



Health for Humanity Annual Report 2004

After the disappointment of having to cancel our 2003 mission last I am pleased to report that we have just returned from our second successful mission in Guatemala. Health for Humanity (H4H) is now three years old and it's time to let all our members and supporters know what we have achieved this year and our plans for 2005.

At our Annual General Meeting in March it was agreed that Board Members would serve for a two year term and the Board was expanded to 10 members. We welcomed the addition of Jill Scyrup, Betty-Lou Reid and Brian Fitzsimmons to fill the new positions and the vacancy left by the resignation of Sara Petersen. Sara was one of our founding members and we thank her for her support in the early days of H4H.

During the early part of 2004 Board Members put considerable effort into organising our second surgical mission to Antigua, Guatemala. In May we were again indebted to Sunsail Canada who donated their fleet of 40ft sailboats for our fund raising regatta. These funds combined with personal donations collected by group members cover the patient care expenses incurred in Guatemala



These include the cost of using the operating rooms in Antigua, transporting many of our patients from the rural villages, providing necessary laboratory tests, and providing food and accommodation for our patients during their early recovery until they are able to make the arduous journey home. In addition, we are grateful to many individuals and companies in the Canadian Pharmaceutical and Medical Equipment and Supply industries for supporting our work. All of our medications and supplies for this year's mission were donated. A complete list of our donors and supporters can be found on our website www.h4h.ca

At last, after almost a year of preparation our team of 30 individuals (13 physicians, 12 nurses, 1 biomedical engineer and 4 support staff) arrived in Guatemala on Friday November 12th. On Saturday, after a welcome breakfast, the group toured the Obras Sociales Del Hermano Pedro Hospital where we were going to work for the next two weeks. As usual Sunday was our busiest day with our physicians seeing more than 300 patients in the clinic while the nurses and support personnel unpacked the many bins and suitcases of supplies and prepared the operating rooms for surgery. Over the next two weeks we completed 110 surgeries including cleft lip and palate repairs, hysterectomies, cholecystectomies and hernia repairs. While plastic surgery has the most visible benefits, the Gynecological and General Surgeries also have a major impact on the lives of the patients enabling them to return to full activity. This year again our team members worked in collaboration with local Guatemalan healthcare professionals and there was a valuable exchange of knowledge. It is our intention to build on this educational aspect of our visits next year.

Again this year we worked with Partner in Health a local non-governmental organization (NGO) that works in the rural villages to assess patients in need of surgery and arrange their travel to and from Antigua. We will continue to work with this organisation next year as they are reaching the neediest of patients.

While in Guatemala some of our group visited Fundacion Marco Antonio, a Guatemalan NGO dealing with the HIV/AIDS problem in Guatemala City. We hope to work cooperatively with this group in the future as we believe they are doing valuable work to help control the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Guatemala.

For some of our group the highlight of this year's mission was the chance to return with some of our patients to their villages, meet their families and experience their living conditions. The pictures they brought back tell a distressing story of the incredible poverty and hardship that these people endure. While our surgical treatments change the lives of individuals, a concerted effort by the governments and people of the developed world is needed to correct this deplorable inequality that exists in our world. Over the next year H4H will be investigating ways to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of these villages.

Another important event in Guatemala was the visit to the Obras Sociales Hospital by James Lambert, Canadian Ambassador to Guatemala. We will continue to work on this liaison with the hope of acquiring some funding from the Canadian International Development Agency.

In addition this year we have to thank Tania Maryniak who volunteered her time and expertise to videotape the activities of our group. She will be producing various professional quality videos to assist us with future recruiting and fund raising.

Plans are already underway for our next visit to Antigua which is scheduled to leave October 28th and return November 13th. Our major fundraising event, the 4th Annual Sunsail Sailing Regatta will be held on May 7th, 2005. This event has always been a great experience and we encourage you to join us again. Also to those corporate and individual sponsors who generously donated last year please remember us again in the coming year. All donations of \$20.00 or more receive a tax deductible receipt and we remind you that all members of our teams volunteer their time and pay for their own transportation and accommodation. All donations are used strictly for patient care expenses in Guatemala.

Thanks again to our Board and team members for their commitment and hard work and to our donors for their support in 2004. It has been a successful year and I look forward to expanding our endeavours in 2005.

Mike Morton.

President, Health for Humanity.

Caring for Those in Need

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