



grassroots

Your Curamericas Newsletter | Fall 2012

Curamericas Global Expands Community-Based Work in Guatemala

Over the past year, Curamericas has experienced significant growth in Guatemala. We are serving more communities than ever, thanks to generous contributions and grants from our donors.

One of the most notable developments is the implementation of our new USAID-funded Guatemala Child Survival Project which began in October 2011. The Child Survival Project is permitting the expansion of community health services that are being delivered by the Guatemalan government. **Now Curamericas is expanding to reach 185 additional communities in north-west Guatemala.**

The four-year project is being implemented in partnership between Curamericas Global and local partner Curamericas-Guatemala and will improve health and nutrition and ultimately reduce mortality among children under the age of five. With a final goal of reaching a population of 90,000, the project provides a focus on addressing the leading causes of child mortality through maternal and neonatal care, nutrition, prevention and treatment of diarrheal disease and pneumonia, and immunization. These needs are critical as our baseline assessments revealed that 76% of children are chronically malnourished, which can result in stunting, and 14% are acutely malnour-

ished, which can result in rapid weight loss or inability to properly gain weight.

Curamericas is using a "Community-Based Impact-Oriented Child Survival" approach. Through partnership with the local community, Curamericas creates an environment that supports the advancement of maternal and child health by creating links between rural community members, health facilities, government entities, and non-governmental organizations.

Activities such as the development of community health committees promote local participation and commitment and enhance the long-term goal of sustainable health programs. Promoting participation of women and improving their visibility is also essential for effective, inclusive, and sustainable health improvement and community development.

Currently ending the project's first year, Curamericas has already mapped and mobilized 88 communities. A health team visits each community once per month, taking a preventive approach to health care by checking in with each person to monitor their health and provide needed services. The first year is also an important time as we train local teams and Ministry of Health personnel so they both provide quality services and know how to track and improve our systems. Establishing a firm understanding of the communities we work in and the health system we are supporting will ensure the future success and sustainability of health improvements in Guatemala.

"I think that every day we continue to learn from each other and that the work of Curamericas Global is that of a team; we all help with what we know how to do and together we



Working closely with the community allows women to feel comfortable speaking with our staff about their family's health.



Local men and women are trained to provide basic health services that make a big impact.

do good work. Again, my gratitude goes out to everyone helping make this possible." Dr. Mario Valdez, Guatemala Project Director

For more information on our Guatemala Projects, contact Erin Pfeiffer, Program Manager, toll-free at (877) 510-4787 or at erin@curamericas.org.

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Curamericas Global Welcomes New Leadership



**New Executive Director
Francesca Florey, MA.**

As the new Executive Director of Curamericas Global, Francesca Florey is no stranger to global health. Born in Cochabamba, Bolivia, Francesca lived in a number of Latin American countries before completing her graduate degree in social demography at the University of Washington.

Her professional career in global health began at the Research Triangle Institute in the mid 1980's, promoting more effective and targeted health policies in Latin America. Over the next 26 years Francesca worked in numerous global health organizations in the Triangle area of North Carolina, supporting country programs across Latin America, Asia and Africa.

While she is an experienced program manager, her expertise has ranged from community-level interventions to strengthening health systems at the regional and national levels worldwide. Most recently, Francesca directed the Office of Global Health at the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health.

Francesca hopes to combine her experience and understanding of global health priorities and needs with the passion and vision of the Curamericas Board and staff, "I firmly believe that the best way to create lasting change in the lives of men, women and children rests in empowering communities to take charge of their health and well-being. I am thrilled to be leading an organization that has promoted this vision among the most underserved communities around the world for nearly 30 years."

To contact Francesca and learn more about the work of Curamericas contact us toll-free at (877) 510-4787 or at info@curamericas.org.



**Brenda Booth, APRN-C, with her
husband, Dr. Frederick Booth.**

Brenda Booth has dedicated her career to improvements in health care delivery in her local community as a nurse practitioner with Highland Family Practice in Fayetteville, North Carolina. Brenda now extends her leadership and commitment to improving community health as the new Board Chair for Curamericas Global. Brenda's first experience with Curamericas, originally known as Andean Rural Health Care, was through a visit to a former project site in Montero, Bolivia in 1996. This experience in the field sparked her enthusiasm and passion for global health as she witnessed the impact that Curamericas was making in impoverished communities.

In subsequent years, Brenda traveled to Montero several times and became more interested in the unique approach to global health which Curamericas utilizes in partnerships with local communities. In 2010, Brenda and husband Rick joined a group traveling to visit the Curamericas Nehnwaa Child Survival Project in Nimba County, Liberia. Brenda's experience in Africa deepened her commitment to working with the community as a means to health improvement and she joined the Curamericas Board of Directors later that year.

