An open door to quality health care

The Health Care Issue
FROM THE DESK OF SHARI BLINDT

Dear friends,

It’s true that families all over the world may face a medical emergency. For those with regular access to health care they are more likely to avoid major medical crises, stay in good general health and provide the same for their family. In this special issue of our spring newsletter, we want to share more about the work we do to help the families we serve stay healthy and strong.

Common Hope’s Antigua Clinic and our partners in other communities provide excellent general care, treating infections, malnutrition, prenatals and more. For those with chronic, manageable diseases like diabetes or hypertension we teach patients how to manage their health and provide them with needed medicines. These services are critical in a country where there are only 9.7 doctors for every 10,000 people, and where the choice of paying for a doctor and buying medicine may mean there is little food for the week.

What many do not realize, however, is Common Hope’s commitment to accompanying families on their journey when they face major health issues. In a country where limited health care resources are becoming even more scarce, we support our families at any given moment.

On a recent visit to Guatemala I spent time with our clinic director, Dr. Walter Estrada. Together, we reviewed our special health cases. In 2018, Common Hope will support more than $30,000 in critical medicine coverage for a small number of families facing serious health situations. Just making sure they get the care they need represents nearly 30% of the total annual medicine budget for the organization. For these families our support is their only option.

We work hard to be good stewards of our resources and partner with our peers—we attempt to manage these costs by working within a referral network of other organizations, visiting volunteer specialists and Guatemalan doctors to leverage donated services when possible. Still, in 2018 we anticipate spending an additional $24,000 to help cover critical services like chemotherapy or dialysis.

We serve more than 14,000 moms, dads, brothers and sisters each year, and helping them stay healthy is a key part of our partnership with them.

We know that good health contributes to a child’s ability to stay in school and graduate. We also know that graduation can radically change the future for an entire family—not just the student. Our social workers, doctors and nurses work diligently to help families stay healthy, but for some there will be an emergency or serious illness that is unavoidable. When that happens we accompany the family through their healing. Sometimes we attend appointments with them or provide transportation to a specialist in Guatemala City, and other times it may be covering all or part of the cost of a surgery. Whatever the situation, we are here to accompany families on this journey.

Your generosity makes this possible.

It is never easy when someone we love is sick. But knowing you have access to the medical attention you need for your family makes a difference. Thank you for making that difference for the families we serve.

Gratefully,

Shari Blindt
Executive Director

HEALTH CARE
IN GUATEMALA

Guatemala suffers from widespread poverty, with more than 50 percent of the population living below the poverty line. There is a great need for access to quality health services in a country where health care is expensive and scarce.

We offer logistical, emotional, and financial support for surgeries and specialist referrals.

Antigua families have access to an onsite pharmacy where they can get their medications at little-to-no cost.

leading cause of death in children are highly treatable illnesses like respiratory infection and diarrhea.

Guatemala has the highest infant mortality rate in Central America and is 4th in the world.

there are 9.7 doctors for every 10,000 patients.

public health facilities are underfunded and underutilized due to scarcity of medicine and supplies.

in Guatemala

health care

common hope’s

health care program

Our Antigua Clinic and partner clinics provide health and wellness services to 14,000 individuals each year.

general medicine, chronic disease management, specialty care, and psychological support are available to families in need.

We work hard to be good stewards of our resources and partner with our peers—we attempt to manage these costs by working within a referral network of other organizations, visiting volunteer specialists and Guatemalan doctors to leverage donated services when possible.
COMMON HOPE CLINIC RENOVATION
improving patient experience ...
adding more space to serve!

SUPPORTERS IN ACTION: CALVARY LUTHERAN CHURCH PERHAM, MINNESOTA

It all starts with an idea. It was a small Vision Team from Calvary Lutheran Church in Perham, Minnesota that asked Common Hope’s Guatemala staff, “What is your dream for this clinic?” Thanks to the incredible leadership and guidance of Ron Anderson, sponsor, church member, and volunteer extraordinaire and retired Pastor Rob Nelson, Calvary Lutheran Church took it upon themselves to support a 2018 clinic refresh and renovation project.

Together, they led a campaign to raise $32,000 to renovate and update Antigua’s clinic and have exceeded that goal! Renovations will begin this spring, and Common Hope families can expect a new waiting area to keep sick children warm while they wait for their appointment and a renovated pharmacy space to make medication disbursement easier and more efficient. Lab equipment will be updated to provide more effective timely results. The renovation will allow Common Hope to better serve those families experiencing chronic disease and unexpected illness with new resources. Thanks to Ron, Pastor Rob, and the Calvary Lutheran supporters below, Common Hope families can anticipate even better access to health care.

Be sure to put a visit to the refreshed clinic on your next trip to Guatemala to see their amazing generosity first hand.

Congratulations also to Calvary Lutheran, President of the Congregation Terry Hepola, and Ron Anderson who received the Partner of Distinction Award in the fall of 2017 (pictured below).

