



Partners in Health of Maine

*Maine volunteers sharing the gift of health
November 2019*



Dedication: Gerald Green Thompson

We are pleased to dedicate this Newsletter to Gerald Green Thompson who was born in Puerto Cabezas Nicaragua in 1949. His 52 years of labor were shared between the Moravian Church in Nicaragua, as Administrator of its health program at Gray Memorial Hospital, Puerto Cabezas; Financial Manager of the Nicaragua Moravian Province; and then later, his last fifteen years of service were as Vice Rector of the Bluefields Indian and Caribbean University. We recognized Gerry's talents 15 years ago and over the years he has become increasingly involved helping with our projects, finances, decisions, and helping patients to get to Managua for treatment they cannot receive in Puerto Cabezas. We are blessed that he is our representative in Nicaragua as he reflects compassion, honesty, and a behavior that is deeply rooted in his Christian faith. Ask him a favor and he will do more than you asked for. He is truly a servant of God

Remarks about Partners in Health by Gerry Green

Since the late seventies, Partners in Health has been one of the best things that could occur to northeast Nicaragua due to the presence of Dr. Robert Bach in the Rio Coco area, specifically at the Bilwaskarma Hospital and extending later to Puerto Cabezas. Best thing because it is the region most distant from the capital city where means of transportation was scanty and logically costly, and where some of the most indigent people have been living with much difficulty in obtaining quality special medical care.

Tuberculosis was common among miners and many were hospitalized in the Sanatorium of the Moravian Bilwas Thaeler Memorial Hospital where adequate treatment was administered and patients were restored to health. Dr. Bach is known as the first surgeon who successfully performed an extraction of a lung from a patient on the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua. This was hardly of any monetary cost to the patient and one that saved his life. Thanks to the brilliant skills of the later- to-be President of Partners in Health, Dr. Robert Bach, and his well-trained assistants and nurses. He has been a living example of a true Christian Missionary Medical Doctor, compassionate, tireless, and persistent in his commitment for the welfare of our people in Nicaragua. He is a uniquely excellent representative of Partners in Health and a much liked ambassador of good will by our natives.

Throughout the years since, Partners in Health has established strong links with the Ministry of Health in this region of Nicaragua, and beneficial relationships with other non-profit organizations based in settings of poverty and necessity. Such has been the case of its key links with the Rotary District Club 7290, U.S.A (re. Water and Sanitation Project Rio Coco); the local Fire Department here in Puerto Cabezas (re. overhauled and repaired ambulance donated to them), and the David Fellers Foundation (re. Wheel chairs Program), among others.

Partners in Health continually strives to achieve overarching goals such as bringing blessings of modern medical science and technology to our poverty- stricken region, and assuring us that we are not alone in our endeavors to make life better for all. Partners of Health has shown much solidarity and given us much hope in achieving improved health care level for the most vulnerable population.

Partners in Health have shown its additional outreach to our society as it creates a neighborhood of friendship, peace, and solidarity, in Puerto Cabezas where its guesthouse is located. Thanks to the noble spirit of community and the empathic heart of its current President, Ms. Jill Grant.

Northeast Nicaragua, particularly, will always be grateful to Partners in Health for their uninterrupted support and good- will for our people's well – being throughout several decades.



A Note from the President-Jill Grant

It is a privilege to assume the leadership of Partners in Health. It has a long and colorful history as noted in Gerry Green's note. Over the years we have developed many close relationships so that we come as friends who work alongside rather than taking over with a team. I am very comfortable with this as establishing relationships has always been my priority. Unfortunately, we have had to cancel a few trips because of the political situation but we are planning a trip in the Spring

A Note from our Founder –Robert Bach

One of the best decisions I have ever made was to hand over the directorship of Partners in Health of Maine to Jill Grant. She picked up the ball and ran with it. One of her greatest assets is her outgoing friendly personality which has resulted in many lasting friendships. She is in frequent conversation with our Nicaraguan partners and is consequently well informed of their needs. She finds ways to address them even when we are not physically there. We have not been able to travel there this past year because of the political situation which we hope will be settled in the new year



Endoscopy and Laparoscopy

Dr. Sidney Antonio Muller and his team prepares to do endoscopy while patients and family wait in the hallway. Dr. Sidney has taken a team to Waspam to do endoscopy along with the weekly clinics in Puerto Cabezas. We were able to purchase and send him a newer model of an Olympus fiberoptic video gastroscope (160 series). Although it is used equipment, it has been completely refurbished by Adam Rudinger who has repaired our scopes with no charge for many years

Dr. Sydney has also been able to find suppliers in Managua for equipment for laparoscopic surgery which includes clips and trocars for which we reimburse him.

