

Medical Practicum Report

Mulukukú, Nicaragua January 1999

During the 17th annual Medical Practicum in Central America, the medical team delivered health services to almost 1800 persons from Mulukukú, Nicaragua, and the surrounding areas. We are extremely grateful to those who contributed to the success of this program.

Most of the medicines and supplies were provided by: Interchurch Medical Assistance, MAP International, Bayer Corporation, Hoffman-La Roche, World Dental Relief, Oral Health Products, and Liberty Drugs. Sanofi Pharmaceutical donated Aralen (anti-malarial tablets) for the entire team. Many groups and individuals provided financial support for the purchase of necessary medicines that were not included in the donations.

Our team consisted of three physicians, a physician's assistant, a nurse, two dentists, translators, Manchester College students, and family members. During eleven days of clinics, our team provided patient care to: Medical Patients 1469; Dental Patients 306; Grand Total = 1775

A MINSA (Nicaraguan Ministry of Health) staff member worked with us and administered 792 doses of vaccines to children and 688 doses to adults. All medicines not used during our two weeks of clinics remain at the health center for use during the coming months and for a medical delegation which is arriving in June, 1999.

Because the local organizers made an effort to "bus in" patients from outlying communities this year, some of whom walked many hours to the bus pick-up site, and then rode an hour or two, we saw many patients who had not had recent medical care. These families suffered from scabies, malnutrition, malaria, many types of skin infections, and other evidences of health neglect. As always, there were many more persons seeking health care than it was possible for us to provide.

We continue to believe that the Medical Practicum serves as a valuable educational program for Manchester College students. For many, it is their first exposure to life in a lesser developed country and to realize that this is the life style for a majority of the world's people. At the same time we are able to provide health services to a needy rural population. We are privileged to work with our Nicaraguan friends who are committed to improving life in Mulukukú and its vicinity. The remarkable positive changes that have occurred in Mulukukú during the seven years since we first worked there are a tribute to what can happen when caring persons of different cultures work in a mutual exchange of hard work, friendship and trust.

Edward Miller, Director, Manchester College Medical Practicum, February, 1999,

P.S. While we were relaxing on the veranda at Noel and Gretel's house, I remembered that they had been awarded the Carlos Fonseca Medal on July 19, 1998, at the central plaza in Managua and I asked to see it. This is the highest honor bestowed by the FSLN party and this year was the first time it had ever been awarded to more than one person. It was bestowed for their service to the party and their community. They almost missed the ceremony because they encountered a single vehicle accident along the road and stopped to help the victims. It reminded me of the "good Samaritan" parable.