International Women’s Day is celebrated worldwide on March 8th to celebrate the economic, political and social achievements of women. This year Centro Medico Hombro a Hombro (CMHH), the STSG clinic in Ecuador, joined in these worldwide festivities by hosting a Women’s Health Fair for the Carlos Ruis Burneo Community. Local community partners participated including the Municipal Government Health Team, the Ministry of Health’s Health Outreach team, local STSG partner FASCA and a local pre-school. “Special guests” even included a visit from the mayor’s office and local media coverage.

Women gathered to listen to a talk on the importance of HIV/AIDS testing and then waited in line to receive free HIV/AIDS testing and counseling. Seventy-four women were tested in total. Free treatment for HIV/AIDS is available through the Ministry of Health and various community programs. In addition women learned of the importance of receiving PAP exams and what the exam entails. The Municipal government health team collaborated with CMHH staff to provide free PAP exams to 34 women. Follow-up from the PAP exams was provided at the CMHH.

In addition, children participated in various activities and games designed especially for them so that their mother’s could be free to enjoy the Health Fair. They enjoyed playing on the newly installed swings and tires that CMHH staff had built especially for the event.

The Women’s Health Fair was truly a community sponsored event as STSG worked “Shoulder to Shoulder” with community partners and leaders to make this event a success for the women in the community.

In Numbers:
- 138 women participated
- 34 PAP exams performed
- 74 HIV/AIDS tests performed
- 60+ Medical visits by the Municipal Health Team
- 40Kg of nutritional supplements for pregnant/nursing women and children under age 3 given away by the Ministry of Health

Women celebrated their health and learned how to promote their own health and that of their children. They visited various health booths and listened to several educational talks about self-esteem, water purification and HIV/AIDS prevention and testing. At the Ministry of Health sponsored booth women learned how to make nutritional inexpensive meals fortified with iron, were given a recipe book with simple meals and watched a cooking demonstration. The Ministry also passed out nutritional supplements to pregnant/nursing women and children under three years of age for a nutritional supplement program that the CMHH runs in conjunction with the ministry. Women were told about the program and that they could register at CMHH.
The Physical Therapy Trip

Dustin Brown, Katelin Fane, Ellen Magee, and Casey Overbee – University of Kentucky Class of 2011

Over spring break, a team of four second year University of Kentucky (UK) PT students, a UK PT graduate, a UK Professor, and a UK Spanish masters student all travelled to Ecuador for a Spring Break service trip. Breathtaking, exciting, unforgettable, eventful, emotional, and educational, are all words to describe the experience. We saw much of the culture, landscape, and attractions that Ecuador has to offer, but the greatest impact was made and felt in the clinic and the homes of the people. For three days we traveled with a community health worker to give physical therapy care in an underserved community in Santo Domingo de Los Tsachilas, at Centro Medico Hombro a Hombro (Shoulder to Shoulder) clinic where UK has had a long standing affiliation as Shoulder to Shoulder Global. Our hearts were racing on the first morning; it was time to transfer the knowledge of examinations and treatments and put them into action; a challenge that we were excited to embrace. Then our first patient walked through the door, a man who had been hit by a car two years prior with his right leg still casted, and we realized the challenge was greater than anticipated. As we removed the bandages to find a non-union fracture and abscess which had been keeping this man from work, we understood the desperation of the people, but also discovered their significant perseverance. Though we were unable to address the unhealed fracture, we offered him education about how to care for his wound and strengthen his leg, and advised him to see the doctor in the clinic. He left with such gratitude, even for the little assistance that we could offer him under the circumstances. This is just one snapshot of the multitude of experiences we had that week. We evaluated and treated patients with cerebral palsy, myasthenia gravis, low back pain, orthopedic injuries, people recovering from stroke, and several patients injured in motor vehicle accidents. We adapted to work with minimal resources, and though we were not equipped with the luxuries of a typical physical therapy gym, the foundation was to provide education and home exercise programs that they could incorporate into their everyday life activities.

On trips like this it is often easy to see the blessing in our own lives comparatively, but we were encouraged to investigate what we could gain from the Ecuadorian people. Not only were we able to provide them with some education, but they were able to teach us a great deal from their culture and how they embrace each other as family. Their generous hearts, large enough to carry their family and friends through any illness, were also extended to our team. “Family comes first” is a key concept that our group discovered was most important to the people to an extent that is often lacking in the lives of those in our society. We developed an appreciation that, even in the midst of their “poverty” and lack of healthcare, they had more than enough love, compassion, and generosity in their lives to teach us the value of human connection.

