



# GUATEMALA VILLAGE HEALTH

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

## BIENVENIDOS Welcome!

Greetings and welcome to the 2016 issue of the Guatemala Village Health (GVH) newsletter.

- Meet our Staff in Guatemala
- Volunteer of the Year
- July Trip with UW Bothell
- ManiPlus Nutritional Supplement
- GVH at a National Conference
- New Staff Members Added
- A Year in Review



## 2017 Dates

**Health Team Trips:**  
February 10 - 25  
August 11 - 26

**GVH Annual Dinner**  
Saturday April 8<sup>th</sup>  
Red Lion Inn, Bellevue

## GVH HIGHLIGHTS

By Jennifer Hoock, MD, MPH

**Medical Team Trips** – We sent 3 teams to Guatemala this year with a focus on chronic disease management and prevention. In July we collaborated with University of Washington School of Nursing in Bothell to send a larger clinical team. In October a smaller more experienced team worked on program improvement, setting up a supplies and medicines management system in addition to providing clinical care.

**Healthy Mothers/Healthy Babies** - These programs continue to support women of childbearing age and their babies with supplements and education on nutrition and contraception. We received a large donation of vitamins from Michael Bostleman, which allows us to continue to provide micronutrients as we work on the cultivation of moringa, chipilin, and aselga, natural sources of iron and folate. Children under the age of 5 years receive parasite treatment, fluoride varnish, and multivitamins with parental education.

**Macronutrients** – We started a pilot with a nutritional supplement made in Guatemala called Maniplus. We collected baseline physical and developmental data for 100 babies in three villages, and will be following up every 6 months to gauge their progress on fighting short stature and delayed brain development, common problems among children in the villages we support. We hope success will allow us to receive funding for all of our villages.

**Alternatives to Violence (AVP)** – Nine villagers completed facilitator training in AVP this year and were to be able to put on our first village-based workshop in the native Q’eqchi’ language. We plan on implementation in schools next year.

### GVH has been very busy this year!

- Implemented our GiveTogether (Seattle International Foundation and Seattle Foundation) to fund programs for women and girls.
- Added a Program Assistant in the office most mornings of the week to keep contact with supporters and track our programs.
- Applying for an International Rotary Grant to put composting toilets and water filtration systems in 400 homes in 4 of our most remote villages.
- Had our first Program Review Day with our in country partner, Aldeas Sanas Guatemala to achieve shared understanding and project improvement.

### Our Village Families Wish List for Healthy Living:

Smokeless Stove .....	\$65	Cement Floor .....	\$155
Composting Toilet.....	\$115	Thatched Roof .....	\$200
★ Water Filtration System (lasts 10 yrs) .....	\$40	★	

**Give the “GIFT OF HEALTH ” this holiday season:**

**Donate to GVH in the name of someone you care about!!**

### Mission: Improve the health, education and economic prosperity of rural villages in Guatemala.

We are a group of health workers, engineers, teachers, administrators, college students and kids, working to help improve the health of a group of villages in the Rio Dulce and Monte Rico areas of Guatemala. We are a 501c3 organization based in Seattle, Washington. Visit us at [GuatemalaVillageHealth.org](http://GuatemalaVillageHealth.org)

## Meet Our Guatemalan Staff

Juanita Hernandez began volunteering about four years ago with GVH, and her dedication has since led her to become our in-country nurse. She is currently in her last year of advanced nursing school, while running the healthy women program and training health promoters in our villages.



Juanita Hernandez works as the GVH & Aldeas Sanas in-country nurse

Every six weeks Juanita travels to the villages we serve to meet individually with our health promoters to teach them medical skills and hand out essential medicine kits, chronic disease medicine, and vitamins for children, women, and mothers. On trips with North Americans, Juanita joins us as a leading member of the triage and health education teams.

Last year Juanita also collaborated with Dr. Gutierrez of the Guatemalan Ministry of Health to train comandronas, or lay midwives, from each village to oversee safe delivery.

When asked if she had anything to add, Juanita wanted to express her thanks for GVH: "Truly I am very grateful. I have a lot of appreciation for GVH, for bringing health care and education in areas that are in real need. GVH goes to areas that are forgotten by the Guatemalan government."

Juanita plans to continue to work with GVH in a professional capacity after graduating, as well as volunteer her time with seniors.

## Chronic Disease Management

By Sherry Santarina, MPH Candidate

My first trip with GVH took place during the summer of 2014. It was my first time working abroad as a nurse and my initiation into international public health. Two years later, while working on my MPH I got in touch with GVH for an internship to develop Chronic Disease Management.

During my return to Guatemala, I sat in on doctor visits with patients, talked with villagers and even provided some charlas (training). Following the trip, along with Jennifer's help I reconstructed the Chronic Disease Management Program. In addition to establishing clearly defined roles and tasks for health promoters, nurses, and doctors, we created educational materials that are used to teach promoters about chronic disease and interventions. We also developed protocols to aid in easier monitoring and treatment of villagers with hypertension and diabetes.