Brenda and Rick have four sons and seven grandchildren with whom they enjoy spending as much time as possible. They love to travel and have visited many countries, both as volunteers and for personal enjoyment. In addition to her work as a nurse practitioner, she is involved in many church and community activities. Brenda is on the Missions Committee of Haymount Methodist Church, which has lent support to various Curamericas projects. She is also on the board of The CARE Clinic, a free health clinic in Fayetteville.

"I am delighted to serve as a Board member and honored to be selected as Board Chair. The Curamericas Board of Directors continues to support our mission to improve community health through local partnerships. Having served more than 350,000 people in almost 30 years, we seek to continue the high quality of support in the communities where we work and to expand our reach globally." Board Chair, Brenda Booth

Curamericas Global Board of Directors

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Responding to the Community in Liberia



Two women and their children attend a health education session in their community.

The Curamericas Nehnwaa Child Survival Project has just entered the fifth year of service in Liberia, West Africa. Working in 105 communities, we have worked with our local partner to reduce child and maternal mortality through education and services focused on obstetric and neonatal care, immunizations, HIV, and prevention and treatment of diarrhea, pneumonia and malaria.

In partnership with Liberian communities, Curamericas has also helped to build and rehabilitate wells, latrines, hand washing stations, dish racks and garbage pits as part of our clean water, hygiene and sanitation health focus.

As Curamericas' activities expanded in Liberia, we discovered that family planning was an important aspect of health care that was in great demand relative to the scarcity of information and services in the communities we served. Family planning empowers men and women to determine both the number of children they want to have and the spacing of the pregnancies. Moreover, spacing and planning pregnancies contributes to a reduction in risk associated with pregnancy and childbirth that could otherwise lead to maternal or child mortality.

Through funding from World Learning and USAID, Curamericas was able to implement a fifteen-month community-based family planning project that concluded in July of 2012. This project complemented the Curamericas Nehnwaa Child Survival Project as family planning team members simply joined community health teams that already traveled from one community to the next to provide education and services.

The project focused on health education on family planning, individual and couple family planning counseling, and commodity distribution. All Nehnwaa staff were trained in effective communications skills and best cultural approaches to family planning to ensure quality family planning services in project communities.

When the project started, only 10% of women in our communities knew of at least three different types of family planning methods. After one year, 98% of all women had learned of at least three methods, more than tripling the project goal. We found similar results among women who received counseling on birth spacing. This indicator increased from 19% to 89%. More remarkably, after one year 97% of women openly discussed family planning with one of our trained health workers, relative to only 25% at the start of the project.

“The project was extremely successful, surpassing all of our goals. I attribute this success to our hardworking interns who ensured a successful start to the project, to our passionate family planning supervisor, Kormassah Mulbah, and to our strong relationship with the United Nations Population Fund, World Learning and USAID.”

Leah McManus, Program Associate

In High Demand: HIV Health Promotion in Haiti



Haiti Country Director Dr. Rose Francois speaks at a popular Haitian radio program about our work.

Meeting Community Needs

Curamericas' visibility is increasing in the community as a trustworthy provider of information. The project has created such a high demand for HIV counseling and testing that the health facilities were having trouble keeping stock of HIV test kits. This problem was quickly recognized and immediate steps were taken by Curamericas to mitigate stock out. Working closely with the Ministry of Health, we are working to keep tests in stock to meet demand. One young woman was tested for the first time by our staff and said that she is happy to know her HIV status and she is thankful Curamericas provided advice and referral services at the community level.

For more information on our Haiti Project, contact Bakary Sidibe, Senior Program Manager, toll-free at (877) 510-4787 or at bakary@curamericas.org.

Dr. Rose Francois, Haiti Country Director, oversees health promotion and HIV testing services at each of three facilities in southwest Haiti. Under her leadership, Curamericas Global staff provide health promotion and education at the community level where they encourage men and women to visit one of the three facilities in their area to get tested for HIV. Curamericas is connecting these communities with local facilities, an important link missing in reducing HIV incidence and awareness in Haiti. Staff members called Peer Educators are specially trained to work at the community level to educate individuals about HIV and how and where they can get tested and get treatment, if needed.

Protecting Two Lives At Once

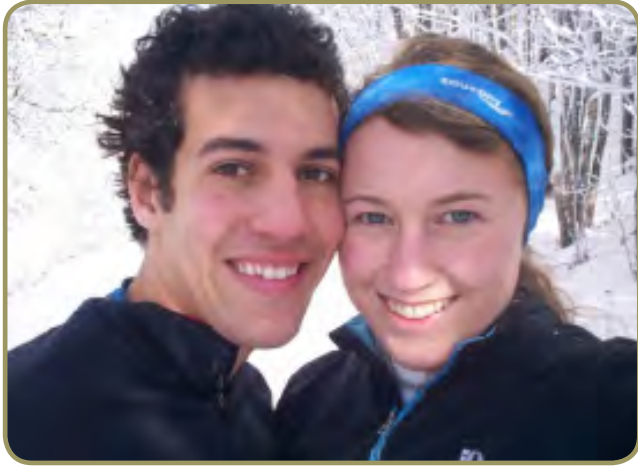
An important focus for Curamericas is preventing the transfer of the disease from an HIV positive mother to her child. Pregnant women who test positive receive education and treatment that will improve their health as well as prevent the disease from being passed on to their babies. Curamericas staff follow up with each woman to ensure that she is seeking continued care. Educating and testing women of reproductive age, even if HIV negative, enables women to make informed decisions about their future reproductive choices.

