



A health partnership linking Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, with Rosita, Nicaragua

Winter 2007 Newsletter

PROGRESS UPDATE ON DEEP WELL AND HYDROELECTRIC PROJECTS



Banasuna Falls near Rosita, Nicaragua

On a recent trip to Nicaragua, a group of six persons including two Directors of the charitable branch of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) and two hydroelectric engineers from Idaho of the same Mormon faith traveled with me (representing UHH) from September 23 - 29, 2007. The primary purposes of this trip were to address clean water issues in Rosita and to investigate water systems with hydroelectric potential in the proximate area of Rosita. Following the visit to Rosita for these purposes, our group met with Paul Trivelli, the American ambassador to Nicaragua; a USAID (United States Agency

for International Development) representative; and Mario Torres, the Director of hydroelectric projects for Nicaragua of ENEL, the Nicaraguan government electrical utility. On a personal note, I was deeply moved during this trip by the deep faith, kindness, and compassion for the poor of my new friends of LDS and the representatives of USAID and ENEL.

There are 2 noteworthy outcomes of this trip:

1. **Deep well** for the Rosita Hospital. Hurricane Felix created an emergency need for clean water through deep wells on the Atlantic Coast. An alliance of USAID/CARE made available American drilling rigs in that region which includes Rosita. Through the efforts of Ambassador Trivelli, a project was created for a deep well at Rosita Hospital. The great generosity of **Fond du Lac Morning Rotary in donating \$9,000** and a substantial donation of one of the Idaho members of LDS made possible a matching grant from USAID. This partnership has provided the funding for this deep well, which is scheduled to be completed before mid winter.

2. **Hydroelectric Power:** Three sites were identified by ENEL hydro engineers during a visit to Rosita in September 2007. The Banasuna site, which is 5 to 6 miles SSW of Rosita, has been selected as phase I of the small hydroelectric projects. At present estimates this site could provide greater than one megawatt of power at peak flow. A feasibility study is being initiated over the ensuing year with the possibility of beginning the actual project as early as late 2008 or early 2009 to be completed within an 18 to 24 month period. Investigations for funding are underway including partnerships with ENEL and private investors.

In summary, some exciting developments having the potential of meaningful long-term impact on the health and economy of the people of Rosita are evolving. As important, people of faith and compassion from Morning Rotary of Fond du Lac, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, USAID and CARE have joined the other partners of UHH in helping the people of Rosita climb out from the consequences of extreme poverty.

~ Dr. John Lent

SUPER-SPIN SATURDAY

FOND DU LAC YMCA

JANUARY 26, 2008

9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Come join us for the 4th annual Super-Spin Saturday and raise money for Rosita by riding for \$5.00 an hour. Bring your own bike or ride a stationary spin bike or kinetic trainer. Anyone can participate who is able to sit on a stationary bike. Wonderful prizes will be awarded throughout Super Spin for those "Riding for Rosita."

Besides biking, casual riders can also enjoy watching some of the experts in the field such as Dave Haase from Attitude Sports; Andrea Putz, local Ironman/woman Tri-athlete; and Shanna Armstrong, the first woman to finish "Ride Across America."

Four kids' compu-trainers will be available, and all children ages 6--15 who ride the compu-trainers will have their names entered in a drawing for an I-Pod.

Be sure to taste our homemade power balls, and remember, this is an excellent way to get back into shape after the holidays.

Brochures are available at the local bike shops, the YMCA, Agnesian HealthCare, and Aurora Health Care. For more information, call Barbara Lent at 921-6021.

Get your friends and family to sponsor you and help raise funds to support better health care in Rosita, Nicaragua.

RESPONSE TO HURRICANE FELIX

"The devastation left behind by Hurricane Felix has called forth a tremendous response of generosity, solidarity, and outreach from community members and associates both in Latin America and the United States as well as from an awesome number of donors including our families, friends, colleagues in our sponsored ministries, other religious congregations, CSA employees, and former members. We honor the courage and compassion of our sisters in Latin America, especially in those areas most affected by the storm. They have been working tirelessly to bring assistance to the people around them. At the same time they are cleaning up and restoring their ministry sites while dealing with devastating loss personally and among their own families.

Truckloads of rice, beans, water, medicine, and rolls of plastic sheeting and zinc for roofs have been sent from Managua to Puerto Cabezas to share with the people there as well as those in the surrounding villages, especially Santa Marta. More donations and supplies are on their way through the efforts of members and friends here in the USA."

