Care Group" in Managua mentored by Dr. Megan Jordan, a palliative care physician, recently elected to our board. (The "Palliative Care Group" was initially sponsored by Rotary of Ann Arbor Michigan initiated by Barbara Bach in coordination with Rotary of Managua.)

Continued outreach to the community through lectures and to the jail through a clinic initiated by Jill Grant and sharing of carpentry skills of Ernest Grant, which are constantly in demand at the hospital.

Further training in laparoscopy by Doctors Grant and Abdalah to include the gynecologists as well as general surgeons.

Further training in endoscopy to be facilitated by Dr. Amit Agrawal, gastroenterologist from EMMC.

Continued sharing of techniques of arthroscopy by Dr. Swett, orthopedic surgeon from Dover Foxcroft with Dr. Ernesto Espinoza.