During a recent mobile clinic, Peer Educators and health facility staff walked on foot for two hours to reach a community where a pregnant woman tested positive for HIV. This young mother would not have been identified as being HIV positive and would not have been able to prevent transfer to the child, nor would she have sought treatment for herself. This result demonstrates the success of outreach to rural areas where people still need ways to access health care.



Curamericas is working out of four main cities in southwest Haiti where HIV prevalence is high.

Spotlight on Eduardo and Julia Brasileiro



After a summer internship with Curamericas in 2010, Julia led a team of undergraduate students to Guatemala the following January. Julia and Eduardo grew close while earning their undergraduate degrees and when the happy couple married in December 2011, they asked wedding guests to donate to Curamericas. They have since become regular donors to our Annual Fund.

I heard about Curamericas from the career department while studying in the School of Public Health at UNC. A couple of things really stood out to me about Curamericas: the vision of providing hope to the world through health, the grassroots approach by working and partnering with existing in-county organizations, and the focus on maternal and child health.

Serving Curamericas in Guatemala

Eduardo and Julia

the pressing health needs and how Curamericas is addressing those needs with each local partner. I feel that the most significant difference I made was demonstrating to the people there that I truly do care about these communities that have largely been neglected and underserved for years.

I learned so much from my experience in Guatemala; the country, the people,

Celebrating Generously

Marriage is an amazing relationship that is about being selfless and choosing to love and serve someone else. We thought that having people donate to Curamericas, an organization that is serving people all over the world, was a much better way to celebrate such a beautiful event.

Reaching Underserved Communities at Home

After getting married near my home in North Carolina, we moved to Milwaukee, Wisconsin and I spent the year as a HealthCorps member (a program under the umbrella of AmeriCorps), serving at Sixteenth Street Community Health Center. The community health center is located in a predominantly Hispanic neighborhood and the majority of patients are uninsured, best served in a language other than English, and have incomes below the federal poverty line. I served specifically in the Women's Health Department and assisted with coordinating Centering Pregnancy, a group prenatal care program.

Why Do You Think Curamericas is Different from Other Organizations?

All of the staff members at Curamericas were truly committed to the cause and vision of the organization. They all passionately work hard to help communities learn and receive care they need to result in positive outcomes and sustainable improvements.

Contributed by Julia Brasileiro

You Can Make A Difference

Most of our funding goes directly to our programs so we depend on private donors to help keep our small organization operating. Private donors like you have kept Curamericas running and making measurable strides in reducing child and maternal mortality for almost 30 years.

DONATE. Simply use the enclosed pre-addressed envelope to mail your check made payable to Curamericas Global or fill in your credit card information, if you prefer. Credit card donations can also be made at our website, www.curamericas.org/donatenow.

To make a gift of stock or to remember Curamericas Global in your will, please contact Stephanie McMillan at (877) 510-4787 or at stephanie@curamericas.org.



Guatemala Country Director Dr. Mario Valdez meets newborn Silas, son of Curamericas Program Manager Erin Pfeiffer.



Curamericas Global
HOPE THROUGH HEALTH

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Curamericas Global partners with underserved communities to make measurable and sustainable improvements in their health and well-being.

Your gifts help to fund our efforts to make a lasting impact around the world. Thank you for your support!



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Join the Hall Family and Become a Monthly Donor!

Monthly donations give Curamericas a steady source of income that allows us to sustain our global health programs.

Charles and Jill Hall of Lincoln University, Pennsylvania, have been committed Curamericas donors since 1998. That's when Jill's sister, Cynthia, visited our project in Bolivia and learned about our community health work while receiving her PhD at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

The Halls have two daughters and the whole family is involved in the local community. They volunteer with Project R.A.K.E., a group that works on home repairs including projects like building handicap ramps. Charles is the Facility Manager for the Community Service Building that houses multiple nonprofit organizations in Wilmington, Delaware, and Jill works as an Environmental Planner for the state of Delaware.

Jill particularly likes that Curamericas works closely with local people to carry out our work. This impressed them and it is part of the reason they have supported us for many years.



Immunization Officer, Oliver, administers immunizations on a regular monthly visit.

Remember that donating monthly is meant to be easier on your pocketbook in addition to providing a stable funding base for our work. Join Charles and Jill and become a monthly donor today!

To set up an automatic online donation go to curamericas.org/donatenow or mail a check to:

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