

In Focus

Mano con Mano Health Reach Newsletter
1200 Bradner Place South
Seattle, WA 98144

September 2005
www.manoconmano.org
Tele:Guatemala 011-502-2-460-0179



Feeding Center Construction seen from the road above



First church service in Yalu after land was cleared

“Enter the Land that the Lord will give....as He promised.” Ex. 12:25

Feeding Center Update-Yalu

As many of you know, MCM is constructing a “feeding center” in the Mayan village of Yalu. This village is the home of some 5,000 Mayan Kaqchikel people (indigenous to Guatemala) whose main source of income is farming. Often a worker makes less than 35 quetzales (\$4) per day. Their main food staple is corn tortillas. Studies show that 62% percent of Mayan children are malnourished, second highest in the world behind Bangladesh. Guatemala has the highest “stunting” rate in the world. Stunting is when children never reach their potential height due to poor nutrition. The difference in height between middle class Guatemalans and poor villagers is startling. The vast majority of brain development occurs during pregnancy and the first two years of life. Brain development lost during these years cannot be recovered later in life. In spite of this knowledge, most feeding programs in Guatemala begin with school age children (seven and above).

Hands of Hope, a clinic that serves three villages (Santa Marta, San Rafael El Arado and San Jose de Yalu) brought Susan Jones to this remote farming area in the Guatemalan highlands. As an outgrowth of this clinic’s ministry, MCM has partnered with a Guatemala City Church, Centro Biblico Renuevo, to design and develop a center in which to feed expectant mothers and the most needy children in Yalu.

In February of 2005, a small parcel of land was purchased for \$6000 and construction on the building began. From the picture above, you can see that the building is making good progress. With the bottom level constructed and the upper level (where the kitchen and feeding tables will be located) well underway, the Yalu feeding center is becoming a reality. Money from MCM donors has constructed the largest and most significant building in the community. The people of Yalu are amazed, wondering why anyone would come to their community and build such a structure and provide services to them. Many of them are reluctant to trust that this project is for them, and they are wondering if the “gringos” are going to infiltrate their community and take advantage of them. History of invasion and conquerors that exploit and demean

them has proven that outsiders rarely come in to “do good.” That anyone would do such a service motivated by Jesus’ love is completely foreign to their experience and understanding. We need your prayers to make sure that history does not repeat itself in any aspect of this ministry.

Our desire is that the “feeding center” will be a “hope center.” Plans are being discussed to start small family-owned businesses that will provide food and protein sources for the feeding center AND an income for village families. One idea is to invest in chickens, seed and fertilizer and partner with ministries that have experience in self-sustaining development programs to help educate and equip Mayan families to feed themselves for present and future generations. Yalu is rich in land, sunshine, rain and labor. The area is poor in education, equipment, venture capital and hope.

Currently 104 families are enrolled in the feeding center. Of the 400 children represented by these families, the first 100 to be fed are rated by local leadership as severely at risk. As we wait for the building to be ready for feeding, we have started feeding pregnant and nursing women in need, and the most severely malnourished children under the age of 3. We use donations to buy milk, fortified protein drinks, eggs, vegetables, beans and fruit for these villagers. Food is delivered to them at weekly visits as patients are examined and weighed. If we had waited until the building was finished, some of these children might have died. Thank you for helping Mano con Mano to make a difference in these families.



Santos, one of the children currently being fed as “priority one” for the feeding center. As building speeds ahead, special needs families are given basic staples to cook at home. Severely malnourished pregnant mothers and preschool children are monitored twice weekly for growth and development.

What is needed?

- **Teams** to come help with construction and finishing.
- **Funds** to buy materials and pay local labor.
- **Wisdom** in planning a program that is **culturally appropriate and self-sustaining**.
- Consistent **Christian witness** in the community by all visitors and ministry personnel.
- **Partnerships** with ministries experienced in development, farming, poultry-raising and education.
- Churches and individuals to support the ministry in prayer and provision.

Positive "Side effects" of the feeding center construction:

- A **church was planted** in April 2005 by Centro Biblico Renuevo and has met faithfully each Sunday near the construction site.
- Mayan and Guatemalan workers hear **testimonies** and a bible story during their snack breaks several times each week.
- As a result, several construction workers have **accepted Jesus as their Savior**.
- 9 Mayan men are learning a **marketable skill** which will also help to build and improve their own homes.
- 15 families have husbands and fathers who are employed and receiving weekly income.
- Middle class Guatemalan Christians are being given an **opportunity to serve** their poorer neighbors only one hour away from home.
- Volunteer members of the city church and visiting teams have ministered to families in practical ways.
- **God's love has touched hundreds of hearts and lives.**