One physician with whom we had the opportunity to work described our physical therapy efforts with this quote, “You are teaching them how to fish, not just giving them fish.” Although, we were not fishing on this trip, the analogy still holds true to our profession as we try to improve the quality of life of all our patients. From this experience we hope to have made an impact on the lives of others, but we are so appreciative of the immense, lasting impression that the Ecuadorian people made on our future therapy practice and our hearts.
Bamboo Architecture Experimentation

By Tony Roccanova

During the time frame of March 13 – March 17, 2010 Tony Roccanova (Architecture Professor in the College of Design) and Salvador Prado (Architecture graduate student) worked with the parents of the Julio Jaramillo school in Santo Domingo de los Colorados on a construction for a food bar for the use of the kids of that school. Prior to leaving for Ecuador Tony sent an image of a model to Lupe Alvarez (the Director of the Jaramillo school) showing a proposal that would use 9 bamboo columns, 3 bamboo beams, a canopy and a suggestion to paint the ensemble of structures (the other two being a water tower and the gate keepers house) the magnificent complex of colors used by the indigenous Tsachila community. The site for the food bar would be in the area where the children sometimes play their circle games.

The construction went smoothly and on schedule. Indeed it became a work originating from within as the parents were highly motivated and interested in the project. In the end we had fun and laughed a lot and the parents also made delicious food for everyone and the most unbelievable fresh fruit drinks. Salvador and Tony learned something about making with bamboo and in return they left the parents with some innovations for bamboo detailing.

There is yet more work that can be done. The concrete water tower is proposed to become a storage shed. There is a possibility for new landscaping that can bring back to the site its native plants. There can be more seating and canopies offering protection from the hot sun and hard rains. And there is the application of color which brings movement and life affirming meaning.

Thank you Kiwanis for your generous funding support.

Staff Highlight

Ivonne Barrera is the licensed nurse at CMHH. She studied nursing at the Central University in Quito and has worked with CMHH since September 2009. Her five year old son Sebastián is a frequent visitor at CMHH and lights ups everyone’s day with is smile and laugh. Ivonne is responsible for coordinating all Ministry of Public Health programs provided at CMHH. This included vaccines; vaccination campaigns in the community and at local schools; Pap information, exams and follow-up; TB screening and treatment, nutritional supplements for pregnant/nursing mothers and children under age two and patient education on nutrition and breast feeding. On average she keeps busy at CMHH, providing over 300 vaccinations per month, preparing 500 plus patients to be seen by the doctor and doing lab exams. Ivonne says, “I like the work that I do because I am able to work in the specialty that I chose and because I enjoy working with children.”

Carlos Roman is the part-time psychologist at CMHH. He studied at Central University in Quito and has been with CMHH since June 2008. In addition to patient clinical visits Dr. Carlos frequently sees patients in the community. This ranges from home visits to patients with depression often from chronic illnesses that keep them homebound to talks at local elementary and high schools about self-esteem. Dr. Carlos especially enjoys working with adolescents and doing individual patient visits because, “I can learn about new cases and help people with their problems.” In his spare time he enjoys playing the guitar and singing and practicing in the band that Dr. Cristian Carrión, CMHH’s medical director, also plays in.
Shoulder to Shoulder Global • Hombro a Hombro

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May Brigade

I currently work as a Resident Physician in Preventive Medicine at the University of Kentucky. To further explore my interests in global public health I participated in the Shoulder to Shoulder Global Program in Ecuador during May of 2010. Our group of forty volunteers gathered at the international airport in Quito. Several of us were meeting for the first time. Some of us were traveling abroad for the first time, and one of us had just flown on an airplane for the first time. As we greeted each other with smiles and handshakes, it was clear that our group represented a fine selection from the University of Kentucky and the surrounding community. It takes a special kind of person to donate their time and their money to a selfless cause – serving the underserved. Doctors, dentists, pharmacists, nurses, physical therapists, students, and others joined to form multidisciplinary treatment teams. We offered free clinics at various sites in Ecuador including areas around Cotacachi and Santo Domingo. We served rural areas and even some traditional villages such as the Tsáchila communities. The intercultural education and the gratitude of the local people continually refreshed and renewed our spirit and our purpose. We shared their cuisine, their customs, their culture, and their country. We experienced a glimpse of their diverse flora and fauna across scenic lakes, forests, mountains, and volcanoes. Our volunteers embraced both the people and the places with open minds and open hearts. Though our eye-opening adventure eventually came to an end, Shoulder to Shoulder Global extends on to provide continuity of care in permanent Ecuadorian clinics in addition to these biannual volunteering programs.