2017 Calvary Lutheran Vision Team
(L-R) Ron Anderson, Ron Heinis, Rusty Wynkoop, Rob Nelson, Dan Petersen, Amy Ashling, Kari Poltremant, Hannah Comins (VT Coordinator)

Thank you to the following supporters that made this renovation possible:

- Carl and Penny Anderson
- Dora Anderson
- Ron and Dee Anderson
- Dave Benson and Peggy Nelson
- Dorothy Bentley
- Geoff and Pam Bentley
- Karl Bergland
- Joe and Anita Blen
- Cari Brown
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- Sharon Vetteson
- WELCA
- Mike and Mari Wilke
- Rusty and Kim Winekoop
- Larry Witt
- George and Laurel Yost

WHAT YOUR GIFT CAN DO:

- $25 provides 1 month of respiratory treatments
- $40 gives treatment to one malnourished child
- $90 provides one day of lab services

PROGRAM IN ACTION: DOÑA MAYRA & DON JOSE

Meet Doña Mayra and her husband Don Jose. Like so many Common Hope families, the Zamoras are working hard to change their future and the future for their children. The Zamoras have three sons and two are affiliated (a part of Common Hope’s programs). As such, they are living out a great example of why Common Hope’s model presents a comprehensive solution to change.

The Zamoras do not have health insurance and in a country where health care is not even a shadow of what Americans experience, being a part of the Common Hope program is even more important. Doña Mayra works three jobs even with Common Hope affiliation. She makes and sells tortillas, works as a housekeeper, and chops wood to support her family. Late last year, Doña Mayra started experiencing severe pain. After trying to ignore it and hoping it would improve, she finally decided to visit the Antigua Clinic. Dr. Estrada quickly confirmed she had suffered a hemorrhage and severe loss of blood. By this time she could not stand or walk.

Dr. Estrada was able to immediately provide the care Doña Mayra needed and slowly but surely her health is improving. Unfortunately, she had to quit working because she was physically unable to stand, but once healed, she will be able to return to contributing to her family income.

The Zamoras experienced the value and need for a comprehensive program to accompany families through tough times like these. Educational support alone would not have been enough for the Zamoras to survive this challenge. Being a part of Common Hope’s program made all the difference. Not only will her health improve because of access to treatment, but the Common Hope network and programs supported the entire family during a time of crisis.

IMPROVING FACILITIES TO OPTIMIZE PATIENT EXPERIENCE

Now more than ever, our families in the Antigua area are using health care as a resource to aid in keeping their children healthy and in school. Over the last few years, our Antigua clinic has seen some of its largest demand ever, proving that Common Hope has made progress in addressing cultural norms that challenge the value or necessity of general health care.

Our Antigua clinic is approaching its 21st anniversary. In those 21 years, technology, utilization and intellectual capital have grown exponentially. Common Hope’s goal to renovate the clinic to address these changes and provide an even higher quality experience for our families, along with enhanced lab services, will be met thanks to Calvary Lutheran. But there is always more to do.

DR. ESTRADA, CLINIC DIRECTOR

“Renovating our clinic will provide a more comfortable experience for our patients, especially in the winter when temperatures drop and families must wait outside with blankets on for 2-3 hours. I am looking forward to having this space to treat our patients in a more pleasant atmosphere.”
POVERTY AND DENTAL CARE

When people think about health care, they usually think only of medical doctors, hospital visits, and medication. It is an important reminder that health care includes so much more than just traditional medical treatment.

Populations in poverty suffer little or no assistance when it comes to all types of health, including mental, social, and dental. In particular, dental health is often seen as separate from general health and there is a lack of understanding that dental disease is highly preventable. Oral health affects people physically and psychologically, and influences how they grow, speak, chew, taste, and enjoy life. Poor oral health can greatly diminish a person’s quality of life and dental issues that go untreated can lead to more serious health problems, hospitalization, and even death.

COMMON HOPE DENTAL PROGRAM

making smiles bigger

...and healthier, too!

COMMON HOPE DENTAL PROGRAM is 100% volunteer. Imagine a program that is fully delivered by volunteers—from supplies to dental chairs to labor—every child, sister, brother, and parent that needs dental care receives services because of the generosity of a core group of dentists that visit every year.

Even more impressive, these volunteers bring their professional skills and expertise to not only Common Hope families but to the greater community and school where our families live. On average, every year more than 1,500 dental consultations occur because of the commitment of generous dentists and their teams.

COMMON HOPE DENTAL TEAMS are groups of 4-12 volunteers. Each dentist typically sees 12-20 patients per day. Dentists bring their own assistant(s) and Common Hope provides the translators, accommodations, and more.

100% VOLUNTEER DENTAL SERVICES

Did you know that Common Hope’s DENTAL PROGRAM is 100% volunteer? Imagine a program that is fully delivered by volunteers—from supplies to dental chairs to labor—every child, sister, brother, and parent that needs dental care receives services because of the generosity of a core group of dentists that visit every year.

Even more impressive, these volunteers bring their professional skills and expertise to not only Common Hope families but to the greater community and school where our families live. On average, every year more than 1,500 dental consultations occur because of the commitment of generous dentists and their teams.

