

# SEW HOPE

STRENGTHENING AND EMPOWERING WITH  
HEALTH, OPPORTUNITY, AND EDUCATION.

***2009 Annual Report***



Dear friends,

“In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps” (Proverbs 16:9). As I prepare this letter for our annual report, this verse speaks loudly to me! This past year has once again taught us that the greatest fruits of our efforts are often unforeseen and far greater than we could have imagined. God has continually opened doors to enable our work and showed us that by serving alongside each other here and in Guatemala, we alleviate the suffering we all experience.



I recall one afternoon when we were holding a gynecology clinic and were faced with the usual long, chaotic line of patients. A very persistent woman arrived with her young son and pleaded with us to do something for him. He had been diagnosed with a brain tumor that was blinding him and the local medical care could not offer anything. I explained that our team was not prepared to handle brain tumors, but the mother was persistent as any mother would be. So with no obvious answers, we prayed together and asked God to help us. I really did not see any option for her son, but God had a different plan! After returning to Toledo, we contacted a local neurosurgeon who generously agreed to take on the young man's case. Then through the efforts of many here and in Guatemala, the young man was granted a visa, came to Toledo, and had his tumor removed successfully. During his three month stay here, he was embraced by the medical and local community, but he also provided us with a rich demonstration of what it means to have faith in God. The number of people here and in Guatemala touched by this young man was huge. His family no longer lives with the daily fear that he will go blind and die. And the many people who helped in this effort have experienced the true peace and joy of serving the Lord by serving others. You never know what can happen in a gynecology clinic!

I also think of Thanksgiving Day this year. We had just launched our new Toledo chapter of “Kids Against Hunger” a few weeks before. A good friend, Dr. Coral Matus, called me to ask if she could have people come to her house on Thanksgiving to raise funds and pack food for starving children in Guatemala. She wanted her family and others to be able to really share their gifts on such a significant day. So about 75 smiling, energetic, enthusiastic people of all ages came together, packed several thousand meals, and truly understood their blessings and the joy that comes in service. That and other packing events enabled us to send 110,000 meals to Guatemala recently.



I remember the morning last August when our bus pulled into one of the villages we work in. After months of encouraging the community to put in gardens to improve their nutrition, it was at the school where the idea took hold. The people had always believed their soil would not grow crops and that they didn't have the ability to grow a garden. But that morning when we pulled up, the school teachers and children were hard at work fencing off the garden area, turning the soil, and preparing it for planting. Children from all the grades, the teachers, members of the community, and our team worked together under a hot sun and got the garden ready for planting. The children planted radishes, carrots, tomatoes, cilantro, peppers, and other vegetables. Each grade was responsible for a garden row. When Randy Ruch went back in February, seven families had started gardens and others were planning to do so. Working with the people with God in the midst brings change.

Below is a summary of our 2009 accomplishments, but I know in my heart that our greatest accomplishments may not be on the list. Perhaps the medical students on our trips will be inspired to follow career paths that will enable them to correct injustices and inequalities in our world. Perhaps one of the people we serve or who serve with us no longer feels unloved, unworthy, or lonely. Perhaps the children in the villages we serve now have hope that they will have a real education and can fulfill their dreams. Perhaps one mom will not die of cervical cancer and will be able to raise her family. All we can do is to continue following God's call to care for those in need. We thank each of you for your generous support that enables this work. Mother Teresa reminds us, “Let us more and more insist on raising funds of love, of kindness, of understanding, of peace. Money will come if we seek first the Kingdom of God – the rest will be given.”

God bless you,  
*Anne Ruch*

## About Shannon

SewHope also signifies the HOPE of Shannon E. Wilson, a young physician who had an abounding compassion for the people of Guatemala and who participated in several medical mission trips to Guatemala. Her goal was to become a full-time medical missionary following the completion of her training in Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of Texas. Before her dream could become fulfilled, Shannon died at the young age of 26. However, her enthusiasm and love for the Guatemalan people and her desire to serve them inspired the creation of SewHope and has remained an inspiration to our members.