A Message from STSG-SA (Student Association)

The Shoulder-to-Shoulder Global Student Organization is anticipating a successful year for increasing community involvement on both the local and international levels. The organization will have a student involvement fair booth this year during K week and is looking forward to increased student involvement to begin planning service projects. Additionally, the program is undergoing structural changes, as the organization will consist of a network of liaisons from various student organizations and academic departments at the University of Kentucky to connect the student body.

If you are a UK student (undergraduate, graduate or professional) and would like to get involved or want more information please contact Mary Collins by e-mail at mco226@uky.edu or by phone at (502) 457-9459.
Tonki: The Trilingual Book Project

Dr. Claudia Hopenhayn

A trilingual children’s book project was undertaken in the Tsa’chila community of El Poste, as a collaboration of UK College of Education and STSG (Drs. Katherine McCormick and Claudia Hopenhayn, and Mariela Rich) and two programs in Ecuador, ‘Así Dicen Mis Abuelos’ (led by Mayfe Ortega) and ‘Oralidad y Modernidad’ (led by Dr. Marleen Haboud). Although the book itself is a great product, the process by which it was developed is even more amazing. We visited El Poste and met with one of the community’s leaders, José Aguavil, in May, 2009, and he shared his concerns that the Tsa’chila culture is in danger of disappearing, and particularly that the younger generation will eventually lose their native Tsa’fiki language and traditions. Given Dr. Haboud’s previous work and a new federally-funded project by Ms. Ortega, the idea of a bilingual (Tsa’fiki and Spanish) children’s book based on a traditional Tsa’chila story arose. Then it was suggested that since the UK groups speak English, it would be useful to have the book in all three languages.

During our next brigade, in August 2009, a recorded workshop was conducted in El Poste in collaboration with our partners in Ecuador. During this half day event Jaime Aguavil, one of the village elders, told a large group of children from his community a traditional story in his native Tsa’fiki. The children were then given materials to illustrate the different parts of the story. Everyone involved (kids, family members, Peace Corps volunteers, UK and Ecuadorian project partners) had great fun during the workshop. Eventually, the recording was transcribed into written Tsa’fiki and translated to Spanish and English. Ms. Ortega used all the drawings and other art products of the children to create the Tonki story book, which was published recently in Ecuador, with the support of the James W & Diane V. Stuckert Endowment for Service-Learning.

Currently Dr. McCormick and students in the College of Education are working on an instructional manual and materials for the El Poste teachers to be able to use the Tonki book as a didactic tool.

Special Thanks

Central Baptist Pharmacy and Paul Lucas made a very generous donation of medications to the Shoulder to Shoulder Global Medical Brigade in May. Donation of over 20 medications allowed our team to treat over 800 patients with infections, hypertension, diabetes, skin disorders, chronic pain and other medical conditions. Thank you Paul and CBH Pharmacy for caring for families and children in Ecuador.

— Dr. Tom Young

Shoulder to Shoulder would like to thank The International Federation of Medical Students’ Associations (IFMSA). The IFMSA Art auction for STSG, raised a record $4,630 – look for the auction next year and help continue its success!

Muchas gracias a todos en el CMHH por brindar tanto apoyo y organizacion para la brigada de Mayo. Sin ustedes no podria haber sido exitosa.

— Dr. Claudia Hopenhayn

Donors

We would also like to say thank you to all our donors… Shoulder to Shoulder Global could not function with out your dedication and support.

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Shoulder to Shoulder is a non-profit organization operating under the University of Kentucky and all donations are tax-deductible.

A very real and sincere thank you for your support!

For more information about how you can support STSG, please contact Dr. Tom Young (tyoung@uky.edu) or Dr. Claudia Hopenhayn (cmhope0@uky.edu).