

## Scholarships

Educating healthcare professionals in rural areas of the world is the focus of HMA scholarships. Preparing qualified healthcare providers makes a tremendous difference in the quality of life for the many receiving medical care who had little or none before and for the one who now has a career. The return from your investment is tremendous. Here are two examples.



HMA medical scholarship student, Alma Mejia is in her fourth year of medical school. Alma received her white coat at the beginning of 2020. As a result of the pandemic she is doing her course work online until the crisis is over.

*Alma Mejia in her white coat*

Karen Tinoco, our nurse auxiliary student, completed her 24-month program at the end of 2019. Both women, as their time permits, work with our Professional Nurse Saira Giron in the clinics she holds as part of the Honduras Rural Healthcare Program. They also assist with the HMA health teams when they are in-country.

## Education Endowment Fund Grows

Our Healthcare Education Endowment Fund is intended to guarantee scholarships are given for years to come. The fund now stands at a little over \$82,000 towards our goal of \$100,000. Endowment interest earnings plus donations to our Indigenous Healthcare Education Scholarship Fund allow us to offer two to three scholarships every year.

Your donations to the Scholarship and Education funds assure an uninterrupted flow of trained healthcare professionals who can improve the lives of some of the poorest people in the world.

## Honduras Rural Healthcare Program

Prior to Covid-19's spread into Honduras and shutting down the country, the fourth year of HMA's Honduras Rural Healthcare Program was going strong. Our full-time Professional Nurse Saira Giron was continuing her excellent care of the patients that come to her home clinic in the town of La Boquita, in central Honduras, as well as providing monthly health clinics in four rural villages.

Since the program's beginning in January 2017, Nurse Saira has averaged over 250 patient visits a month. In addition through our partnership with the Community of Christ Central America Mission Center, she has provided camp nurse services to Youth Camps, Women's Retreats, and Leadership meetings that are held at the La Buena Fe campground.



*Sometimes the needs are as simple as removing a corn kernel from a mischievous little boy's nose*

Besides providing a broad scope of medical services, Nurse Saira has conducted classes on nutrition and pre- and post-natal care. She has also established health committees in each village and trained the members in first aid and proper use of medications.

## The COVID Pandemic in Honduras

COVID has hit Honduras hard and San Pedro Sula, which is about two hours north of the HMA clinic, is an epicenter. The health system has all but collapsed. Hospitals only treat people that they feel can recover. Severely ill people are sent home to die. Some clinics are charging up to \$500 to be seen, which means most people in this poor country can't get medical attention. Hospitals and clinics are out of oxygen and the price on the black market has escalated to \$1,300 to fill a large tank.

Pharmacies have raised prices for medications and food is scarce. Community of Christ provided Oblation Fund money to buy food and supplies for church members in every congregation. Thanks to a generous bequest, HMA sent \$1000 to supplement those funds.

Honduras is under Marshall Law. People are only allowed out of their homes once every 15 days between the hours of 10 am and 4 pm based on their National Identification Number. During this time they must buy whatever they need and go to the bank, if possible. Lines are very long at banks, pharmacies and clinics.

## Nurse Saira Adjusts to The Virus

Nurse Saira's home clinic in La Boquita is open Monday – Friday: 7am to noon and 1pm to 4pm. She has instructions on the clinic door giving the hours and a requirement for masks. Even though some people do not wear masks, Saira only treats people wearing a face covering. She instructs people with respiratory problems to go to the hospital to receive care. Unfortunately, Saira must keep everything under lock and key due to increasing crime.



*Saira regularly scrubs and sanitizes the clinic*

Because of the travel restrictions, Saira cannot visit the four villages she serves for patient visits. Thankfully, she is using the long-ago formed health committee members in each village. Many of her patients have either diabetes or high blood pressure, that requires regular medications to control. On the days she can leave the house, she takes a month's supply of medications to each village. The medicine is driven to the village roadblock where someone

from the committee comes to pick it up. We applaud Saira for establishing these health committees over three years ago, not knowing just how critically needed they would be.

In the villages she serves there has only been one Covid-19 case, and that person recovered, but cases in rural areas are increasing. Saira's sister had permission to travel to Santa Rosa de Copan, so Saira gave her the money to buy medications there for July.

Saira reports that the price of the medications that she purchases have not increased very much because she buys from a distributor, not a pharmacy. That distributor is in Comayagua, which is a bit of a distance to travel for her, but it is the closest affordable place she can buy medications.

## More than Medicine



*Saira and her son fill bags of food to be delivered to the villages*

In Honduras, with travel limited, jobs gone, and prices increasing, many of the people in the rural villages that Saira serves were in need of not just medicine, but basic necessities. Part of our program includes a 'Special Needs Fund' kept in-country for medical needs beyond what Saira can provide at the clinic. It is used for medical tests, surgery, special medicine, medical equipment, etc. as determined by Saira with HMA approval. Given the dire straights faced many families, HMA approved use of some of the funds for the purchase of staples to be distributed to those families most in need. With the addition of a donation by Gary & Paula Rummel, Saira was able to purchase enough food to fill 60 bags, 15 going to each village of the four villages she serves.

