

Medical Practicum Report

Mululkukú, Nicaragua, January 1998

With your continued support, we again had a successful trip, the 16th Medical Practicum since the program began in 1981. It was exciting to see former MC students, now finishing medical school, in action: diagnosing and treating patients, performing minor surgeries, and planning to incorporate service projects into their future practices. All of our baggage arrived on the flight with us and passed through customs without much difficulty. I estimate that we took about \$35,000 worth of medicines and supplies (retail value).

We saw 2474 patients in 11 ½ days in both medical and dental areas. Dr. Richard Myers of Boulder, Colorado took his entire dental office staff of five. They had an impressive set up which involved cleaning, scaling, and fluoride treatments in addition to the extraction of teeth decayed from chewing on sugar cane, which is about the only 'candy' available, but the consequences are depressing. A beautiful young girl smiles and exposes badly decayed teeth. The village is in the planning stages to include fluoridation so the next generation of children can be better protected from cavities.

The children's nutrition program, which is funded by the Global Women's Project and Art for Hunger, continues to exert a positive effect on the families involved. The children receive one meal a day at the project and their mothers are required to participate to learn improved food preparation. The local diet is supplemented by enriching the beans, rice and tortillas with soy protein and green leaf extracts of indigenous plants that are rich in vitamins and minerals.

We learned that the micro loan program is working well so that women can obtain small interest free loans to begin income producing projects. One woman travels to Managua to purchase remnants from garment factories and constructs clothes to sell in the village.

Although we receive most of our medicine from IMA and MAP International, we always need to purchase items to complete the minimal list suggested by the physicians. Your support enables us to take a remarkably well-rounded basic supply of medicine each year.

Thank you,

Ed Miller