Teams, Teams, Teams**Short Term Missions, Mexico City 2005**

Brian Nelson, MD, MCM Board Member

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to live in a city that many consider the most populated metropolitan region in the world? Like many large cities, it is plagued with poverty, traffic congestion and crime. Also like many cities, it is rich in history and culture with people being its biggest asset. Mano con Mano recently partnered with a group of high school students and the Missionary Outreach program of Seattle Christian School to conduct a vision clinic at the invitation of a small Christian church in the outskirts of Mexico City. We were blessed to serve the vision needs of the residents of this area, many who earn only \$5 per day and cannot afford to buy glasses for themselves and their families. Each day commenced with a prayer that the Lord would bring

those to the clinic who were in need of improved physical sight as well as spiritual sight. A team of local volunteers from the church provided spiritual counseling and introduced hundreds to the Good News of Jesus Christ. Many needs were identified by the church, and plans were made to help and follow-up with those that were interested. Following the counseling session each individual was invited to have a brief screening eye exam. Many people required distance or reading glasses (often both!) and were fit with glasses at no charge. The Seattle team brought these glasses to Mexico, which were donated by countless individuals in the Seattle area who no longer needed or wanted them and were gracious enough to donate them instead of throwing them away. In addition, we examined many who had moderate to severe eye problems and provided counseling about treatment options, answered questions and recommended preventative therapy.

It was inspirational to work with high school students who have a tremendous desire to serve the Lord in any capacity they could during the week. The people that we served were extremely patient with our inadequate Spanish and the long lines in the clinic. They were always thankful for whatever we could provide in the way of glasses and medical advice. The smiles of the many thousands of patients we examined were worth the price of any discomfort we may have experienced due to heat and standing on our feet for long hours. The students, adult team members and myself were continually reminded of Christ's servant spirit, and it provided inspiration for us to finish the week strong with joyous attitudes towards those that we were called to serve. Isn't it interesting that we usually receive much more than we can ever give when we try to serve the way Jesus did? I can confidently guarantee that a short term mission experience will be life changing!

In case you were wondering, the residents of Mexico City claim the population of the greater region is now approaching a staggering 35 million!

**Johann Yi, DDS, MCM Board Member, Goes to Cameroon**

From April 10th to 27th I traveled to Cameroon, Africa performing dentistry. I joined a group called Health Team International which consisted of physicians, dentists and other professionals. Lead by Dr. Wiklund from Puyallup, we traveled to the northern part of Cameroon which has desert-like climate. Temperatures soared to average of 110F. One of the days we were there, it was recorded to be the hottest place in the world. In addition, the region consists of a predominantly Muslim population. I noted many mosques where Muslims pray several times a day at designated times.

We stationed ourselves in a place called Kousseri. Like other third world countries, people were extremely poor and

distraught. We established medical and dental clinics in four different villages. We worked two days in each village commuting there by bus. In the dental clinics we focused on extractions only, due to the lack of resources and the needs of people. Everyday, we had a large crowd of people lined up to receive treatments.

Like all MCM projects, each morning started with group devotions. At the clinic, Pastor John N’Goh, a native of Cameroon, gave powerful messages inviting people to Christ. Counselors were also present. Overall, it was a challenging trip due to the climate and length of time away from family. It was also very rewarding in terms of my spiritual growth. Thank you for all the prayers.



Grace Church Invades Yalu In July, a team of 19 youth and seven adults descended upon a small Mayan community to show the love of Jesus through vacation bible schools, women’s ministry and construction work. This team, coordinated through Al and Patty Turnbow, new missionaries to Guatemala, and Pastor Steve and Kathy Pace of Grace Community Covenant Church in Olympia, Washington, was a tremendous blessing to MCM and the people of Yalu.



Team members “commute” from VBS to construction site
Over 500 kids heard about Jesus, learned new songs and participated in craft time and games for two days. The following two days their mothers were invited to hear testimonies, sing and make baby blankets and frames for family pictures. Over 100 women came the first day, and as word spread, the number doubled to 200 women for the second day. As women heard testimonies of Christ’s work in the lives of women in the midst of suffering, they shed tears of sadness and joy. Several women prayed to receive Christ as their savior resulting from the two day event. One woman

from the community stood on behalf of her sisters in the village and thanked the women of Olympia for coming to bless them and share God’s love. The final blessing on the week was that all 26 team members participated in the construction of the feeding center, showing tangibly that North American Christians CARE about the lives of Mayan villagers. For everyone involved, this team was a gift from God. Discussion and prayers are in progress to repeat this team next year.



