



Guatemala Village Health

**“Improving lives
one village at a time”**

¡BIENVENIDOS! Welcome!

Greetings and welcome to the 2018 issue of the Guatemala Village Health (GVH) newsletter.

- Meet our Guatemala Staff
- Volunteer of the Year
- UW Bothell Partnership
- Composting Toilets
- Permaculture Internship
- September Event
- Eco-filter Updates
- Board Member Changes
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2019 Dates

Health Team Trips:
February 9th-23rd
August 2nd-17th

GVH Annual Dinner
Saturday April 27th
Red Lion Inn, Bellevue

**Guatemalan
Independence Day
Celebration**
Saturday, September 14th

GVH HIGHLIGHTS

By Jennifer Hook

Medical Team Trips – This year we had 2 amazing US team trips and our in-country team visited villages every 6 weeks in between. For our summer trip, we were joined by 14 students and their professor from the UW Bothell Nursing program (see “UW Bothell” article). With their help we did hygiene education, developed and implemented a nutritional supplement for babies and gathered data on STIs and contraceptive use.

Composting Toilets and Eco-filters – Our goal this year was the distribution of composting toilets and Eco-filters to 200 families to provide sanitation and pure water. Our composting toilet model has been developed and piloted over the past several years with villager’s input. Compost from these toilets is mostly odorless and can be used as fertilizer for trees and bushes. Families contribute the wood, sand and labor to build and maintain them.

Healthy Mothers/STIs & Contraception – Continuing our focus on family planning for health and reduction of poverty, we provide education and access to everything from condoms to IUDs. A nurse manager from the Ministry of Health staff traveled with us to our villages and helped with education and alignment with their standards. A volunteer doctor revised our prenatal care program and trained the traditional birth attendants in how to do preventative care for pregnant women.



Mission: Improve village and individual health in Guatemalan rural villages by educating villagers, empowering local leaders, and developing local health providers.

We are a group of health workers, engineers, teachers, administrators, college students and kids, working in the Rio Dulce area of Guatemala. We are a 501c3 organization based in Seattle, Washington.

Visit us at GuatemalaVillageHealth.org

Highlights Continued...

Healthy Babies/Macronutrients –

Our program of fluoride, parasite treatment and vitamins along with parental education for all children under 5 years of age continues with increasing enrollment. To fight malnutrition in the most vulnerable first 1000 days of life we are now using a supplement made of commonly available ingredients – Incaparina, milk powder, oil and vitamins with the long-term plan to develop permaculture production of high nutrient foods to provide sustainable nutrition.

Permaculture and our Training and Development Center (CIDECAS) –

Our sister organization Aldeas Sanas is currently housed in Santiago, Sacatepequez in the route from Guatemala City to Antigua. Here we are piloting the Casas Mejoradas project and Permaculture. The goal of Casas Mejoradas is to help families make their houses healthier one step at a time. With permaculture, we are learning how to cultivate plants for food in a sustainable way by creating “food forests” in combination with composting.



Meet Our Guatemala Staff

Alejandra Zarazúa



“My name is Alejandra Zarazúa de Román. I'm 26 years old and I'm from Guatemala. I'm the third of a four-child family, I got married 4 years ago and I have a 3-year-old child. I studied medicine at the Rafael Landívar University and did my practice mostly in Hospital Roosevelt. I worked during my studies as a volunteer for "Un Techo para mi País" and worked in "Hospitales la Paz" and "Centro integral de atención médica" after graduating. I really enjoy working with people, and the main reason I decided to become a doctor was to be able to help the needy. I'm really excited to work with this organization and to be able to help the ones that need it the most and to give my part in the dream of building a better and more equal world without misery and poverty.”

Alejandra is the newest member of our team in Guatemala, and will be focusing her time and efforts mainly on improving the functionality of our clinic in Santiago. She will help us:

- Organize the pharmacy
- Review clinical protocols
- Supervise program implementation in villages

Volunteer of the Year

Lisa Sferra

“I first met Jenny Hoock in 2001. Jenny overheard me speaking Spanish with my 2-year-old son. She had recently adopted Gabriela, who was also 2 years old. As we got to talking, it was discovered that I was a second-year resident, and Jenny had a spot available at Valley Medical Center. Shortly thereafter I began work at Jenny’s clinic.

Years later I finally joined a trip to Guatemala. It blew me away how Jenny orchestrated the founding of such a life changing organization. The GVH mobile clinics and education classes throughout the country clearly made an impact. High school students taught small groups about proper tooth care and each student learned to run the lab and pharmacy. It was a beautiful, educational and worthwhile experience for those involved.

Early last year, we discussed the possibility of a celebration for Guatemalan Independence Day. It was my chance to give back. Only, I’m not sure I gave as much as I received. An evening full of festive people, bonfires, model composting toilets and best pastries I’ve eaten is etched into my memory with laughter filling the background. Thank you Jenny Hoock, Gabriela and GVH for all the many ways you have enriched my life and all those who know you.”