**Thank you to all our generous donors who make our Honduras Program possible.**

# HMA Annual Health & Spirituality Workshop 'Zoomed' to a Great Success!

The 18<sup>th</sup> annual Health and Spirituality workshop, "**Speaking through the Silence: Addressing issues of Domestic Violence.**" was held August 22, 2020. It was a successful and historic event for HMA! Traditionally held at the Community of Christ Temple in Independence, MO, the restrictions of the COVID pandemic, rather than cancel the entire workshop was presented live, online via Zoom.

This year's workshop was co-sponsored with three Community of Christ teams: Health and Wholeness, Spiritual Formation, and Temple Ministries. This collaboration supported a World Conference Resolution 1317 Domestic and Sexual Violence, encouraging congregations and members to become more aware of domestic violence symptoms, to learn about available resources, and to partner with organizations aiming to eradicate this violence, wherever it occurs.



Catherine Vannier

The workshop was an all-day event composed of plenary and breakout sessions presented by local experts on a variety of aspects of domestic and familial violence. After a morning devotion, Catherine Vannier, the Missouri Special Victims Resource *Prosecutor*, gave the opening keynote address highlighting the various kinds of domestic violence and the challenges of investigating and prosecuting those crimes. She also provided important strategies for working with victims seeking safety and care, while

holding offenders accountable.

Four breakout sessions, two in the morning and two in the afternoon, addressed issues related to specific types of domestic violence. Each session was presented in two parts. The first part addressed causes, symptoms, and recognition; the second part, treatment, outcomes, and resources.

Participants chose one morning session and one afternoon session to attend. The breakout session selections were:

## MORNING

Child Abuse presented by Kara LaTessa and Heidi Olson Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Program Managers at Children's Mercy Hospital in Kansas City, MO.

Elder Abuse presented by Judy Gibbs, Assistant Prosecutor for Kansas City, MO and chair of the KC Elder Abuse Task Force.

## AFTERNOON

Intimate Partner Abuse presented by Whitney Francis, Bridge Program Coordinator at Rose Brooks Center Domestic Violence Shelter in KC, MO.

Sexual Abuse & Assault/Rape presented by Jennifer Green, SANE and Clinical and Forensic Care Manager with St. Luke's Health System in KC, MO.

A two-hour lunch break allowed participants to get away from their screens for a while. For those interested, Community of Christ's Daily Prayer for Peace, which takes place every day at 1pm, was offered by Joey Williams lifting up domestic violence in the world.

The day closed with participants reassembling for the closing session "Hearing Silenced Voices: Spiritual Companionship in Violence and Trauma." lead by Katie Harmon McLaughlin, Community of Christ Spiritual Formation Team Leader. Participants were invited to reflect on their experiences of the day and to process spiritual implications for their lives and communities. Katie also brought the morning devotion.



Katie Harmon McLaughlin

Evaluations were very positive, with appreciation for the expert speakers, the increased awareness of the terrible issues of domestic violence, and more prepared to deal with it when confronted with them in their communities or congregations.

Transforming this year's workshop into an online event allowed participation from all over the United States and Canada. Going forward, and building on the success of this year's event, future workshops will be offered online.

## 2020 Health Teams Canceled

The virus has forced cancellation of this year's HMA health team to Honduras as the country closed its borders to incoming travelers. The team visits to Honduras are mutually beneficial. Saira is able to learn from the team doctors and the doctors are able to check the progress of previous patients, make recommendations, and bring back first-hand reports of the program in action. Another cancellation was Dr. Luke Beno's annual trip to see patients and bring quantities of medicines for the clinic, such as, Ibuprofen, Acetaminophen, Clarithromycin and Clindamycin. Dr. Beno has been a great support for Nurse Saira and HMA's Honduras Rural Healthcare Program for several years.

## The Clinic Threatened by Massive Rains this Fall



The challenges aren't always medical. This fall has seen devastating rains in the mountainous area of central Honduras where Saira's home clinic is located. Heavy rains washed out the retaining wall behind Saira's home (left). An emergency loan from HMA allowed a new wall to be built (right) by the end of October, just before hurricane Eta deluged the area. Thankfully the new wall was in place and held. Other homes in the area were not as lucky and were washed down the hillside.



**HMA's Honduras Rural Healthcare Program provides healthcare services in La Boquita and four rural villages**



*Professional Nurse  
Saira Giron runs  
HMA's Honduras Clinics*

*With the covid-19 crisis in the poorer areas, food is needed as much as medicine. Some of the 60 bags of food purchased for those most in need in the villages the Honduras Rural Healthcare Program serves.*

**We need your help to keep this life-changing program going for 2021  
Please Give to HMA's  
Honduras Rural Healthcare Program**