COMMON HOPE DENTAL PROGRAM is recruiting dental teams. If you are a dentist with a team of helpers, contact Avi at 651-287-0716.
It is common for people to live years with serious dental pain and problems—conditions that can be easily treated (and are here in the United States). Each year, Dr. Steve Humbert, a Hastings, MN native, coordinates six trips to Guatemala. Five of those trips are for dental students from the University of Minnesota to come and practice. This gives the students a hands-on dental experience and the opportunity to observe another culture, its dental health challenges and dental opportunities. Dr. Steve has made 49 trips to Guatemala, bringing a total of 319 people. Of those, 238 have been dental personnel and students! Dr. Steve’s dental groups provide an average of 900 consultations every year. After spending countless days, including many Thanksgivings in Guatemala, Dr. Steve considers Guatemala his second home. Our Dental Program would not be what it is today if it weren’t for Dr. Steve’s passion and initiative to recruit, educate, and deliver students to Guatemala ready and willing to serve. We are so grateful for his generosity!

**THE GUATEMALAN DENTAL AWARENESS PROJECT**

Made up of dental professionals from Florida to California, the Guatemalan Dental Awareness Project joined us for the first time in 2018. They are committed to dental health education and providing desperately needed dental care to those living in poverty in Guatemala, and we are so grateful for their willingness to serve Common Hope’s families. Dental hygiene has become more of a priority over the years in Guatemala, including brushing teeth twice or three times a day. Still, it is uncommon for families to seek preventive dental care like annual cleanings or sealants.

**DR. NANCY NORLING AND TEAM SMILES**

Seeing the dentist can be a scary experience for any child, especially for kids in Guatemala who may have never been taught proper dental hygiene or had a cleaning and checkup at the dentist office. No one makes her patients feel more at ease than Dr. Norling who has a huge heart for treating her patients both young and old.

Nearly a decade ago, Twin Cities “star dentist,” Dr. Nancy Norling started bringing her amazing team of friends and experts to help our families at least once per year. Were it not for running a successful full-time practice of her own, we are confident we’d see a lot more of her in Guatemala.

**DR. SAUL OVALLE**

Saul Ovalle is a Pediatric DDS, raised in Antigua, but now resides in Mankato, Minnesota. He sees volunteering with Common Hope as an opportunity to give back to his community. While volunteering in the clinic, he really enjoys working with younger children.

There are a few common issues that impact dental health among the Guatemalan population we serve, including the cultural norm of adding sugar to a baby’s bottle and giving children sweets to suckle during the day as a way to satiate hunger. It is quite common to see children with decayed front teeth among our families as a result.

If you or your dentist might be interested in volunteering with our Dental Program, call us at 651-917-0917.

**GRACIAS! COMMON HOPE VOLUNTEER DENTAL TEAMS**
NOCHE IS COMING TO YOU!
WE'RE EXPANDING OUR NATIONAL PRESENCE

MINNEAPOLIS
CHICAGO
SAN FRANCISCO
DENVER
MAY 18, 2018
JUNE 15, 2018
SEPTEMBER 8, 2018
SEPTEMBER 26, 2018

WE ARE BRINGING THE BIGGEST GRADUATION PARTY OF THE YEAR ON TOUR TO A CITY NEAR YOU!

Join us for Noche de Colores On Tour. In each city we stop in, we will be celebrating our 2,000th Common Hope graduate in epic fashion and sharing some very exciting news!

Each tour stop will bring something as special as the city itself, and you can only experience it at Noche de Colores!

If you are in the Chicago, San Francisco, or Denver areas, please watch your inbox for ticket announcements and details about each event.

WE HOPE TO SEE YOU ON TOUR!

HIGHLIGHTS

EXCLUSIVE VIDEO PREMIER

EXCITING NEWS ONLY HEARD AT NOCHE

ESPERANZA TIENDA WITH GUATEMALAN GOODS

WE HOPE TO SEE YOU ON TOUR!

check out
COMMON HOPE’S NEW WEBSITE!

EXCITING NEWS

ONLY HEARD AT NOCHE

ESPERANZA TIENDA WITH GUATEMALAN GOODS

GRACIAS TO
Agency:
broadhead.

Photography:
Buck Holzemer
& Patti Petrich

NOCHE DE COLORES
ON TOUR

The Guthrie Family
Suzanne
Michael & Dana
Bill & Mark

The Kandetzki Family
Kristin & Thomas
Ellen & Hal
Amanda

Laura & Jaime
Bethany
Katie
Ricardo & the Grijalva Letona Family

The Kandetzki Family
Kristin & Thomas
Ellen & Hal
Amanda

Laura & Jaime
Bethany
Katie
Ricardo & the Grijalva Letona Family

thank you sponsors!

12 students
12 days
Common Hope’s mission is to promote hope and opportunity in Guatemala, partnering with children, families, and communities who want to participate in a process of development to improve their lives through education, health care, and housing.

**USE OF FUNDS**

- Fundraising - 7%
- Management - 11%
- Programs - 82%

Common Hope is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation founded in 1986 and is audited annually. Contributions are 100% tax deductible as allowed by law.

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CHECK OUT OUR NEW BLOG!
Find it under the LIFE IN GUATEMALA section of our website.