



# CROSSROADS COMMUNITY CATHEDRAL

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## COMM International Medical Mission Report 2013

The third medical mission and Christian outreach of COMM International took place October 31 - November 8. In response to the desperate needs of the people in that area, the team returned to the mountains of Esquipulas, Guatemala, to hold another free clinic and promote health awareness.

The team consisted of fifteen U.S. volunteers. The 5 physicians who were present on the trip were Faustinus Onyirimba (pulmonologist and team leader), Alicia Chilito (family practice), Cesar Fuentes (family practice), Rossy Fuentes (family practice), and Scheuster Christie (surgeon). The nursing team comprised of 4 registered nurses: Milagros Barris, Linda Cloutier, Virginia Jones and Linda Williams. Doug Clough was the team's pharmacist, and 5 other volunteers (Alexandra Beltran, Stephen Best, Norma Christie, Mercedes Garcia and Olga Jacques) also played vital roles in our mission. We were joined by a team of local volunteers including Dr. Ingrid Castaneda, 3 medical students, 2 nurses, and several Spanish interpreters and counselors. The mission was in partnership with Pastor Jose Alvarez, the leader of the host ministry and founder of the Kitchen of Love Ministry.

Dedicated local volunteers transformed the Kitchen of Love project site into a temporary clinic. Twenty-five (25) boxes of medications and supplies, weighing 2000 lbs. in total, were shipped ahead of time and unpacked to set up at the clinic. Approximately 1,200 patients were evaluated and treated in 4 days. Many of the patients walked for hours to come to the clinic. They were all fed, and additional bags of food were distributed to approximately 250 families. All the children were given gifts of toys and coloring books. We were able to cater to all the medical needs of the people and handed out several reading glasses to the vision impaired. Several minor surgeries were performed and health education was emphasized.

Although the mission was physically and emotionally challenging, we were encouraged by the patients who, in spite of their needs and their long commutes, waited patiently and cheerfully until they were seen. We were able to offer health education in the areas of hygiene, nutrition, diabetes, degenerative joint disease, and breast cancer. The local volunteers were very welcoming and open to our U.S. volunteers; it was a wonderful opportunity to transfer knowledge and encourage each other's faith in Jesus Christ. Many Christian ministers were available for patient counseling. During this time, 57 people made a commitment to become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ; as the entire team agrees, this was our biggest success during this mission.

While this mission trip was a huge success, the scope of the need in the area is sobering. With your prayers and support, we are determined to focus on this area to make whatever difference we can.

We are currently praying for the opportunities to 1) offer more general and gynecological surgery, and 2) to build and maintain a small clinic on the site where a local physician can see patients once a week. In this way, the patients don't have to wait until our annual visit. There is so much need in this area and we are committed to making a difference. The team expects to return to Esquipulas next year, and we are grateful for your support in prayers and donations.

Yours Sincerely,

Faustinus Onyirimba, MD FCCP  
Mission Coordinator and Team Leader