

FAITH IN PRACTICE

A New Community

BUILT ON A FIRM FOUNDATION

Our newsletters are often filled with stories of the poor of Guatemala whose health has been restored through the efforts of our U.S. volunteers. We speak of the long lines of people waiting patiently to see a doctor in the villages and the gratitude of the patient who has received their surgery. Yet, this mission reaches beyond antibiotics for an infection, a repaired hernia or replaced knee—as important as they may be. It stretches beyond the gratefulness of our patients and what this mission means to our U.S. volunteers who receive this gratitude with their own humble thanks. This life changing medical mission reaches into the lives of our Guatemalan volunteers.

This past October, Bob Vela and Omar Chan led our annual Guatemalan Network Directors Conference in Antigua. There, 80 Guatemalan volunteer leaders gathered to learn about the improvements planned for the upcoming season. These leaders represent more than 400 Guatemalan volunteers who support our village medical clinic program. This program renders needed medical care to the most remote parts of Guatemala and refers the patients who need surgery to one of our partner hospitals where our surgical teams operate. Our dedicated Guatemalan Network Directors, all of them volunteers, organize the medical clinics in their villages for our US teams and accompany patients to meet our surgical teams throughout the year. Their commitment is extraordinary. They

have so very little and yet they give of their time, energy and compassion to help their neighbors in need. On the last day of the conference Padre José Contran, Director of Las Obras Sociales del Hermano Pedro, told these volunteers that they were responding to Jesus' call to build a new community upon which the foundation is love.

That is exactly what we saw—a community being built upon the foundation of God's love—as the Guatemalan Network Directors stood to tell their stories. Apolinario Lopez: "I have little to give. I only have my time to give in gratitude to God for my life and this mission." Gervasio Garcia: "I believe that Christ has brought us all together. We would not know each other except for this mission and now we are brothers and sisters." Aristides Alfonso:

"We are happy marching together as brothers and sisters to make a better world."

DIRECTORS OF EL PETÉN

"The Virgin Mary said yes to God and so do I in this work." The Directors for El Petén singing a song they wrote for the occasion entitled *God Comforts the Sick*: "We are happy marching together as brothers and sisters to make a better world... God created us and we join in the struggle, awake to the dream. This is what we say to those we meet: we are united in changing lives, we are witnesses to this purpose. With joy we come from the Petén seeking health for the sick that suffer today." A new community built upon a foundation of love. Casa de Fe, a house filled with faith, and a life changing medical mission in all of its wonder. May the Lord continue to bless all those who serve in Guatemala. Gracias a Dios.



2009 Guatemalan Network Directors Conference

A Different Kind of Healing

DEMONSTRATING SELFLESS SERVICE AND LOVE

Missions are not only about serving others. Many times, those we serve impact our lives in an equally significant way. Dr. Robert Wells, a physician from Portland, Oregon and dedicated Faith In Practice volunteer, has seen firsthand how the Guatemalan people serve us through demonstrating what “community” really means. Dr. Wells tells the story...

A man in his mid twenties was shot in the neck during a robbery while working as a security guard in Guatemala, leaving him paralyzed from the neck down and requiring around-the-clock care for the most basic of needs. If left unattended, serious pressure sores could develop and lead to potentially fatal infections.

On a very hot afternoon, this young man was brought into a room on a lounge chair by his caregivers, consisting of his very pregnant young wife, his mother, and at least two female neighbors. It was obvious that they had taken excellent care of him. His skin was intact, his nutrition was good, and he was in reasonably good spirits.

Their means of financial support was not evident, but the fact that they had sacrificed for him was apparent.

Shortly after meeting him, their agenda became clear. They were hoping for a miracle, similar to Jesus’ healing of the paralytic in Mark, but I could not tell him to “pick up his mat and walk”. Boy, did I feel inadequate at that moment. They were looking to the “Great North American Doctor” to provide a miracle, and I couldn’t meet their expectation.

Then it struck me; although I could not offer the miracle, I could offer my compassion and recognition of the excellent care they were providing. I was also truthfully able to state that even though I could not heal him, the young man could not receive as good of care in the United States as he was receiving in his own village. We don’t have the community, or make the time, that they had devoted to him.

This village had a spirit of selfless service and love. We as physicians cannot always heal, but we can always offer our compassion, care, and respect.

“They were hoping for a miracle, similar to Jesus’ healing of the paralytic in Mark.”

DR. ROBERT WELLS



Dr. Robert Wells serving on a village team.

What a Beautiful Web We Weave

I am in the unique and privileged position of witnessing all of the many facets of Faith In Practice. Continually, I find myself humbled by the work and grateful for those who serve this ministry in so many ways. Most recently, I was blessed to witness the US Leadership Conference, the Annual Gala in Houston, and the Guatemala Leadership Conference, all within a few short weeks. I watched our US Leadership sharing ideas of how they could improve our care and witnessed them laugh and cry together—as a community, a family rich in their differences and blessed in their common love for this mission. Then our Guatemalan Leadership came together in a similar way. Each of these leaders are so different, some living on the coastal plane, others in the mountains of the Highlands. So different and yet committed to a common purpose, energized by the mission and each other. Both conferences mirrored a similar witness. When we step out in faith into the unknown, places of risk, somehow we find the safety and comfort of a new family that

had not existed before. Then between these wonderful Conferences, I was privileged to see those who have not had the opportunity to serve in Guatemala give of their hearts at our Annual Gala. Opening their hearts in honor of honorees who have served Faith In Practice faithfully for so many years, doing whatever

was needed—the most difficult and most menial tasks—all with joyful hearts of service. Our incredible and generous donors saw in our volunteers that there is something special about this ministry that while intangible is incredibly real. We are so appreciative of our committed volunteers from across the United States and Guatemala, and for all of our donors that make it possible. Thank you all for making this life changing mission what it is today and for making it what it will be in the future. All to God’s glory and praise.

**EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR'S
CORNER**



www.faithinpractice.org

Los Camino Entrelazados

THE INTERTWINED ROADS

Los Caminos Entrelazados (Intertwined Roads) was the theme of our U.S. Leadership Conference held in August 2009. In Spanish, *camino* has a greater significance than the simple translation 'road'. Rather, it means a journey, a sense of becoming who we are called to be.

In that spirit, many of our wonderful leaders from across the United States shared their experiences of how Guatemala has touched them and helped them on their own *camino*. Throughout the Conference, two stood side by side to tell their stories. In each case, one had served on a village medical team that found a patient who needed surgery. The other served on the team which provided that surgery. Side by side, they connected to each other through a patient and this ministry. They shared from their hearts as they do each year when building their teams then serving in Guatemala. The leaders reminded us that Faith In Practice is so much more than the work. Through this work, the Holy Spirit flows in ways that are assuring and yet surprising all the same.



**Village team Mission Coordinators
Dr. David and Bette Chenault**

Let Your LifeSong Sing . . .

2009 FAITH IN PRACTICE GALA

With over 600 people in attendance, the lifesongs of our volunteers were singing at the 2009 Faith In Practice Gala. Comprised of our Mercado, seated dinner, honoree presentation and a live auction (complete with a trip to Tuscany), the evening raised over \$315,000! We would like to send special thanks to our Gala Chairs Lorri and Scooter Wolff and Sherry and Larry Haas for their hard work and dedication.

Furthermore, we would like to thank our Honorees for being living examples of what it means to live a lifelong of service. The seven couples were honored for over 10 years of service to Faith In Practice as non-medical professionals. All 14 are truly remarkable and humble individuals who are a blessing to Faith In Practice and to Guatemala. We look forward to the 2009-2010 mission season and seeing all of you at the 2010 Faith In Practice Gala.



**2009 Gala Chairs: Scooter & Lorri Wolff,
Sherry & Larry Haas.**



2009 Gala Honorees (left to right): Cathie & Tom Inglesby, Joan & A. J. Phipps, Ann & Bob Croyle, Gay & John Van Osdall, Dot & George Uthlaut, and Marilyn & Bob Ewing

DID YOU KNOW . . .

2008-2009 MISSION STATISTICS

The 2008-2009 mission season was an extraordinary year of growth, accomplishment, change and healing. Thanks to our committed and enthusiastic volunteers, Faith In Practice is grateful to present you with the season's mission statistics:

- 15,576 patients treated in various villages
- 3,531 dental patients treated (an increase of over 1,000 patients since last year)
- 1,195 surgeries performed
- 838 volunteers sent to Guatemala on 31 teams
- 14,470 beds filled at the Casa de Fe (an increase of over 4,000 from last season)
- 2,044 cervical cancer screenings performed resulting in 70 pre-cancerous lesions treated

All this could not have been done without the imprints of your hands and feet across Guatemala and your eagerness to carry out life changing medical missions.

Thank you for serving and allowing the Guatemalans to serve you with their joyful hearts and gentle spirits.

May the Lord bless you!

"Nothing, you see, is impossible with God." —Luke 1:37



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*Faith In Practice
received Charity Navigator's
highest rating for
the fifth year in a row.*

A Life Changing Gift— Just in Time for Christmas!



As the Christmas season approaches, Faith In Practice would like to offer you a creative gift giving opportunity. Our Gift Giving Guide provides you with various ways to make a difference in the lives of the poor in Guatemala on behalf of your friends, family, and co-workers. Simply go to www.faithinpractice.org, click on “Donate” then “Alternate Gifts.” There, you can enter your online payment and specify the recipient of the gift in the “Notes” field. The Faith In Practice office will then send the recipient a card designating the type of contribution made in their honor. Please make sure to include their full name and complete address.

*“For it is in giving that we receive.”
– St. Francis of Assisi*

Gift Giving Guide

Equipment for New Regional Surgery & Clinic Sites	\$ 1,000
Gynecology or Orthopedic Surgery	\$ 500
Cleft Lip and Palate Surgery	\$ 350
Trunk of Medical Supplies or Village Medicines	\$ 200
Via/Cryotherapy: Cervical Cancer Screening	\$ 100
Dental Care: 10 Extractions	\$ 75
Visit to a Medical Village Doctor or Dentist	\$ 50
Antibiotics for 5 Patients	\$ 25

* This is a guide; all contributions received will be unrestricted. Payments received after December 20th will be followed with a note for best wishes for the New Year.

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