Pastor Steve in the “love ditch”

Visalia First Presbyterian lights a fire in Yalu

On the heels of the Grace church came a team from Visalia, California sponsored by Dianne and Wendell Merritt, CAM (Central American Mission) partners. This team laid more block in “the love ditch,” prepared wire for more rebar columns and delivered shoes, clothes and toys to needy children in Yalu. As part of a mission exposure team, the Visalia crew “fell in love” with the people of Yalu and the work God is doing in their community. Prayer is being directed to future work in clean water projects, chicken and livestock projects with the hope of improving health and life in these Mayan communities. It only takes a spark.....



Volunteers from Visalia with Wendell Merritt add more block
Back to School

Christian Academy of Guatemala began its school year on August 22, thus Memo Jones began his third year as a volunteer teacher in the high school. This year he is teaching only three subjects so that he can devote more time to the ministry in Yalu. His current students are young enough to be the children of the sixth graders he taught years ago, and he will be old enough to be called “Mr. Grandpa” by the end of the school year. The parents of his students all serve God in some significant way, so Memo’s teaching ministry continues...at least for the time being.



Brandon Jose celebrates his first birthday after three brain surgeries and bushels of prayer.

The Clinics

Work continues in the Kaqchikel village of El Arado where Susan Jones has been working for the past two years with missionary nurse, Anita Giagnacavo. Recently, a missionary doctor, Jim Hines from Texas, joined their work with the Mayan poor. At this clinic, service is provided for mainly women and children who have no other medical services available for many miles. Staff at this small clinic diagnose and treat what they can—and refer those that they can't treat to Guatemalan hospitals and physicians. The most exciting development in the last year is the ongoing training of three young, Mayan adults to become local village health care providers. Mauricio Grande Canel is now finishing his first year of nursing school thanks to a scholarship provided by Mano con Mano. Maria Juana Can Puluc has learned to care for pregnant women and children, treat common ailments and provide first aid and referral services in emergencies. She has already saved several lives by her excellent judgment and application of the education given to her each week as she works in the clinic. Reyes Raxon, the newest health care promoter, has learned to give injections, listen to congested lungs and provide breathing treatments. Anita and Susan hope that these three young people, each from a different village, will provide the backbone of care for their communities as they continue to seek opportunities to learn and improve their skills.

A second area of improvement is the increasing partnership with local fire department volunteers, emergency departments, downtown hospitals and physicians to provide much needed care to patients with severe illness and injury. Patients have received radiation therapy, root canals, cleft palate repair, ultrasounds, emergency Caesarian sections and brain surgery through partnerships with existing health care systems. Fear of the outside world, superstition and years of mistreatment of Mayan patients by Ladino health systems are slowly being broken down one good experience at a time....by working Hand in Hand...Mano con Mano. A big part of these improvements are due to having five Mayan staff members, including Ester Pirir, a trained nurse who manages referrals and provides bilingual education to patients in stressful situations.

Susan continues to treat patients in another poor community named El Campanero, which is located on the side of a hill behind the school where Memo teaches. Two years ago, Susan inherited the care of many of these villagers from Pat DeLeon, the first missionary nurse to visit El Campanero. Patients came to the home-based clinic run by Pat (and later Susan) because no other health care was available or affordable for these people. Although not as poor as the

Mayans of El Arado and Yalu, these descendents of Mayan farmers still make a very low wage and live in houses of cement block and dirt floors. Although Guatemala has a form of socialized medicine, less than 19% of the population is covered. Getting to see a doctor and receiving treatment is often so difficult that many Guatemalans don't make the effort. Thus, people flock to the mission-run medical clinics for help and encouragement. The gradual transition of care to Guatemalan staff over time and emphasis on prevention and promotion rather than "cure" is the goal of both clinics.



Edgar, a 75-pound, 27-year-old man personifies what happens with malnutrition and lack of health and dental care as a child. Working with Guatemalan dentists, your donations have given Edgar a new chance at life and something to smile about.

Creating New Smiles

Jones Update

Memo and Susan continue to thrive on hugs, kisses and family time with a variety of people in Guatemala. Cell phone, email and visits as often as possible keep family ties alive. They were blessed by a five day visit from sons Graham and Colin in June. Graham and his wife, Erika, are expecting their first son in January. Graham will finish his orthodontia residency in December of 2006 when he and Erika hope to move from St. Louis to Seattle area to set up a home and practice. Colin and Grace just bought their first home in Kirkland, WA near Aunt Sandie and Uncle Doug. Grace and Erika both work in dental offices. Colin is busy buying and fixing up real estate while he plays guitar at Mars Hill Church as often as possible.....sometimes four times in one Sunday! Emails from you keep them connected and feeling loved.

Tio Memo and Tia Susan practicing for being "real grandparents" in January. Edwin and Lesley put up with our hugs, kisses and spoiling while we wait for little Jonesie to arrive.



**Mano con Mano Health Reach, c/o Sharon Im-Lee
1200 Bradner Place South, Seattle, WA 98144
For email updates write: sueijones@aol.com**