

2007 Guatemala Mission Team Daily News

Ron Amberg, Communications

Number 5, August 14, 2007

Spring Valley United Methodist Church

Supplemental photos have been sent for Tom Purcell's Monday August 13th report. Following that, for Tuesday, August 14th is a construction report from Mark Jacobson, a medical report from Dr. Frank Andersen, and a poem from Joni Copeland.



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

Editor's Note: When Monday's report was transmitted from Guatemala, the technical Team was unable to reduce several photos of Tom Purcell's, associated with his report. That problem has been resolved. Hence, Tom's written report is being repeated. ~ Ron Amberg.

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.



Robert Gross and Jerry Malone at the work site, cutting boards for forms

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



Mark Jacobson's feet before he climbed onto the scaffolding



Mark Jacobson putting up forms for the concrete to be poured later

DAY FOUR, TUESDAY, AUGUST 14, 2007
SPRING VALLEY GUATEMALA MISSION TEAM

Second work day in Cunen

Mark Jacobson:

Hello, Spring Valley!

What a week, er day, we've had! Off to the Internet café at the crack of dawn (8:00 A:M) to get the news back to Dallas, then back to the work site.



The new clinic under construction

It's amazing what you can accomplish wearing 20 pound shoes (Are you beginning to see a recurring theme here?!)

We're forming the roof of the clinic and though we probably won't actually pour any concrete, we're making a lot of progress for the next teams to get a top on this masterpiece.

See you soon

- Mark



Putting up forms for the roof
(left to right): Tom Purcell, Mark Jacobson, Edgar, Nick Anderson (on scaffold), Raoul (on the ground)

We spent the day skating in mud from yesterday's rain even though the morning was partly sunny. Rain returned late morning to re-energize the mud, but still we slogged on.



Traffic jam in Cunen
Cattle were being driven down the street and in no hurry.

Frank Andersen:

The Tuesday Medical Report (8/14/07)

Tuesday got busier! We saw 54 patients today. Once again dysentery leads the list (10 patients). It's frustrating that people know to boil their water, but when we ask them they all admit that they occasionally drink tap water. The kids do it at school, but even the adults occasionally cut corners. It's a reminder that no one "gets used to the bacteria in the water"; we treat "traveler's diarrhea" at the first cramp, but these people often have to live with it for months and years. Once again, we saw a lot of children – 25 were age 16 or under.

Our medical team is great and is the only reason I can see 50 patients in a day. Jan (Andersen) and Joan (Copeland) are my nurses; they do an initial history with one of our translators. We designed a record card that let's them check off the history so I can often go straight to a physical exam, diagnosis and prescribe a treatment. Kathryn (Beverly) is our medical assistant; she does vital signs and any other job we need done. Our pharmacy staff – Bekki (Beverly), Meghann (Beverly) and Sue (Metzler) are kept running with records, prescriptions and medications. We have two trilingual translators this year (Daniel, who's been with us every year, and Raoul, who's new to our team). It's a great team to work with!



(left to right): Dr. Frank Andersen, Pastor Alejandro (pastor of the local Methodist church – the clinic is being built beside the church), Jan Andersen, Daniel (our interpreter)

The most touching case today was a 7 year old girl with second degree burns on her foot from boiling water. The burns were a week old and the blisters had opened up. Jan and Joan cleaned her foot and

taught her family how to keep it clean and dressed properly. Sue Metzler gave up one of her socks so the girl would have clean socks over her dressing.

Yesterday I told one of the parents that his child's exam was normal and I was amazed how his face lit up. Everyone here comes with a complaint, often cough or headache. Most of them have normal exams and I think they are using a minor complaint as an excuse to come to the doctor. I've been afraid to tell them there's nothing wrong (you can't get by with that in America), but I found today that they are very happy to hear that they're healthy (especially the parents when I examine children) and they appreciate receiving vitamins, which they understand to be helpful for their overall health. I'll not be reluctant to say "Everything's fine" from now on.

I hear laughter coming from the dining room and I think it's about supper time. We're ready for another big day tomorrow. All of the medications and supplies that you sent are going to good use. We can never thank you enough for your generosity!



Jan Andersen dressing a burned foot of a 7 year old girl

- Frank Andersen, MD

Joni Copeland:

A poem about our medical clinic experience here in Cunen as we help these wonderful people: by Joni Copeland RN

They Come

They come to us in the rain
They walk to us with their children
And their parents and their friends.

They come to us
They are losing weight
They have no appetite
They can't keep anything in their tummies
Their insides are being attacked
They don't know what's wrong

They come to us
With swollen limbs
With painful joints
With headaches and ear aches
Sore throats, and chest pain
And no where to go

They come to us
They can't urinate without pain
It hurts to even bend
Their fingers are twisted and sore
They can't swallow, or see, or even breathe
So, They come to us.

They Come
Their eyes are so innocent
Their smiles are so bright
They come with such hope
They come with such trust

They come to us
Because they know we are here to help them

They come to us and we are here

Thank God, They Come.
We must Thank God we are here for it is through Him that All things are possible.

Our Heavenly Father, Continue to Bless our work and the people we serve! Amen!

- Joni Copeland RN

