



Report from our brigade trip to Honduras

February 09 to 18, 2014

It is just a few days since I returned from our most recent trip to Honduras. A lot was accomplished in 9 days with your help, and with the help of Agrolibano who partnered with us once again to support our house construction in the San Lorenzo region. While it is good to be home, I already find myself missing the people of Honduras. Their warmth and the warmth of their country was a welcome break from this Canadian winter!



As soon as we landed in Honduras, we travelled to San Lorenzo, arriving late on the afternoon of our first day. The very next day we started the construction of a home in Buena Fe, a small village ten minutes from San Lorenzo. Construction went extremely well and we received considerable help from the family and people living in the area.

One member of the family, however, was not able to help. Darwin Omar the family's 16 year-old son, was in the hospital receiving cancer treatment in the capital, Tegucigalpa. His treatment for leukemia is putting great financial strain and stress on the family. We are grateful that the generosity of our supporters in Canada allowed us to not only present this family with a new home, but also a small amount of money to ease the financial burden of travelling to and from the hospital, and to provide food for Darwin Omar while he undergoes his treatments. The family could not be more grateful.



After only three days in Buena Fe, we presented the family with their new home, a moment that Darwin Omar was luckily able to join us for. Darwin Omar was so happy to see "his new home," and for the moment at least it is indeed *his* new home. Because of his condition, he needs to be isolated from others and to be in the cleanest place possible for sleep and resting. The family, therefore, made the decision to stay in their old home and let him have the new home to himself until he gets better. This was an unexpected benefit of doing this project and I am pleased that we were able to contribute this home at such an important time in this family's lives!



Once the house (our 11th in two years!) was complete, we distributed the vitamins that [Nature's Bounty](#) had donated for this mission to all of the children under the age of 12 in Beuna Fe. We were also able to deliver 2 water purification units, thanks to [Lifesaving Water Canada](#).



After our three days in the San Lorenzo area, we travelled to Jesus De Otoro where the orphanage that we support is located. On Friday, February 14, we spent the morning shopping. While shopping is not my favorite activity, I enjoyed spending the morning in this way knowing that we were buying food and cleaning supplies for the orphanage that would last for the next six months. We even had a little party with the children at lunch that included cake! It was so nice to see them laugh and have fun!



Later that afternoon, we travelled to the village of águila in the mountains, about 1.5 hours away from Jesus De Otoro. The goal of this trip was to deliver shoes and school supplies to some children that we had met during our last mission in October. During that trip, a teacher and his students had helped us out when our truck got stuck in the mud near their village. To thank them for their assistance, we promised to return with shoes for them all and that is just what we did!



On the Saturday, we headed for another mountain village called Potreritos to conduct a medical brigade under the direction of our local medical doctor, Carolina Sanchez, and five Cuban medical doctors. This was one of the best medical brigades during my eleven years in Honduras. The care was excellent and we were able to attend to over 250 patients in one day. The physician travel pack we had purchased in Canada from [Health Partners International of Canada](#) was very helpful in ensuring a high level of care. As usual, we provided not only medical care, but also taught the basics of hand washing and teeth brushing; simple skills but life-changing as they teach children skills that will keep them healthier for a long time to come.



The trip finished with a return to Tegucigalpa, where we were honoured to be part of a ceremony in which the Honduras Red Cross acknowledged our support of their work through the provision of medical equipment, training and expertise. The ceremony also recognized the support that Healthy Horizons has provided to the people of Honduras through our 35 missions over the past 11 years.

I feel privileged to have been given an opportunity to serve Honduras during this time. There are no words to express the joy I experience every time I see a child smile because of what we do. With the help of our donors, we have achieved so much. We look forward to achieving even more in the months and years to come.

Steve Malone



How did Frank Adamson see things? (Frank participated in this last trip to Honduras).

"I have just returned from my second mission to Honduras with Steve Malone from HHCF, one of the poorest countries in the Americas. One quickly comes to appreciate how fortunate we are to live in one of the most prosperous democracies with the most robust social and medical services anywhere- a country where, by comparison very few people lack health care or social assistance.

We spent 9 days in the country, 3 days in the San Lorenzo area, where once again it was hot at 36 degrees and full sun. We helped to construct one house from money raised by HHCF for a needy family in Buena Fe, the same village where we built 2 houses last year. These are 16'x16' one room wooden board structures build on cement pylons about 4' off of the ground, which is subject to flooding in the rainy season. The height also deters the pigs and chickens and helps with ventilation. The biggest benefit is to get these residents out of their mud covered trig and tarp structures, which flood and harbor a parasite, which causes chugas disease, a potentially deadly disease of the autonomic nervous system and myocardium. There is a cure but most people cannot afford the medication. So prevention is the key.

