

# Reflections from Honduras

## *Keeping You In Touch*

Fellow Man International of Honduras November 2010

### If Only You Knew The Difference You Make

#### Special points of interest:

- Where Does Your Donation Go and Whom Does It Serve?
- Great Bend FUMC Provides Funding for New Tilapia Lagoons
- Women's Sewing Groups Send New Mother's Home with Love in Every Stitch
- All Kinds of Support Make the FMI Mission Possible
- Field Notes from Lisa

#### Inside this issue:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| In Memory of Matthew   | 2 |
| Tilapia & Corn - A Modern Day Story of Fishes and Loaves         | 2 |
| An Increase in the Coffee Market Helps Pay Workers a Living Wage | 3 |
| Baby Blankets and Hats say, "Welcome to the World"               | 3 |
| All Kinds of Mission Friends Lend a Hand to FMI Honduras         | 4 |
| Over-the-Counter Medications Needed More than Ever               | 5 |
| Coming Back to Myself - Remembering the Reasons Why              | 6 |

How many people does Fellow Man International help in a year? The answer to such a basic question depends on the definition of help. Perhaps a better word that more accurately describes the many activities of FMI would be EMPOWER.

There are the thousands of patients who come to the clinic for medical, dental and surgical services. There are the patients who receive specialized care through referral to the many participating Honduran specialists who are board members and volunteers with FMI.

The malnourished seek to calm their pangs of hunger through our agriculture program. The school children learn better because they have a hot lunch every day. The parents save money because they do not have to provide their school-aged children one meal five days a week. For some families the savings is considerable. For other families the anguish of denying their children a piece of bread is spared when their children eat lunch at school.

Those who receive educational opportunities through FMI scholarships are empowered to achieve their full potential and are given hope for their and their families' future. Many of those who have been the recipients of scholarships now use their new earning potential to help their siblings also acquire an education.

Then, there are the Honduran employees of Projimos Internacionalistas (Fellow Man International of Honduras). There are fourteen people directly employed with the

mission. There are an additional six employees both part-time and full-time who either work with the water project, coffee project or in Lisa's home. All of these people enjoy the benefits and relative prosperity a living wage ensures which includes a more dignified living structure, a better diet, additional education and sometimes even the ability to start their own business.

The families of the FMI employees have also greatly benefited. Many of our employees have paid for the education of their younger siblings. Edmundo Ordonez, the clinic's dentist pays for his aging parent's retirement which includes everything from food, clothing and shelter to medical care. He is providing a college education for his sister and also assists his nieces and nephews with their high school educations. He is, in a sense a lifeline for his family.

Yes, if you only knew the difference you have made and continue to make in the lives of the Honduran people you would truly be unable to count the ways. The Fellow Man International budget for 2010-2011 is \$167,157.00. It is an ambitious goal. However, the results that can be achieved through the works of the FMI clinic, agriculture program and educational outreach will far outshine a simple round dollar figure. Through your gifts, lives will be transformed. Not only will the immediate needs of today be met, but seeds of hope and promise will be planted that richly empower our Honduran friends to build a better tomorrow for themselves, their families and their communities. In His Service, *Lisa*

## In Memory of *Matthew Aaron Thompson*

Matthew Thompson was a young man who had great love and many hopes for the people of Honduras. He was inspired to build homes for the victims of Hurricane Mitch and also someday hoped to build a clinic in a marginal barrio created for the victims of Hurricane Fifi located close to San Pedro Sula. It was, in fact, Matthew Thompson who played a vital role in bringing me to Honduras, even introducing me to what would eventually become my permanent home, Pinalejo.

It was with deep sadness I learned of Matthew's death through his mother, Mary Goodwin. I received a touching letter from her in which she stated there were memorial monies to be dispersed. She said, "we know Matthew would have wanted for you to have a goodly portion". I was moved beyond words the family would entrust us with a place in their hearts where Matthew lives on.

