

Community of Christ
HEALTH
MINISTRIES
ASSOCIATION

HEALING HEARTS HERALD

Winter 2005

"WHAT AN INCREDIBLE YEAR"

By Ruth Humbert, RN, Medical Missionary in
Guatemala

I am sitting in quiet meditation reflecting back over the past year. It doesn't seem possible that a year has come and gone. What an incredible year! -a year of growing, learning, and developing new skills.

My faith in God strengthened daily as I became aware of His presence in my life. Giving me a sense of peace when I really wanted to panic and return home. It took time just learning the chicken bus etiquette so the money-taker wouldn't yell at me in Spanish or learning the chicken bus routes. There were moments of uncertainty when they went off the beaten path leaving me to wonder where will I end up and how will I get home. Then there was my patient Spanish teacher, Mario, trying to teach an old dog a new language. My tongue just won't roll them double rr's!

During my first month of medical clinics I realized how difficult life is here in Guatemala. There are daily struggles of having enough food to feed the family, living without electricity, poor access to water or travel, cooking food on the fire on the floor, and having no access to medical care or the ability to buy medicines. Despite the hardship, I heard no complaining but only laughter and a welcoming smile.

Since my return in May, my path has had some twists and turns. I am no longer volunteering for Mujeres en Accion. It is not easy being terminated as a volunteer in a 3rd world country! I had moments when I thought my time in Guatemala was coming to an end. God had other ideas. I am walking a new path and working independently seeking out poor communities to provide health care. Mujeres en Accion is a good organization and meets many people's needs. But this independent status has opened new opportunities. I have pap clinics scheduled in all my communities because cervical cancer goes undetected until it is too late. I have 2 Rotary Clubs promising money to build 45 stoves in 2 of the communities that still use ground fires in their houses to cook. There is the potential for starting low cost pharmacies in communities with no access to medicine. Training of health promoters and nurses in these communities has begun so the work can continue when I return home.



Two weeks ago I was walking early one morning to get a bus for Xenacoj to have a medical clinic. I heard 3 people walking behind me speaking English. I had this gentle nudge to turn around and say "Hi" and ask of their destination. Unfortunately, I ignored this and the feeling became stronger but I continued to ignore the nudging. Well God got my attention. I tripped and when you have a 50-60 pound backpack on there is only one direction you can go and that is down on a 4 point landing. Guess who helped me up....the 3 people behind me! So the conversation begins. One was a dentist and the other was a nurse/physical therapist and family counselor. During our 20 minute encounter, she was able to give me guidance on a situation and where to get a family assistance. I really needed the information! So in the future, I will listen to those nudges so I don't have to end up on my face, but I thank God for the fall that day.

Last month I was traveling with my friend Madelyn on a shuttle bus. We were talking about how many buses have been robbed and how many accidents Guatemala has from reckless driving. Both of us have had friends who have had their passport, camera phones, and money stolen as well as having to return home early because of accidents or illnesses. Madelyn turned to me at this point and said, "Nothing bad has happened to you and you are still here for over a year!" She continued by saying I think you just have a good aura surrounding you. I then had the opportunity to share my testimony with her about how my brothers and sisters in Christ pray for me daily for my safety and protection. I shared that God is with me on my journey in Guatemala. So please don't stop the prayers because others are seeing the results of those prayers! (of course me, too!!!)

Cards and letters can be sent to Ruth at:

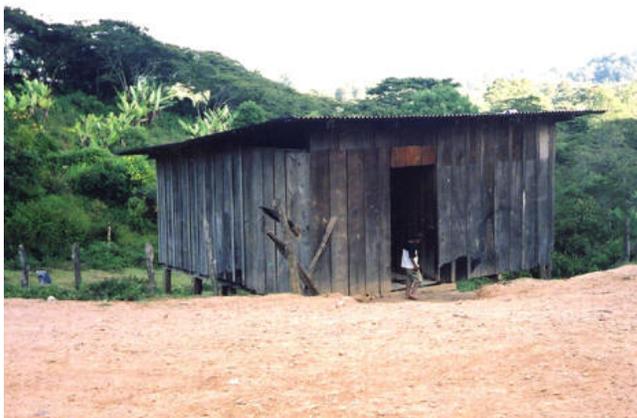
Ruth Humbert, RN
444 Brickell Suite 53-8631
Miami, Florida 33131
G-Nurse@hmaCofChrist.org

WILL YOU HELP BUILD ONE ONIL STOVE?