UW Bothell Partnership

Mabel Ezeonwu



"I believe in collaborative partnerships, community engagement, and the need to prepare the next generation of global public health workforce. In 2015, I was looking for a global health partner, and a colleague referred me to Dr. Jennifer Hoock. After our first phone conversation, I knew I had found a match in GVH. We have a shared value and commitment to health equity and social justice within and across countries.

In summer of 2018, we partnered with GVH for a second trip with a group of 14 students. Together, we have recorded over 1,000 patient encounters. Twenty-six registered nurses in the Masters of Nursing and RN-to-BSN programs, and other health profession students in the team have contributed their skills to improving the health of rural Mayan communities through multiple teaching and research projects while also learning about global health policies and development. The collaborative service-learning experiences have been transformational. The dedication and passion of GVH leadership is like no other."

Composting Toilets

Vladimir Melgar & Julio Choc

Thanks to our partnership with Rotary, we have had measurable successes implementing composting toilets in several villages. Vladimir, Julio, and Samuel are three of our team members who are most involved in the construction and education of proper use for the toilets. Education is a key component of this project as composting toilets cannot be used as intended without proper care and maintenance.



"Bathrooms for all is something amazing that is often taken for granted, and we are very grateful to be giving composting toilets to families in the villages we work with. We have built 200 composting toilets throughout five villages. Now that construction is finished, we can begin with education so that it will be a complete success."

- Vladimir Melgar

Permaculture Internship

Luis Alberto García & Eric García Alvarado

This past summer Luis and Eric, who volunteer in Guatemala for GVH, had the opportunity to live in Montana for three months at Sage Mountain Center. During their stay, they focused on learning about permaculture to help with the development of our project in Guatemalan villages, as well as a few other things to supplement that knowledge:

- Composting toilets and their function
- Practicing English
- Planting and harvesting food and lumber
- Exploring the natural beauty of Montana

"The stay in Sage Mountain Center was a beautiful and unforgettable experience being able to work in the forest and gardens planting, harvesting, and learning new things that can help us personally as well as in the villages that we visit with Guatemala Village Health. We would like to thank the people who gave us the opportunity to travel and get to know some of the beautiful and incredible places in their country."



PLEASE JOIN US and SUPPORT THIS VITAL WORK in whatever way works for you –

Volunteer, Recruit Others, Find Resources, Donate Money!!

Call 206-339-3352 or go to the GVH website, www.guatemalavillagehealth.org to find out more about our rewarding and exciting volunteer opportunities. Donations by cash or check are welcome or donate online at our website. Gracias!

September Event



This year we debuted a new event to celebrate our Guatemalan community here in Seattle! We hosted a gathering on September 15th, Guatemalan Independence Day. Lisa Sferra, our volunteer of the year, generously donated her beautiful farm as the venue, and we all enjoyed a lively evening despite the colder weather. Thanks to many others who donated their time and effort, everyone who attended enjoyed the community that came together to celebrate Guatemala. The event featured:

- Live marimba music
- DJ and dancing
- Guatemalan desserts
- Home-style Guatemalan buffet
- Raffle baskets



Eco-filter Program Updates

Samuel Alvarez

“We are very grateful to be giving Eco-filters to each family in the village we work with in Izabal. We have provided 187 Eco-filters so far, and each family has been educated on the proper use and maintenance of the filter. We have completed 85% of the first part of this project. All the families are very grateful for their filters because they have never had an opportunity like this. Because of this we are supervising them closely to ensure proper use. Thanks to Rotary and Guatemala Village Health, these families have purified water and a better quality of life.”



Board Member Changes

This last year has seen several changes within our Board of Directors. We have been sad to see several members step down, including our Treasurer Gary Christophersen, Vice President Pam Curry and Linda Pinsky. Jennifer Hook has also transferred from a position on the board to a non-voting participant as the Director of Programs. However, we are very thankful for the addition of several passionate board members including Joe Kyle, Gabriela Maki, Steven Fain, Sam McCracken and Deborah Hopkins.

GVH is grateful for the wonderful work all our board members have helped achieve, and we look forward to how these transitions will further motivate and inspire our mission.

Your Donations Can Provide

A Family with...

- Clean water (Eco-filter) for **\$40**
- Composting toilet for **\$125**
- Smokeless Stove for **\$50**
- Roof & Floor for **\$400**

A Village with...

- Community Center **\$2000**

A Health Worker with...

- 1 year of nursing school **\$1500**
- GED training **\$225/month**

GVH Staff in Guatemala

Samuel Alvarez – In-country Director
 Alejandra Zarazúa – Medical Director
 Juanita Hernandez – Nurse Manager
 Vladimir Melgar – Project Manager
 Lesbia Xi – Village Nurse Coordinator
 Julio Choc Xo – Village program

Board of Directors

President: Peggy Visher RN, CNN, MSN
 Treasurer: Sam McCracken
 Secretary: Mickey Kander, PA
 Teresa Wallace, MD
 Diana Orellana, Dental Assistant
 Joe Kyle
 Gabriela Maki
 Steven Fain
 Deborah Hopkins

Executive Director: Carolyn Bain, MPH
 Assistant: Stefany Sterling

Director of Programs: Jennifer Hook, MD

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