

## **Report of April 2010 VCOM Mission Trip**

The week of April 18-24, a group of 27 medical students (between post baccalaureate, 1<sup>st</sup> year and 3<sup>rd</sup> year) and five doctors, came for a four-day mission trip to provide medical treatments and hair dressing treatments to improve the patients' self-esteem, in four poor and unprotected communities in the area of Francisco Morazán.

- The day of the arrival a dinner was hosted by VCOM at El Patio Restaurant, so everyone had the opportunity to get to know each other and set the bases for the work to be done.
- On Monday, the group went to the neighborhood called El Carrizal #1. There the group worked in a house provided by the local church; 175 patients were seen for multiple health problems; the rest benefitted with prophylactic parasite medication and vitamins. The hair dressing group did 72 hair trimmings, 35 treatments, and 26 hair wash.
- On Tuesday, the neighborhood Villeda Morales was visited and 280 patients were treated in the medical clinic and the beauty class performed 40 hair trimming and 35 treatment applications. The members of the community were extremely grateful because they've never had this opportunity before, even though the community is within an hour of the center of Tegucigalpa.
- Wednesday was spent in the neighborhood called Nuevos Horizontes (New Horizons) where the group worked in a small building of the Church of Christ. It felt crowded and very hot as the hours went by, but the group evaluated 160 patients and tried to improve their health conditions. The hair dressing students did 50 trimmings and 20 treatments applications.
- Thursday the community of Lepaterique, a beautiful and refreshing site out in the mountains of Francisco Morazán, was visited and attention was provided in the Community Center. Here 290 patients were provided of medical care, and shoes were given out to the patients. The hair dressing class did 55 hair trimmings and 10 treatment applications.
- Each day the group gave Osteopathic Manipulative Therapy to patients who needed it, no matter how small the space for attention they had, and their hearts and wisdom were with every patient assisted.

### **The story in images**



Lepaterique



The setting



Osteopathic Manipulation Treatment



Patients in line waiting to be seeing.



Shoes distribution



new borns came for attention



Babies received a complete medical examination



After a long and tiring week, a relaxing treat.

### Summary of the most common health problems found

In patients in the age group of younger than 1 year-old (newborns) the 4 major health problems were:

- ✚ Cold virus
- ✚ Upper Respiratory tract infections
- ✚ Scabies
- ✚ Eczema

From 1-15 years old:

- ✚ Parasites
- ✚ Upper respiratory tract infections
- ✚ Atopic Dermatitis
- ✚ Scabies

From 16-35 years old:

- ✚ Somatic dysfunction
- ✚ Gastro enteric Reflux Disease
- ✚ Dermatoses
- ✚ Urinary Tract infections

From 36-55 years old:

- ✚ High Blood Pressure
- ✚ Somatic dysfunction
- ✚ Gastro enteric Reflux Disease
- ✚ Arthritis

In older than 56 years old:

- ✚ Arthritis
- ✚ High Blood pressure
- ✚ Diabetes
- ✚ Gastro enteric Reflux Disease

The common denominator in every group, even when it was not the principal diagnosis, is parasites. As can be noted the chronic illnesses are a major problem in the elderly, and they are not able to receive a proper follow-up, due to the difficult access to health services or the availability of medications. So major complications can be expected on these patients, even though we didn't have equipments to do special tests.

In all, it was a very gratifying experience, to receive the happy smile of every patient reached, and the gratitude they show to the members of the team, in which there was no language barrier because everyone communicated with the worldwide language of Christian love.

Thanks to the group for helping the underserved people of my Honduras. Blessings to you all.