## About Papi

In 2009, SewHope also lost one its greatest inspirations and supporters, "Papi" Carl Sass. Papi was a retired Maumee school teacher who developed a passion for all things Guatemalan. His love for the Guatemalan people, especially the children, and their love for him were legendary amongst the communities he visited. He was a frequent traveler to Guatemala and was ceaseless in his support for the people and our efforts there. Although he knew little Spanish, his broad, warm smile and twinkling eyes were all the communication the children needed before they jumped and danced and raced into his arms.



*We know that Shannon and Papi are with God  
and sharing their stories of Guatemala!*

*"Guatemala was where I found my purpose. It was overwhelming. So many kids. So little equipment. Knowledge, even less. Spanish - none. All I had was my arms, my smile, my lollipops. Young mothers and swollen bellies. Abused and bruised bodies. My whispered prayers of hope that eventually, one day, I would be able to do something besides hand out cough syrup and antibiotics. In Guatemala I learned about patience. I can't save the world. I can't even save this person. I don't have to - they only want a hug. They need HOPE. They need someone, somewhere to say, YES, you are worth my time, my expertise, my training, my God. Even though you have no money, you can have HIM and you can have me. CHRIST'S HANDS AND FEET. Finally, a meaning connected to those words. LET ME BE YOUR HANDS AND FEET! USE ME!"*

*- Shannon E. Wilson*

# SEW HOPE

- **SewHope** is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization based in Toledo, Ohio
- **SewHope** promotes spiritual growth, health, opportunity, and education for the underserved and largely indigenous people of the Petén, Guatemala
- **SewHope** was founded in 2007 by Christians who were involved in short-term mission trips to Guatemala after they realized that long-term solutions were needed to address the many needs resulting from extreme poverty
- The mission of **SewHope** is to enhance spiritual growth, health, opportunity and education in underserved communities of the Petén, Guatemala

## Goals

1. Eliminate parasitic diseases through installation of composting latrines, biannual de-worming, and education in personal sanitation and hygiene
2. Reduce childhood death from infectious disease through adequate immunization, promotion of breastfeeding, and appropriate use of antibiotics
3. Reduce incidence of malaria and dengue fever through provision of bed nets and other preventive measures
4. Reduce respiratory and eye disease and accidents by eliminating open fires in homes through use of appropriate stoves
5. Reduce childhood death and disability from injuries through education, first aid training, and provision of medical supplies
6. Reduce childhood morbidity and mortality from diarrhea and dehydration through promotion of breastfeeding and use of oral rehydration solutions
7. Reduce morbidity and mortality from malnutrition by providing emergency food

supplements and increasing self-sufficient food resources such as gardens

8. Improve dental health through fluoride and sealant treatments and dental hygiene
9. Reduce neonatal morbidity and mortality through education in neonatal resuscitation, provision of prenatal care, education of Guatemalan midwives in obstetric care, and improved maternal nutrition
10. Reduce death from cervical cancer through expanded cervical cancer screening, treatment of cervical neoplasia, and education about HPV and other sexually transmitted diseases
11. Reduce other types of gynecologic and obstetric morbidity/mortality by provision of appropriate medical care and training of Guatemalan health care providers
12. Reduce unwanted pregnancy by identifying obstacles to family planning, providing, contraceptive counseling, and empowering women through jobs and education
13. Support Guatemalan clergy in their efforts to meet the spiritual needs of their churches; reach out to others by being examples of Christ's love
14. Improve access to and quality of primary and secondary schools by supporting the teachers through in-service education, provision of books and school supplies, and improvements in classroom facilities
15. Enable economic development and independence by offering microcredit to community members and assistance with business endeavors

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- Randall Ruch, PhD, MPH
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## SewHope 2009 Accomplishments

### Administrative:

- Extensive development of short and long term strategic planning goals
- Hired Ismael Martines, a Guatemalan, to help us achieve these goals
- Founding of Toledo chapter of "Kids Against Hunger"
- Ten medical students participated on 2009 trips
- Further development of relationship with the University of Toledo; upper level students now receive medical school credit for trips
- Weekly medical Spanish classes started by Deena Ellis
- Establishment of a storage facility in Guatemala
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual LEAP event
- 1<sup>st</sup> Miles for Missions 5K race