Matthew and his wife Lora visited the FMI project

in Buenos Aires a number of years ago. I hope he was able to understand the role he played in planting the seeds of hope we continue to cultivate today.

Early next year, Matthew's parents and widow plan to travel to Honduras. We will be placing a memorial plaque and picture of Matthew in the clinic's waiting room. In the meantime, we would like to express our deepest sympathy as well as profound gratitude to Lora Jackson

Thompson, Matthew's wife and Al and Mary Goodwin, Matthew's parents. What an awesome privilege we have to honor Matthew's life through their generosity.



Matthew and Lisa found this little boy on the streets of Copan Ruins. Matthew had great love and many hopes for the people of Honduras.

## Tortillas and Atol for a Year - Buenos Aires Grade School Children Benefit from an Abundant Harvest



Field corn in Honduras is utilized for a variety of purposes. As our cornfield matured, plans were made to have a "corn celebration" at the grade school in Buenos Aires. While the ears of corn were still tender and full of moisture, three hundred ears of corn were brought the mothers of the school children to be made

into local "fresh corn" dishes such as *riguas* (a fried, fresh corn ground thick tortilla) and *atol de elote* which is a sweet, corn mash drink made with corn, milk, sugar and cinnamon. It was a good day for the children as we all celebrated a successful crop of corn.

The rest of the corn has been left in the field until it is dry enough for storage. Our harvest is so plentiful there will be more than enough corn to feed the school



children tortillas for the entire year, have food for the hungry who find themselves in crisis, reserve enough grain to feed our chickens and hogs and even sell corn on the open market to help expand the agriculture project.





## As Coffee Prices Soar, Coffee Workers Pay Creeps Toward a Living Wage - But Do They Recognize a Living Wage?

Coffee prices are at their highest in twelve years. This is welcome news to the people of Buenos Aires and the surrounding communities as higher coffee prices most surely will mean better wages for the workers. Still, even in the best of circumstances, there are always those who would take advantage of the "least of these".

It was most distressing to me to find that a local producer, from whom Green Parrot Coffee does not buy, offered to pay workers an all time high of fifty lempiras per five gallon bucket of coffee harvested. The workers were ecstatic as they contemplated their potential earnings. The catch was we were early in the harvest season. The coffee that was ripe and ready to be picked was called "pinta". The mature beans at this point in the harvest are far and few between on the branches. It takes workers a very long time to fill a five gallon bucket.

Usually, when the harvest first begins it is customary to pay the workers by the day instead of by the five gallon bucket picked. It ensures the workers are paid fairly for a full day's work.



I quickly did the math in my head knowing approximately what the average worker would pick in a day. Even at fifty lempiras per five gallon bucket, the workers would make less than they normally make clearing the fields! It was clear these humble people who possess only minimal math skills had been tricked. Try as I might, there was no way to convince the people they would make less. Fifty lempiras a bucket was

simply too much for them to resist. They even insisted Green Parrot Coffee agree to pay the per gallon fee instead of the daily wage. My heart broke as I agreed only with the intention of explaining their daily wage vs. per gallon wage at the end of the day. I felt it was our responsibility to help the workers learn, yet wondered if even then they would understand the significance of what had happened.

At the end of the day the totals were in for analysis. Some workers had earned only half of a usual day's wage. Their gazes turned to their feet as the red hot flush of their anger made its way from beneath their collars. They knew they had been taken, but their humility kept any words of anger from leaving their lips. I could only imagine their heartbreak. However, it was good to be able to announce that GPC would pay a daily wage until the fields were fully ripened.

## Baby Blankets and Knitted Hats Say, "Welcome to the World"

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to travel to the hospital to give birth without so much as a onesie or pack of diapers? Many of the mothers who deliver their babies at the Fellow Man clinic come with only the clothes on their backs.