As members of the community, promoters have plenty of potential to help in prevention and day-to-day management of chronic diseases. We are hoping that the training program will enable promoters to effectively care for and teach villagers how to manage or prevent such diseases so that they can continue on the path to a healthy living.



## Volunteer of the Year



Carri, pictured left, helping to weigh a child

Our Highlighted Volunteer for 2016 is Carri Singer! With a strong interest in gardening, she brought her experience and a bit of Spanish with us on her first GVH trip. After several months of planning, we put in 3 pilot gardens – the most dramatic of which was on the side of an almost vertical hill. Her calm pragmatic manner combined with a good sense of humor made her a great addition to the team. After sharing her knowledge of gardening, she agreed to take on the position of Volunteer Manager providing critical support for our medical team trips. She connects interested volunteers with our trips and other opportunities to work within GVH, working in the office several days per month.

Carri has traveled on most of the trips over the past 2 years with her "next generation" of global citizens - grandchildren Jack and Mallory. Her attention to detail and previous travel guide experience has helped us refine the planning and travel aspects of our medical teamwork. Soon, she will be trained with other GVH volunteers to be a Theater of the Oppressed facilitator so that we can bring our pre-trip cultural training in house and adapt it specifically to where we work. We hope she will travel again next summer and continue to brighten our office with her smiles for much time to come.

**Donate to GVH when you make a purchase through Amazon!** Visit [smile.amazon.com](https://www.smile.amazon.com) and sign up for Guatemala Village Health. A percentage of your purchase will go to GVH. Bookmark AMAZON SMILES in your browser so we get credit!

*Program Updates continued from page 1*

### **Preventative Dentistry & Dental Care -**

GVH has continued to provide toothbrushes, toothpaste, weekly fluoride rinse, and health education in collaboration with teachers and health promoters in the schools. With dentists traveling in February 2017, we will be able to provide dental care. We are working on a long-term partnership between dentists in the Seattle area and the Guatemala University of San Carlos.

### **Educational Support -**

Juanita Hernandez is now in her third year of nursing school with our support, and we are sponsoring our new organizational specialist Erick Garcia to prepare for university entrance exams.

### **Health Worker Training -**

We again collaborated with Dra. Marta Gutierrez, this year to train 23 health promoters in a certification program designed by our staff doctor Teresa Upun. We provided additional training in hypertension management and will continue with diabetes training through programs developed by this year's interns: JJ Wampach and Sherry Santarina.

### **Composting Toilets and Ecofilters -**

Currently 400 homes in our most remote villages lack for clean water and sanitation. We are applying for a grant through the Rotary Club to partner with villagers to help build the toilets and subsidize the cost of filters for clean water. Villagers will collect materials.

### **Training and Development Center -**

The final lot has been purchased through private funds for the clinic and training center in Santiago. We are hoping to house Aldeas Sanas administrative offices, a clinic, a training center to work with other non-profits, and casa mejoradas, or example houses, that villagers can live in to experience possible infrastructure improvements to their houses.



### **UW Bothell - GVH partnership for July 2016 Trip**

By Carolyn Bain, Executive Director

In July of this year GVH embarked upon a new adventure: taking 18 UW Bothell nursing and health education/policy students with their professor, Mabel Ezeonwu, to our villages near Lago Izabal and Rio Dulce.

Despite heavy rains, swollen rivers and some serious bouts of illness within the group itself, the students and five GVH members worked well together in the clinic settings. The students carried out surveys of health and hygiene, held village clinics, gave out toothbrushes to adults, and evaluated the need for smokeless stoves.

The group learned a great deal about Guatemalan health care system from rural puestos de salud, to regional centers, and the largest hospital in Guatemala City. The lack of basic supplies in most of these facilities was shocking for the group. In El Estor, they visited clinic buildings in disrepair with the waiting area chairs falling apart. At the hospital in Guatemala City, there were not enough sheets to give each patient clean bedding, and the hospital is so short-staffed that families help provide care.

Many of the students felt motivated by these urgent needs to go back and help on another trip. We look forward to exploring future options with UW Bothell nurses.

### **Getting Started with Nutritional Supplement: Mani-Plus**

During this year's July trip, we began collecting data on child development using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASG). Julio Choc, our lead health promoter from Esperanza Tunica, quickly learned how to conduct the screening for age-appropriate physical and mental development. He is bilingual in Spanish and Q'eqchi', which makes it easy for him to interact with the mothers of the children in all of our villages.

GVH is collecting baseline data for all the babies who will receive the protein supplements of MANI-Plus, created by a company in Guatemala, which aims to decrease physical stunting and improve brain development. The GVH in-country team has been working hard to finish the baseline data collection and is energized about starting to distribute these supplements in our villages with regular oversight of our village health promoters.