I spoke to the residents of the houses we built last year, who have added finishing touches like cement stairs and verandas. They very much appreciate, what for us, would be a garden shed in our back yard!

I had the opportunity to meet with the CEO of the Agrobliano Foundation, a charitable organization in the San Lorenzo area that supports schools, hospitals and medical clinics. We were able to tour 2 of their 5 Star Schools, where they place an emphasis on sustainable farming using a very basic, but effective irrigation system. The ambassador from Peru was on tour as well. I also met 3 Rotarians from the Rotary Club of Chuloteca, who I had met last year in order to explore the possibility of a joint venture between their club and the Rotary Club of Fonthill. This was my primary reason for this visit. The area needs everything that we take for granted in Canada- echo-stoves, water purification, latrines, medical brigades, and electricity and school supplies.



On day 4 we returned to the capital, Tegucigalpa to rent a pick-up truck to take supplies to Jesus de Otoro, a 2 ½ hour drive to the mountains in the North-West of Honduras. Steve has a family he has adopted here and a good friend, Tom Hebert, who arrived 2 decades ago with the American Peace Corps and never left. He is a part-time beekeeper and full time teacher at a private elementary school, which also teaches English. Our goal here was to buy food and to deliver vitamins for 25 children and staff at an orphanage in town. HHCF has been providing support to them for 10 years. For under \$4,000 food can be provided for 3 meals per day. Government funding is enough for only 1 daily meal. We spent a day here, ate with the kids and played soccer. The meal of rice, re-fried beans and chicken was cooked outside on an open fire because both government-supplied stoves are broken and they claim there is no money for a new one. We got quotes on a new stove and for about \$400.00 it was purchased and it was delivered on the day we departed, thanks to the donors!

We took about an hour driving about 6 miles up the mountains on a single lane clay road more amenable to mules than even our 4-wheel drive pickup truck. Farmers use it to bring coffee, bananas and corn to market in the valley below. We went there to deliver basic supplies to 17 students who attend classes in a 2-room schoolhouse. The children and their families, including many babies were all patiently awaiting us. A teacher provides instruction for grade 1-5. This school, built 12 years ago has no doors, no windows, a leaky tin roof, that flaps in the breeze a contaminated well and a latrine the pigs would turn their nose up at. There is no electricity. And there is no funding from the government to make repairs.

Each student girl received shoes and socks and each boy, a pair of boots courtesy a Canadian donor, a new backpack with pens, pencils, notebooks, etc. donated and put together from Tom's school and vitamins, toothbrushes and toothpaste were also given to each kids. They also received valentine cards from Canada and from the students at Tom's school. The kids and their families that walked for hours to get there were delighted with basic stuff we just take for granted. For under \$4,000 this school could be repaired and painted.

We did one medical mission, also in a remote mountain village arranged by a local, Cuban trained physician, Dr. Carmela Sanchez, her physician brother and 4 medical colleagues, where we saw 250 patients. Most, if not all of these walked miles up the mountain and back, some carrying children. We also provided toothbrushes and Tom and 2 teachers taught the kids how to wash their hands and brush their teeth. Interestingly, I had spoken to a semi-retired Canadian dentist about volunteering in Honduras. He said that he would not go to pull rotted teeth because it would be too depressing. Again, showing kids how to brush their teeth is easy to do and in the long run is much more effective.

Our last day was back in the capital, where we spent a day with the Honduran Red Cross paramedics and brought them much-needed supplies, including medications.

Ambulance coverage for a city of 1.2 million is provided by The Red Cross, 3 private ambulance services (for paying subscribers) and one for the military and police. The poor rely on the Red Cross, which staffs 3 vehicle on the day shift and 2 ambulances on evenings and nights. The Spanish Red Cross provided for their ambulance base and an ambulance and one vehicle was donated by the Canadian Red Cross. There are only 10 paramedics, with an untrained driver and 50 first responders. They average 700 calls per month. This city is the size of Mississauga!

We toured the ER at the largest public hospital, which has 1,100 beds. Things that we take for granted like heart monitors, defibrillators and infusion pumps and piped medical gases do not exist. Patients have to pay for medications and procedures, which means that most do without.

In the evening we went to the Red Cross headquarters, where Steve was presented a plaque from the President of that organization in honour of his continued support of the paramedics, most of who were in attendance.

Be thankful for what Canada gives you. Most of us take what we have for granted. We are truly blessed to live in a country that care and Honduras is appreciative of all of the work done by NGO's from around the world, including HHCF."



Frank and Dr Carolina

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"It is not how much we give, but how much love we put into giving"

Mother Theresa