### Health

- Five medical mission trips where over 1,000 adult and child patients were treated
- Cervical cancer screening program continues to develop and includes Pap tests, colposcopy, and cryotherapy or LEEP for treatment. Five hundred women received screening and twenty-five had significant cervical dysplasia and were treated appropriately.
- Prenatal evaluation of over 100 women including OB ultrasound, blood pressure monitoring, urine sampling, provision of prenatal vitamins and help in planning their deliveries
- Building close relationship with local clinic to advance all of the health goals in our strategic plan including vaccine administration, supplying necessary medications and education of staff
- Currently working with local community health officials to plan Women's Health Week in March, 2010 where we will be providing education for women on many women's health issues
- Developed a relationship with health officials at Hospital Sayaxche and planning a surgical trip in April, 2010
- Initiated bi-annual dental fluoride treatment for children in villages. Over 2,000 treatments given.
- Continued bi-annual distribution of de-worming medications for all villagers



### Nutrition

- Started a Kids Against Hunger chapter in Toledo after receiving a grant from Zion Lutheran Church in Waterville.
- Many families, schools, clubs, churches, and other groups have raised funds, and helped pack KAH food for starving families in Guatemala. Recently, 110,000 meals were shipped to Guatemala.
- Fruit and vegetable gardens have been started at the school and by families in Pueblo Nuevo
- We have begun working with the communities to improve farming practices and identify drought-resistant, nutritious crops.
- Through the efforts of Beatrice Thaman and her organization, Give to Grow, over 300,000 vitamins were obtained and shipped to Guatemala.



### Water and Sanitation

- Ten composting latrines were completed and 22 additional ones are being built in Pueblo Nuevo. The composted waste from the latrines will be used as fertilizer in family gardens and fields.
- Funds provided for well pump during period of acute drought.



## Education

- Provided training and in-service support for school teachers to improve their skills and curriculum
- Collected and distributed over 400 Spanish children's books to school children
- Provided school supplies and equipment to school
- Providing daily meal and vitamin to school children
- Helped provide a festival day for the Pueblo Nuevo school children
- With community involvement, developed a plan to improve the physical facilities of the Pueblo Nuevo school and will implement the plan in 2010



## Spirituality

- Distributed 500 Spanish bibles to community members
- Worked with local pastors to identify their needs and build rapport amongst denominations
- Prayed and ministered to patients, families, and medical staff at clinics and in villages



## Eduardo Salas

- Eduardo Salas was brought to the U.S. to have a brain tumor removed by Dr. Ahmad Zakeri with the help of Promedica Health Systems and Healing the Children.
- Eduardo was lovingly cared for during his stay by the family of Rev. Paul and Carol Doerfler.



## 2009 Total Revenue – \$62,789

- Revenue for Projects – \$42,793
- Personal Contributions – \$32,793
- Grants – \$10,000
- Revenue for mission trips – \$19,996

## 2009 Gifts in Kind - \$16,900

## 2009 Total Expenses – \$64,476

- Mission trips – \$19,910
- Administrative (website, postage, bank and credit card fees, fundraising, printing, and shipping) – \$5,567
- Student travel scholarships – \$600
- Project expenses – \$38,399
  - Medical Projects – \$19,400
  - Education – \$3,247
  - Sanitation (water, latrines) – \$2,828
  - Spiritual – \$900
  - Nutrition – \$12,024

## Available Funds – \$49,963

- SewHope – \$41,146
- Shannon Wilson Foundation – \$8,817



*SewHope is a 501(c)(3) organization. Contributions are fully tax deductible.*

## **SewHopeSupporters (since inception)**

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Prudential Spirit of Community Award

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*"This service you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people, but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. And in their prayers for you, their hearts will go out to you because of the surpassing grace God has given you."*

*2 Corinthians: 9:12-16*

*To all of our supporters... Thank you and God bless you!*

**SEW HOPE**

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

