



Partners in Health of Maine

Compañeros en la Salud

Volunteers sharing the gift of health

SEPTEMBER 2017

News From PIHOM

*“The greatest injustice is the inequality of medical care”
–Martin Luther King*

As the days of summer pass we reflect on the successes and lessons hard earned from our trip in April. The trip was full of volunteers old and new, brought together by the love and passion of helping the people of Puerto Cabezas. Robyn Frick, Biomedical engineer at EMMC, joined our efforts to resuscitate the burnt-out equipment found at both the clinic and the hospital. To our surprise we arrived to find that not a single x-ray machine on the northeastern coast was functional, including the C-arm recently donated by John Bergfeld from the Cleveland Clinic. To imagine seriously injured patients not having the availability of an x-ray was shocking. Robyn was able to introduce ideas of Biomedical Engineering to the new leadership at the hospital as well as mentoring the maintenance crew in self-reliance and scaffolding the steps it took to get all three x-ray units functional as well as an autoclave.

Volunteers Ruth Jahn, Mark Grant, MD, and Richard Swett, MD focused efforts in training and education in the Operating Room. Dr. Swett joined the team once again to assist Dr. Ernesto Espinoza in Orthopedic procedures. “I am here as a resource and to continue my education. Everyday Dr. Espinoza is dealing with cases that I have worked on in the U.S. but the challenge is navigating the resources available to both the hospital and patient. The creativity in solutions is astounding. You need to be able to think outside the box when you don’t have all the tools you need.”



Volunteer, Robyn Frick working on a broken anesthesia machine



Alice Ramirez, a local hospice nurse, visiting a patient at home

Given the tropical climate, the guest house and hospital are in need of constant structural repairs and upgrades which is where volunteers, Jill and Ernest Grant focused their efforts. In the last visit, a revamp for the downstairs bedroom was completed as well as several projects for the hospital lab.

The population and needs for Puerto Cabezas are constantly evolving and as this happens it is important for us as an organization to evolve as well. As one of our first moves we have had the pleasure of inviting three Nicaraguan surgeons to play a more active role as members of our Board. Doctors William Abdalah, Ernesto Espinoza and Sydney Antonio will play an increasing role in functions and activities helping us create a more sustainable organization.

Upcoming Projects/Needs

We are excited about the upcoming trips in October/November and wanted to give you a preview into what we would love your help in accomplishing this year through your support and interest.

- Ambulance repair
- Internet Access in the OR and Administration
- Funding for Palliative Program
- Nicaraguan Specialist Sponsors

Maternity Ward

The maternity ward in the hospital sits central to the rest of the hospital with a five-room layout attached by labor and delivery and a neonatal intensive care unit. As healthcare develops in the region, more and more women are coming to the hospital to give birth. This is seen as a huge achievement but with so little room, patients are crammed two or three to a bed just to be able to accommodate everyone. The hospital administration presented PIHOM with a request to assist in building another maternity ward to help with the overflow and deal with issues of infection and overcrowding.

The design is in the works with a local Nicaraguan architect for a structure with a new nurse's station and 10 new beds. In earlier stages of development the hospital received quotes totaling \$11,000 and we hope to have funding to break ground sometime this fall.



Maternity Ward on a typical day

Development of Emergency Medical Services



Puerto Cabezas Firemen holding their new jump kits

The development of an Emergency Medical System for Puerto Cabezas is the continued partnership between PIHOM and Atlantic Partners in Emergency Medical Services (APEMS) to bring resources and education to the local fire department. Right before the trip in April, we were able to obtain an ambulance to be repaired and given to the Nicaraguan Fire Department. Continued support from volunteers and donors has allowed the purchase of the ambulance and the next step is to get it up and running for the station.

In preparation for the trip, volunteer Katherine Badger, Tufts Medical Student, joined with APEMS to collect bags of basic medical supplies to support the firemen. "Just one day after giving the bags of supplies and reviewing the materials and how to use them I was able to see them in action. I witnessed a young boy being wheeled in for an x-ray and on his foot was a well structured splint using the sam splints and gauze I had just given the fire department," Katherine reflected. The hope is to continue the relationship and provide training next June.

HOW TO DONATE

Please send your donation to:

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Please contact Jill Grant (jgrant6198@aol.com) with further interest or questions