

Health for Humanity Service Society

2008 Annual Report

This year, your donations enabled health for Humanity to achieve the following:

- Yearlong planning and preparation for our 2008 Guatemala Surgical Mission
- Complete revision of the public and administrative sides of our website
- Support for an environmental scan of HIV awareness in the Alta Verapaz region of Guatemala
- Initial planning for our 2009 Philippines Surgical Mission
- 160 successful surgeries completed at the Obras Sociales Hospital in Antigua, Guatemala
- Influenza vaccinations for 600 staff and residents at the hospital
- Donation of a digital baby scale for use in the Hospital

For those of you that have not read our annual report in previous years, taking a surgical team to a developing country takes yearlong planning. As soon as we return, feedback from the team leaders and team members is used to make recommendations for future mission planning. Team leaders and a mission planning committee are appointed, and recruitment of team members begins. Throughout the year, volunteers work on the collection of donated medications and the collection, sterilisation and packing of all the surgical supplies. We are grateful to many individuals and companies in the Canadian Pharmaceutical and Medical Equipment and Supply industries who continue to support our work. A complete list of our donors and supporters will be posted on our new website www.h4h.ca shortly.

Our Guatemala team this past November included 13 physicians, 19 nurses and 7 support staff. This year for the first time, we had a full complement of nurses and were able to fully utilize four operating rooms. This was thanks largely to the Tula Foundation, which provided bursaries to reduce the travel expenses of our hard working nurses. On triage day our surgeons assessed over 200 patients, and during the two week mission our team completed a record 160 surgeries, including cleft lip and palate repairs, hysterectomies, cholecystectomies, and hernia repairs. All of these surgeries have a major impact on the lives of our patients as they enable a return to full activity. Again, we worked with local professionals and there was a useful exchange of knowledge. This year there was some optimism among the Guatemalans we worked with, that the new Government will bring about some improvements to healthcare in Guatemala. However, it will be some time before the minimal access to elective surgery increases for the vast majority of Guatemalans. Thus, our volunteer services will be needed for several years to come, and we remain committed as long as there is need.

In January 2009, our second surgical team will travel to the Baguio General Hospital in the Philippines and are scheduled to perform approximately 100 surgical procedures in two operating rooms. They will also provide education to the local resident medical and nursing staff, and donate some much needed medical equipment and supplies to the hospital. Our 2007 Philippine mission was well received by the hospital and the community, and we look forward to another successful mission.

Please be assured that your donated funds are used only to pay for medical services and patient care expenses incurred in Guatemala and the Philippines. We emphasize that all of our physicians and support personnel travel to and stay in these countries at their own expense; all our organisers are volunteers and we have minimal administrative overhead.

Thanks again to our dedicated Board, team members, and other volunteers for their commitment and hard work, and thanks to all our donors for their support in 2008. Our second Philippines Team is about to leave for Baguio City and plans are underway for our next mission to Guatemala in November 2009. We hope that, even in these challenging economic times, you will consider supporting us again in 2009.

Cindy Masaro - President, Health for Humanity. January 2009