GVH is so grateful to all of our donors who supported this pilot project at the annual dinner in March. We are eager to see this model take off and our Guatemalan in-country team is even considering formulating a supplement that could be made by the local villagers so they may sustainably continue to have healthy children for years to come.



**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](http://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!

### Reaching Beyond Our Borders

By Jennifer Hoock, MD, MPH

Our Guatemala physician, Teresita Upun, and I traveled to Costa Rica for the WONCA Conference (World Organization of Family Medicine). As the first doctors from Guatemala ever to attend, we were welcomed as honored guests. We met with WONCA leadership and participated in the dignitary's tour of the Costa Rican public health system. Their amazing tiered care model staffs puestos de salud with full-time professionals nurses and public health technicians. Specialists including family doctors provide referral care at health centers and supervise puestos. Regional hospitals provide secondary care with tertiary care at the national hospital.

We also participated in the Summit on Family Medicine where we met with faculty and leadership from Spanish-speaking countries all over the world. We shared in discussions on the development of family medicine in countries like Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, which currently have no training for primary care specialists.

Back in the USA, our two interns, Sherry Santarina, JJ Wampach and I presented our Chronic Disease Management Program for diabetes and hypertension to a national audience at the American Academy of Family Physicians Global Health Workshop in Atlanta. This program has been ongoing since the inception of our organization, and with the interns' help we were able to review what we have accomplished, clarify roles and develop new protocols for care and data management. Surprisingly these conditions now rank in the top 10 causes of death in Guatemala.

At this meeting we met up with the Providence International Foundation, who is also working on improving health in rural Guatemala. They introduced us to leaders from the Schools of Medicine at Landivar University, a Guatemalan college committed to the integration of public health and primary care. One of their faculty is the Minister for Health for Guatemala, and she is committed to bringing Family Medicine and primary care training to the country.

We are excited to be able to share what we have developed and learn from others so that we can more effectively work to improve health with local action around the world.

### A Year in Review

By Samuel Alvarez, Aldeas Sanas Director



Guatemala, my country, is very nice and rich in resources but we do not know how to take advantage of them. Because of this, many people are poor and that makes the work that GVH does in rural Guatemala amazing.

This year we can see changes in the villages we have worked with for 4 or 5 years. We are starting a pilot to eradicate the chronic malnutrition, and I am very excited for this because almost 5 kids of 10 in Guatemala suffer from this. Of course, the rest our programs also have generated very successful results. And we feel a part this success because we visit the villages every 6 weeks for follow up and to see all benefits GVH provides.

The impact is also very big in education. We educate in health, Alternatives to Violence, and hygiene and sanitation. In 2016 we worked even harder, having had the opportunity to train the health promoters in each village. Our commitment with village people is going well and for this we feel important and influential in these villages. GVH is a successful and efficient NGO in Guatemala and we need focus responsibly on our commitment. God bless Guatemala Village Health.

### New Staff at GVH/ASG

**Julio Choc** – Julio has joined us as our lead health promoter from Esperanza Tunica. He's an elementary school teacher and community organizer, with a background in health education. He is fluent in both Q'eqchi' and Spanish, and has been doing a fantastic job working with our team on clinical trips and collaborating with other health promoters.



Lesbia Xi



Julio helping a villager

**Lesbia Xi** - Lesbia is trained as an entry-level nurse, and works with Julio to supervise the health promoters. She has also stepped in to provide health education of all types, with a specialty in women's health. Lesbia is also fluent in Q'eqchi' and Spanish and is training directly with Juanita, our nurse, to work in more medical care.

**Erick Garcia** – Erick has been with GVH previously as a volunteer, but recently has come on in an official capacity to help organize supplies and medicine.

**Mitchel Ayer** – Mitchel has joined GVH as their Seattle office Program Assistant. He has experience with health education and clinic administration. He will be focusing on creating protocols, maintaining program organization, and improving external communication.

#### Board of Directors

President: Peggy Visher RN, CNN, MSN  
Vice President: Pamela Curry, DH  
Treasurer: Gary Christophersen  
Secretary: Mickey Kander, PA  
Development: Jennifer Hoock MD, MPH  
Teresa Wallace, MD  
Diana Orellana, Dental Assistant  
Karyn Pereyra  
Linda Pinsky, MD

**Executive Director:** Carolyn Bain, MPH

#### Retiring Board of Directors

Carol Ireland Mclean RN, NP, MHA  
Alice Lobenstein RN, MN

1265 S Main Street  
Suite 303-D  
Seattle, WA 98144  
Phone/Fax: (206) 339-3352  
[www.GuatemalaVillageHealth.org](http://www.GuatemalaVillageHealth.org)  
[office@gvhealth.org](mailto:office@gvhealth.org)