There are several women's sewing and knitting groups who make sure the babies we deliver are swaddled with warmth and love. Foundry Methodist Church -

Great Bend, KS, First United Methodist Church - Great Bend, KS and First United Methodist Church in Chanute, KS all have some very talented women who come together to make baby quilts and knitted or crocheted hats for our tiny new arrivals. Whether it be a first baby or number ten, each mother receives her newborn wrapped in a beautiful handmade quilt and cap. What a special way to say you are special,



loved and "welcome to the world". Thank you to all who have provided for the needs of these mothers and little ones.

## FUMC of Salina Provides Sweet Support for Honduras

Recently, First United Methodist Church in Salina, Kansas held a dessert auction and sale of Honduran crafts for the benefit of the Fellow Man Project. It was certainly a day of "sweet" support for the people of Honduras.

Church members and other visitors participated in a silent auction of Honduran handcrafts, then generously bid on a wide assortment of exquisite desserts lovingly prepared by the members of FUMC in Salina.

Marshall Stanton, FMI President was able to facilitate a Skype video conversation with Lisa to provide a brief update on mission activities live from Honduras. The connection was left open so Lisa could hear the lively bidding going on in the fellowship hall of the church. Many desserts went for handsome prices. The congregation's generous support of the Honduras project was evident as each sweet went to the highest bidder. The total amount raised was \$5,159.25!!! What a blessing!



## Chica Chat - When a Visit from a Friend Makes All the Difference



Doris Bedinger is a good friend. She has been to Honduras many times, but this visit was slightly different than the others. She simply came to "hang out" with Lisa and be a friend. It's not always easy being a single, American girl in Honduras. Sometimes, what a mission-

ary really needs to feed her soul is a little "chica chat"... or "girl talk". Still, in between late night soul searching, cups of coffee and bites of chocolate, Doris was always a friend on a mission. She wrote down the urgent needs of the clinic and upon return home immediately began seeking funds for the purchase of over-the-counter medications. She also took samples of Green Parrot Coffee to help spread the word about our new and improved blend. Thanks *Dorita*, you are a true friend!

## Midlife Men on a Mission Make Another Visit to FMI

Once again, FMI has been blessed with the gifts of medication and service through Fairfax Presbyterian's Midlife Men on a Mission work team. The group of men traveled to the clinic on November 1, 2010 to make a very special delivery of much needed medications and brand new, hand sewn school uniforms for the 2011 school year.

Every year, the clinic's staff anxiously awaits the Men's visit as they bring precious medications to fill the pharmacy. This year, the team gave special priority to purchasing antibiotics the mission would

otherwise be unable to afford.

Four of the Midlife Men stayed behind to work at the clinic. Two thousand dollars were donated to purchase construction materials which included supplies to replace the badly sagging operating room floor and paint to create a nice environment for our patients. The Men worked on the OR floor, installed ceiling fans and re-worked the plumbing in the bathrooms. Thank you Men!!!





## Over-the-Counter Medications Desperately Needed

You might be surprised to learn we use many common over-the-counter medications at the Fellow Man clinic. Everything from ibuprofen, Tylenol to children's chewable vitamins are needed to treat the daily health concerns of the people. With an increase in the clinic's patient load this year, it's not surprising the mission is severely over budget for medication purchases.

There are some items which are especially important with respect to the prevention of more serious illnesses. Every woman of child-bearing age needs to consume folic acid. The cost per day is cents on the dollar and helps to prevent the heartbreak of neural tube defects such as spinal bifida and perhaps even hydrocephaly

in the developing fetus. Iron when taken with vitamin C can quickly resolve cases of iron deficient anemia. Baby aspirins are used to prevent blood clots. Even medications such as Zantac and Prilosec OTC can be purchased at a considerable discount when compared to the price FMI pays in Honduras through Pharmaceutical wholesalers.