The Onil stoves that Ruth speaks about are constructed with only 11 cinderblocks in less than 4 hours. The stove materials are delivered to the community and someone in the village is trained on proper construction and becomes the foreman of the project. The stoves are not permanent so can be relocated, use a minimal amount of wood, and has an elbow in the stove pipe for easier cleaning.

Many of the Guatemalan homes have no doors, no windows, no chimney, and poor ventilation. The black soot and smoke inside these houses pose many health risks including asthma, respiratory problems, ophthalmic problems, and inhalation of carcinogens. The Lorena stoves in Honduras have made a huge impact in their health. Onil stoves cost less, assemble easier, and don't require cement.

HMA's goal for 2005 is the purchase of 100 stoves from designated contributions. Just \$100 will build a stove and provide financial support for Ruth and the training of community nurses and health promoters. HOW MANY ARE YOU ABLE TO PROVIDE?



HMA NEEDS YOUR HELP: Past and Present

HMA Historian Mark Thoman is compiling a record of testimonies, photos, and video clips of past Health Team mission trips. He would appreciate folks digging through their old photo albums and sharing some of this history before it is lost. He would also like to have your written testimony of the experience like we have shared Ruth's story in this newsletter. Please send your information and photos to:

Mark Thoman,
PO Box 349,
Johnston, Iowa 50131-0349
Historian@hmaCofChrist.org

If Ruth's story has sparked a mission excitement or fueled a life-long dream- WE NEED YOU! HMA is always needing health professionals to join the Health Missions Teams. Please contact one of the team leaders listed on the back page or Paula Rummel at ExecutiveAssistant@hmaCofChrist.org or 1-816-833-1000 ext 2262 for information.

Ruth invites individuals to come down and assist her in the communities with her work. Just contact Ruth to schedule a time and work out details. She has had several folks take her up on the offer and have thoroughly enjoyed the week. Bring good shoes because I hear it's hard to keep up with her! Contact Ruth at: Ruth Humbert 444 Brickell Suite 53-8631 Miami, FL 33131. Ruth's email is G-Nurse@hmaCofChrist.org.



HMA MISSION

To promote health care to the underserved and those in need
To advance health education enabling self directed care.
To promote wellness of body, mind, and spirit.
To network with others to advance health care.

HMA VISION

To increase sustainable health and wellness
by providing services and ministries
that express our Christian commitment
and promote peace.

CONTRIBUTION AND/OR MEMBERSHIP FORM

Information may be taken over the phone by calling 1-800-825-2806 ext 2262 Mon., Thurs., or Friday

Name _____ Phone _____ Occupation _____

Address _____

Email _____ Signature _____

Level of Membership: \$ _____ Member (\$25-\$99) \$ _____ Sponsor (\$100-\$249) \$ _____ Patron (\$250 & up)

Additional Contributions: \$ _____ Onil Stoves/ Ruth Humbert support in Guatemala @ \$100 each
\$ _____ General Fund, \$ _____ Missions Fund, \$ _____ Chaplain Ministries, \$ _____ Cong. Health Ministries

Payment Method: _____ Check Please mail to: Health Ministries Assoc. 1001 W. Walnut Independence, Mo 64050
____ VISA _____ MasterCard # _____ Exp. Date _____ Amt. _____

Pledge amount: \$ _____ monthly, \$ _____ quarterly. Will make by check _____, Make by credit card _____

Ministry and Committee interests: _____

HEALTH MISSION-March 9-16, 20

05 Leader- Ron Edwards, MD RonEdwards@hmaCofChrist.org

OPEN BOARD MEETING-April 17, 2005 9 AM @ Temple Independence, MO

HEALTH & SPIRITUALITY WORKSHOP- May 2005 @ Baltimore, MD postponed to May 19-21, 2006

OPEN BOARD MEETING-July 17, 2005 9 AM @ Temple Independence, MO

CONGREGATIONAL HEALTH MINISTRIES Training- July 31-Aug. 5 CLW @ Graceland Univ. Lamoni

HEALTH & SPIRITUALITY WORKSHOP- Sept. 16-17, 2005 @ Temple Independence, MO

**HEALTH MISSION- October 5-13, 2005 Leader- Ron Edwards, MD
RonEdwards@hmaCofChrist.org**

OPEN BOARD MEETING-October 16, 2005 9 AM @ Temple Independence, MO

WINTER FIELD SCHOOL- February 6-10, 2006 Congregational Health Ministry Training

HMA is willing to offer guest ministry at 2005 Summer Reunions! Classes can be on current health topics or on congregational health ministry. Please contact Paula Rummel at ExecutiveAssistant@hmaCofChrist.org or 816-833-1000 ext 2262.