

2007 Guatemala Mission Team Daily News

Ron Amberg, Communications

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Spring Valley United Methodist Church

Numerous challenges are encountered for the Spring Valley Guatemala Mission Team in both medical and construction details. Bekki Beverly tells of her experiences setting up the make shift clinic. Sue Metzler writes about the eventful first day in Cunen. Dr. Frank Andersen provides a medical report. Tom Purcell has learned a new Spanish word.



DAY THREE, MONDAY, AUGUST 13, 2007 **SPRING VALLEY GUATEMALA MISSION TEAM**

The mission work begins in Cunen!

Bekki Beverly:

Hi Ya'll

Greetings from Cunen. Liz [Gross] hijacked a Pepsi truck for a caffeine fix for all of us. We melted the pastors coffee pot, flames coming out. Much excitement for those of us who are caffeine addicts. Frank [Andersen] had a great day in clinic. He saw 44 patients—a very large percentage of them were children, which was a change from the other clinic. We had a slow morning. No one had advertised that we would be here, but the word got out and the afternoon was very busy.



Pharmacy
Kathryn, Meghann and Bekki Beverly

The morning being slow was a blessing since it gave us a chance to get the clinic and pharmacy organized. We are working out of suitcases stacked on chairs. We took one of the dining tables down to count on. Frank would see the patient; write the script. Meghann [Beverly] would take the basket to the "pharmacy" to be filled. She would print the picture while she waited on the prescriptions. We had quite a system going.

The people here are amazing. We saw so many smiles and trust from each person who came thru the gates. They walked to us in the rain trusting that their needs would be taken care of. Hopefully we met their expectations.

Salud y Paz
- Bekki Beverly

Sue Metzler:

Hola,

Our first day in Cunen has been joyful and, for me, jam packed with learning. The people here are beautiful- inside and out. Everything moves at a much slower pace than I am used to, and I am loving that.

We woke to rain which did not let up all day. This made things challenging for the construction crew, as they were up to their ankles in mud. The suitcase full of the supplies for VBS is not here with us, so we were uncertain as to what the children's program might be. When the morning started, we felt that we didn't have a large enough group of children, so Liz did an amazing job of leading us in "troop support" for the day. We started by counting out vitamins to help Bekki get ahead of the game.

Then we set off on a mission for a coffee pot with Josephina. She commandeered us a ride in one of the little red taxis and we came back triumphant with a large bag of coffee and cups. Unfortunately, as Bekki told you, we managed to set the coffee pot on fire.

After lunch, we went to the construction site and formed an impromptu "Methodist sewing circle" to twist wires. I'm still uncertain as to what these wires will be used for, but the men assured us that they are essential. Then the true adventure of the day began... Liz wanted to find paper plates, some garbage bags for the men to put their muddy clothing in, and some Diet Pepsi to make up for the coffee shortage. The 4 of us: Liz [Gross], Susan [Hanchey], Judy [Kline] and myself headed to the tiendas without a local guide. In the first one, it was truly hilarious as we tried to explain that we wanted paper plates. The storekeeper just shook his head at us (probably thinking "crazy ladies").

Two stores later we found the paper plates, cups and one (yes, one) bottle of Pepsi. The next tienda yielded more pop, but we still hadn't found the prize: diet Coke. As we were walking back up the steep hill towards the hotel, the Pepsi truck came roaring around us and stopped at the tienda next to the hotel. Liz took off full speed after the truck. Using a lot of hand signs and some Spanish we managed to buy a case of Pepsi light, in plastic bottles, off the truck.

All in all, a day of joy and adventure.

Pax,
- Sue Metzler

Frank Andersen:

Medical Report

We had a busy day in the clinic. Our first job was to create a clinic from a carport. Some twine, bedspreads, a few tables and chairs and we had a two room office to work from. It was dry, although the helpers ran back and forth through rain much of the day to get medications from the pharmacy. It was actually much better than I expected from the reports and all-in-all was a very workable arrangement.

Our day started slow, possibly because there had not been advertising about our team and the rain (it rained off and on all day). But Adolfo went to the fire station and they drove up and down the streets with the ambulance advertising the clinic on the loudspeaker. It seemed to work because our afternoon got busy! We saw 17 patients in the morning and 27 in the afternoon.

The morning was pediatric clinic and over the day we saw more children than we did last year in Camanchaj (7 under age 2 and 18 were ages 3 – 17). Probably the most dramatic case was a young woman with mastoiditis, a severe infection of the bone behind the ear. Once again I have the frustration of not being able to do more than give some oral antibiotics and hope for the best, knowing that I'll never get follow-up to find out how she did. Another very interesting young man has been crippled since birth, probably a form of cerebral palsy. Despite his limitations he's married and as we finished the session he told me they had been trying to have a child for eight years; another frustrating moment, knowing that I just don't have the facilities to do a proper workup for him and his wife.



Break time – Taking a break between patients
(Left to right) Judy Kline, Raoul (back), Jan Andersen, Kathryn Beverly, Meghann Beverly, Josefina (doing registration), Amanda Carpenter, Sue Metzler

We noticed that a lot of people didn't know their birthdays when we asked. Perhaps its an American thing, but we make such a big deal of birthdays that it seems sad not to have that once a year celebration of life that we so enjoy in our homes.



But for each frustration there are several cases where I believe we've done good. There was the family of four that gave us hugs as they left. A teacher who brought his son and was relieved just to know that his son's exam was entirely normal. And once again we saw a lot of dysentery (11 cases) – at least I know that we'll relieve some misery for those folks.

Today was a warm-up, getting our clinic set up and our systems in place. I think we're ready for tomorrow and we certainly appreciate your prayers and support.

- Frank Andersen, MD

Tom Purcell:

Learned a new Spanish word today, Lodo. It means 'mud'. It was "mucho Lodo" today at the construction site.

Jerry Malone and Robert Gross used the circular saw to square the ends and rip boards for making forms for the concrete beams for holding the roof.

Mark Jacobson and Tom Purcell with the help and instructions of "los Hefes" put up the frames.

Susan Hanchey and Nick Anderson made wire ties used to hold the wooden frames.

More rain is predicted for tomorrow. Hope it's not so bad we can't put a full day in.

- Tom Purcell