We would like to encourage you to form collection points where donors could drop off donated over-the-counter medications to be sent to Honduras. Perhaps there are other clubs, civil groups or others who would like to help with a medication drive. If you need further information please contact Marshall Stanton at [mstan151@kans.com](mailto:mstan151@kans.com). OTC medi-

cation currently needed are the following:

|  |
|--|
| <b>Ibuprofen 200mg</b>                               |
| <b>Acetaminophen 500mg</b>                           |
| <b>Children's Chewable Tylenol</b>                   |
| <b>Aspirin 325mg &amp; 81mg</b>                      |
| <b>Prenatal Vitamins</b>                             |
| <b>Adult Multivitamins</b>                           |
| <b>Children's Chewable Vitamins</b>                  |
| <b>Folic Acid</b>                                    |
| <b>Iron</b>  |
| <b>Vitamin C</b>                                     |
| <b>Calcium with Vitamin D</b>                        |
| <b>Ranitidine 75mg (Zantac)</b>                      |
| <b>Prilosec OTC</b>                                  |
| <b>Generic Metamucil</b>                             |
| <b>Generic Tums Antacid</b>                          |
| <b>Generic Neosporin Cream</b>                       |
| <b>Clotrimazole Cream</b>                            |
| <b>1% Hydrocortizone Cream</b>                       |
| <b>ReliOn Confirm/microblood glucose test strips</b> |
| <b>Bars of Antibacterial Soap</b>                    |
| <b>KY Jelly</b>                                      |
| <b>Cotton Balls</b>                                  |

## A Word from Marshall Stanton - FMI Foundation President



A tenacious spider spins a web on our front porch. Suspended by only a few nearly invisible threads, the spider waits for a rewarding meal of an unsuspecting insect. The tiny threads of support are adequate.

Fellow Man International's mission is supported by a relatively few people who believe in the mission and ministry carried out by Lisa Armstrong and employees in Honduras. The supporters are like the tiny threads securing the web. They are few but adequate.

In July, 2010 a letter of special appeal was sent to all patrons of the Mission, asking for mid-year gifts in the amount of \$15,000.00. Some gifts came in but were not adequate to meet the needs through

the end of 2010. The support is good but inadequate.

**In November the FMI Foundation will send its annual letter appeal for gifts.**

Now, in order to maintain the Mission, additional gifts are necessary. Could you strengthen those webs of support by giving an additional gift? As evidenced in this newsletter, the Mission's work continues, serving the medical and financial needs of the poor people.

Thanks for your support!

*Marshall Stanton*

Marshall Stanton - President  
FMI Foundation





## Fellow Man International Foundation

P.O. Box 2993  
Salina, KS 67402  
(785) 823-1341

[www.fellowmaninternational.org](http://www.fellowmaninternational.org)

### Coming Back to Myself - Remembering the Reasons Why



Recently I had the opportunity to cover for our dear Dr. Marvin Pineda while he was on vacation. (Dr. Pineda has not had a vacation in nearly two years!) It was a rare, guilty pleasure to

see patients for the entire week while Dr. Marvin took a much needed rest from the daily needs of the sick.

Around the clinic we like to joke that when Dr. Marvin is gone, there are several likely events. The employees make bets on how many deliveries I'll get or how many machete wounds I'll have to sew up. But, the truth of the matter is I love every minute of my contact with the people. Yes, I'm most at home with one hand on my stethoscope and the other on the shoulder of my fellow man.

As I saw patient after patient, some whom I have cared for since my arrival in Honduras, I couldn't

help but feel I was coming home or *back to myself* if you will. Above all things, I believe my true calling is to care for God's children the best I know how.

Sure enough, as I delivered that eight pound baby girl pictured on page 3 and placed her in her mother's arms, I remembered all of the reasons why I came to Honduras. I came to share the love of Christ through works. What a blessing it is to feel deep within my soul the profound, gut-wrenching love God freely offers us at that very moment in which we are called to share it with others. I feel convinced beyond all measure that the true nature of our Creator can only be experienced when we love Him through service to others. Mother Teresa had it right when she said she could see Christ in the "eyes of the poor".

Now that Dr. Marvin is back from vacation, my eyes turn from *peoplework* to paperwork. Yet, my heart overflows as I watch the patients filter in every morning. What a marvelous gift to be reminded every day of God's mercy and love as it's reflection burns bright in the eyes of the people we serve.