A recent Agnesian congregational publication carried the above article, written by Sister Joann Sams, CSA, General Superior.

Members of Holy Family Parish and United Hearts for Health are among the "awesome number of donors" continuing to find ways to cooperate with and minister among the people of Rosita and the surrounding rural and coastal villages. While the greatest damage was to the north and east of Rosita, any disaster of this magnitude affects the entire country because it destroys roads and bridges and depletes the meager supplies available in an already impoverished country.

Our indigenous Sisters of St. Agnes tell their stories:

- of searching for "missing" family members;
- of cooking rice and beans on a small four-burner stove that was salvaged from our destroyed convent in Puerto Cabezas to feed the many homeless survivors;
- of spending days in the stricken villages to be among the people for clean-up and for distribution of food, water, medicine, and supplies;
- of burying the dead – Sr. Johana's brother remained on the coast for days and reported burying more than 40 unidentifiable victims.

We Sisters of St. Agnes are deeply grateful for the compassionate and generous hearts of so many people.
~Sr. Anne Jude Van Lanen, CSA

MEDICAL MISSION TRIP 2008

We had barely returned from our medical mission trip to Rosita this past February, and it was already time to start planning for our next trip. In fact, the planning meetings, networking, recruiting, fundraising, and communications continue throughout the year. Very soon, we will be on our way to Rosita for our next medical mission. We inventoried, packed, and shipped our medicine and supplies (23 barrels and 28 boxes, including over 600 Beanie Babies that were fun to pack and great fillers in the barrels) to Nicaragua by sea container in September, and we will carry more with us when we leave for Rosita in February. It is hard to believe that we will be at the airport getting ready to board the plane in less than three months!

One of the main goals for our medical mission to Rosita has been to ask the people what *their* main goals are for medical care and how we can be of the most help to them. We spent some time with the staff of Rosita Hospital after our week of clinics had concluded this past February and asked for their impression of the team. We also asked how we could best serve the community when we return in 2008. Their response was very positive and a quick summary would say that they "liked and appreciated everything we did, would like more of the same, and wished we could stay longer." We also asked if there were any particular specialty areas that they would like to have represented on our next trip. They were happy to have the same group return but especially requested physicians specialized in pediatrics and gynecology, and we are happy to report that we have been blessed with physicians in both areas for our 2008 trip. There are also many people with upper respiratory illnesses, and we will have an allergist on this trip to help some of those people. There is also a tremendous need for dental care, and we are grateful to have another dentist joining us again this year. Other new additions to the team for 2008 are a physical therapist and another nurse. The rest of us will be returning for our second round of clinics in Rosita.

We also spent some time networking with members of the community in Rosita this past February and went to an outlying village with Ernesto Vargas, who works with both the Vicariate (like our Diocese) and United Hearts for Health. His work concentrates on improving health in the rural areas around Rosita. We plan to venture out and set up a clinic in a community called Riscos de Oro for one or two days this trip, hoping to reach some people who might not be able to travel into the city of Rosita for medical care.

We thank all of you who have contributed toward making our mission trips possible. Many of you have contributed money to help finance our work, others have been present to help us pack, worked at fund raising, donated or picked up donated items...and the list goes on. Thank you. We could not do this work without you. We also appreciate your prayers and encouragement. We will remember you in our work with the people in Rosita. Please continue to pray for all of us and the success of our 2008 mission.

~Gail Tomkowiak, RN,
Mission Trip Coordinator

The date for our 2008 Medical Mission is February 8-16, 2008.

These are our missionaries:

- ✓ Barbara Zink, MD Pediatrics
- ✓ Tom Ries, MD Obstetrics and Gynecology
- ✓ Anne Lent, MD Allergy and Clinical Immunology
- ✓ Tim McBride, Dentist
- ✓ Judy Pellerin, Physical Therapist
- ✓ Ruth Cunzenheim, RN
- ✓ Robert Helminiak, MD Internal Medicine
- ✓ John Lent, MD Cardiology
- ✓ Marcie Janz, Nurse Practitioner
- ✓ Janet Coon, RN
- ✓ Barbara Lent, RN
- ✓ Gail Tomkowiak, RN
- ✓ Flavio Araña, Translator



THE STORY OF KEIDY

Keidy Mariel Cortez Flores is a 16-year-old Nicaraguan young woman with congenital cyanotic heart disease, who lives in the city of Rosita, Nicaragua. The anatomy of her heart consists of two chambers (rather than four): a single atrium and single ventricle and two (rather than four) heart valves. In addition there is a reversal of the normal position of the two great vessels of the heart (transposition of the great vessels) and the position of the heart in the right side of the chest rather than in the left side. Without surgical intervention the natural history of this condition is usually death within the first two decades of life.