A Thank You, From a Nicaraguan Surgeon

At this difficult time in Nicaragua, we would like to thank Partners in Health of Maine for always being there to support us. We appreciate the fundraising efforts of your organization. This provides us with money to purchase needed equipment for laparoscopic surgery and gastroscopy. Your organization also helps us with the repair of equipment. There are no words to convey our gratitude for your support to the hospital and our people. We are appreciative for the ongoing support despite the fact that you have been unable to travel to Nicaragua. We hopefully look forward to your visit in the Spring of 2020.

Sidney Antonio Muller
General Surgeon, Hospital Amanacer
Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua

A New Maintenance Shop

This year a new maintenance shop was constructed. The need was great. The maintenance people were working in a barely closed tiny shack. They did not have proper lighting, electrical supply or benches to beginning working on the simplest repairs. The maintenance shop has been completed and is in use. We are planning on installing running water and a covered porch. As more technology is used there is a need to repair more equipment. It is essential to have a clean organized place to do repairs.



Medical Equipment: More Than Meets the Eye

Modern healthcare requires modern equipment. Modern equipment requires a lot of support to be successful in improving healthcare. There are three general support categories that should be in place for successful deployment of medical equipment. The first is to assure that the facility can provide the proper support for the equipment such as electric power, that there will be someone to train them and lastly to teach them the importance of routine maintenance rather than waiting until the piece of equipment breaks

Jill Grant and Dr. Bach have done a good job trying to promote these issues that have created a fertile environment for the use of medical equipment. Including matching the level of support to the corresponding level of complexity of the medical equipment.. Slow, deliberate training by counter-parts, like nurse-to-nurse, doctor-to-doctor and engineer-to-engineer, etc. will win the race. Remember, "The Lord himself will go before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forget you. Don't be afraid and don't worry." -Deuteronomy 31:8

By Robyn Frick, volunteer and bioengineer Eastern Maine Medical Center

Laundry Updates in Puerto Cabezas

As the building of the new maintenance shop progressed, the personnel in the laundry requested the same type of shelving, which we subsequently installed. A local welder and Harold Oporta designed and constructed the shelves. We also provided them with a new sewing machine.



The Fire Station gets a new coat of paint.

The home of the donated ambulance is now looking new. We chose the fire department to set up emergency services as there is a 24/7 dispatcher and tremendous interest on the part of the fireman to learn emergency skills. We are planning to hold the second part of a First Responder course in the Spring. We are also looking into providing them with a second ambulance

The Bilwaskarma Outreach Project

It has reported some remarkable statistics for this year .

1. Another year with 0.0 Infant Mortality within the 10 communities under the supervision of the Moravian Clinic w/ follow-up supporting all that's been achieved.
2. Coordination with the Casa de Madernas of Waspam for the "at-risk" pregnant women wherein the Outreach activities pulled together and no mothers were lost in childbirth!
3. Partners in Health of Maine have supervised the Rotary Wells project another year in the 10 communities. The Bangor, Maine Rotary Club has funded the project to this point.



A new well nearly finished

Plans for the New Year 2020 - Jill Grant

It is our hope that we will visit Nicaragua this year, pending the political situation. Our volunteers miss the friends that have been made, but many of us are in contact through Facebook. We would like to complete the second part of the first responder course that Dr Rob Rose taught in 2018. We have some new volunteers who are anxious to help with conducting the course. Although we have not been able to visit this year and carry equipment with us, we have started to build a local supply chain to provide supplies for the operating room.

We are waiting for an estimate to buy a rebuilt engine to revive a second ambulance that has a blown engine. This will cost around 3500 dollars plus the installation. Puerto Cabezas serve approximately 40,000 people so a second ambulance would be very useful.

- o Any donation will be greatly appreciated.
- o Please make checks payable to Partners In Health of Maine sent in the enclosed envelope
- o Our history and mission can be seen on our website PIHOM.com.
- o Please visit our facebook page Partners In Health of Maine
- o If you order anything under Amazon, Use Amazonsmile.com, Partners in Health of Maine is listed and we get a few cents on each dollar spent. (This does not cost you more.)
- o We accept Pay Pal payments under Partners in Health of Maine



Volunteer Sarah Warner with patient receiving a life changing wheelchair