At the age of one she underwent open-heart surgery in Cuba where a life-giving vascular shunt was constructed (bidirectional Glenn shunt). Thereafter, she was able to pursue a near normal but somewhat limited lifestyle similar to that of her peers. However, at the age of 12-13 she noted progressive limitation of activity, shortness of breath, fatigue, cyanosis, headaches, and chest pain. As a result, she was seen by cardiologists in Managua, the capital city. After intensive testing, she and her family were told that there was nothing that could be done for her condition.

Dr. John Lent of UHH first saw her in February 2006 at the request of her father David and mother Christina. When Dr. Lent saw her again upon return to Rosita April 2006, he noted significant deterioration of her condition with now severe limitation of activity and inability to go to school. Measurement of the oxygen in her blood showed severe desaturation.



Upon return to Wisconsin, Dr. Lent learned that there was a moderate probability that a combination of cardiac catheterization techniques (coiling) and open-heart surgery for revision of the Glenn bidirectional shunt could improve her condition. However, there was also a significant surgical risk. After many failed attempts to find an institution that would do these procedures on Keidy, contact was made with Maria Corbo, Executive Director of International Programs of NYU Medical Center in New York City. Maria was able to arrange for the cardiac procedures and living quarters in NYC for Keidy and her father David. In late February 2007 Keidy underwent the catheterization procedures followed by

the open-heart surgery during the first week of March. The procedures were both outstanding successes and her recovery quite remarkable. She was able to leave the intensive care unit within four days rather than the expected two weeks. She was able to leave the hospital within two weeks and then go home to Rosita in mid May, 10 weeks after surgery.

Dr. Lent visited Rosita in late September 2007. There he had the privilege of seeing a beautiful young woman completely free of symptoms enjoying a normal and active life. A true miracle had occurred through the great generosity and skill of the doctors, nurses, and medical personnel of NYU Medical Center, great efforts and love of Maria Corbo, and the great faith and love of Keidy's parents, David and Christina.

~Dr. John Lent

AGRICULTURAL INITIATIVES MOVE FORWARD



Flavio Araña interprets as Jim Simon gives a presentation at Casa Schlaefer

The agricultural initiative continues to progress both in Rosita and in Fond du Lac. Our committee in Fond du Lac has added a couple of members and has begun having bi-monthly meetings. In Rosita, the committee has also added a couple of members. The new members of both committees have much to offer to their respective groups.

Flavio Araña, Jim Simon, and I have just returned from our trip to Rosita. We took a little detour on our trip from Managua to Rosita as the direct flight was full. Flavio was able to get us on a flight to Puerto Cabezas and then on another flight to Rosita. Having a couple of hours on the ground in Puerto Cabezas, we were able to take a quick tour of the city and see some of the damage caused by Hurricane Felix. The damage was quite evident, especially from the air as we approached and as we flew out of Puerto Cabezas heading for Rosita.

From the time we arrived in Rosita on Friday until we left for Managua on Tuesday, we were kept very busy working on the three main focal areas of this trip's agenda. There was a great amount of interest in Jim's fish farming program. The area around Rosita seems ideal for this type of venture as there is an abundance of springs that possibly could be used as a water supply for creating fishponds. We also spent considerable time working on the artificial insemination project, which was started during the previous trip in February. This project continues to slowly move forward, showing some success but still is a work in progress. A couple of cross-bred calves resulting from the inseminations done in February are due to be born soon. We continued to work with the students, training them in the proper technique for artificial insemination. The third main project that we focused on during this visit concerned the veterinary pharmaceuticals donated by Pfizer Animal Health. We worked with a small group of individuals, teaching them proper usage of these products. We also discussed these products in a large group meeting.

The high point of the trip was this large meeting held at Casa Schlaefer. About 30 people from the rural areas around Rosita attended. With Flavio's very valuable help, Jim and I gave presentations on the three topics that we worked on during this trip. The presentations lasted for about 2 ½ hours, and the complete group seemed very interested and excited during the entire time. A "town-hall" discussion followed where the group decided to use the donated drugs and the artificial insemination program to anchor a program that could expand. Arely Garcia Padilla led this discussion, and there seemed to be a great deal of interest and desire to work together to make these projects succeed.

~ Dr. Steve Malin

MEET MARIA ARELY GARCIA PADILLA

In December of 2006, Sr. Mary Christine Fellerhoff traveled to Rosita to spend six months helping United Hearts for Health and the Holy Family Sister Parish Committee administrate and organize our projects in Rosita. One of her tasks was to identify a local person who could continue in the role that Sr. Mary Christine had established. That person was Maria Arely Garcia Padilla, a computer science teacher in the Santa Rosa School.

United Hearts for Health and the Sister Parish Committee already knew and had worked with Arely for several years in a variety of capacities:

- ❖ She was one of the founding members of the Santa Rosa Sister Parish Committee.
- ❖ She was a member of the construction management team for Casa Schlaefer.
- ❖ She worked with Steve Malin on the Agricultural Committee.
- ❖ She is presently working on the well and the hydroelectric projects.
- ❖ She organized the domestic violence training program for the Rosita community with the funds from the Sophia Foundation.

Arely has been to Fond du Lac twice, once with sponsorship from the Holy Family Sister Parish Committee and once with sponsorship from the Agricultural Committee. Since Sr. Mary Christine's departure from Rosita, Arely is now responsible for the management of Casa Schlaefer and for the administration of the programs of United Hearts for Health and the Holy Family Sister Parish Committee. She is an excellent communicator and quickly responds to our requests and questions. She can read English well but responds in Spanish, which challenges us to perfect our Spanish. We are delighted to have Maria Arely Garcia Padilla as our representative in Rosita and look forward to working with her.

~Barbara Lent



BRIEF NOTES

WINE TASTING: In September, the Wine Tasting party was held at the home of Drs. Sujatha and Laxman Kailas. It was a lovely evening with excellent food and many supporters attending. The profit from the party was \$5,500. Mary and Tom Freeman worked behind the scenes to obtain the wine, which was donated by the California wineries of Joe Freeman, Amy Freeman, and Molly Freeman Bolin. Kathy Brimhall coordinated the delicious food, and the home of Drs. Sujatha and Laxman was perfect for the occasion. We will keep you updated on our wine-tasting plans for 2008.

~Barbara Lent

ROSITA RED: We were deeply disappointed that we were unable to have a shipment of Rosita Red produced and sent to Fond du Lac for 2007. After much time and hard work, Mary and Tom Freeman were unable to secure enough red wine, have it bottled, labeled, and shipped. Apparently, it is a very complicated process to move wine across state lines. However, we thank Mary and Tom for all their efforts. We are presently working on ways to have this popular fundraiser available again in 2008.

~Barbara Lent

FILTRON CLAY POT PROGRAM UPDATE: In July of 2007, 79 families in Barrio Sol de Libertad received a clay filtration pot that will be used to provide clean, safe drinking water for the family. The monies to purchase these water filtration pots were donated by several members of Fond du Lac Noon Rotary. The program was to begin in March but was delayed until the pots could be purchased. A total of 539 people will be served by this project with 121 being under the age of five. In order to receive a water filtration pot, a member of the family had to attend an educational session. The use of this system will be monitored monthly by a UHH representative in Rosita. We expect to have a report in July of 2008 as to the effectiveness of the project.

~Barbara Lent

Make a Christmas donation to United Hearts for Health

Please make your check payable to UHH/Holy Family and send to:
Carol Hyland, Treasurer UHH
589 Sarah Drive
Fond du Lac, WI 54935

Donation

Your Name _____

Your Address _____

Donation in honor of someone else:

Name _____

Address _____

(We will send an acknowledgement to the person in whose name you are giving the gift.)





EXCERPTS FROM THE SANTA ROSA CHURCH BULLETIN

The June-July 2007 Santa Rosa church bulletin included an article written by Arely Garcia Padilla, representing their Sister Parish Committee, in which she listed the many ways in which the Fond du Lac community has helped Rosita, Nicaragua. On the front page she states:

“ We are very thankful to the people of Fond du Lac for their generosity and efforts but even more for sharing the love of Jesus Christ.”

She concludes the article by saying,

“The town of Rosita wants to thank everyone who has visited bringing warmth, Christian unity, economic assistance for health, education and other areas. Last but not least they bring hope for a better future”

