

Trip report
Aug 19-25, 2013
Anne
Jody Harland (Spanish teacher)
Jonathan Zee (architect)

Accommodations:

Stayed with Orfe and Ismael. Jonathan (architect) also there with one day overlap. Great accommodations (easy to get to clinic, comfortable, great food, great company) but clearly made more work for Orfe - I paid them \$20 per day each for me and Jonathan and think we should always do that. She seemed grateful.

Their house is fantastic - designed for great airflow, the gardens are amazing, the fish farm is in place. Ismael is planning on putting in a more permanent, larger cement lined fish farm soon. 70 chickens!

Jody stayed in room that Peter used to be in; next to Sr. Pam. It's in Santa Ana - I found it pretty depressing. There's a loud bar across the street; a bunch of older men living there. Sr. Pam gave me a "tour" of her room which is on the 2nd floor. Electricity goes in and out. The rooms flood at times. There are only 2 "pilas" outside (and down the stairs) for about 10 accommodations. Sr. Pam uses a bed net. Bed mattresses are awful. Sr. Pam has 4 pillows on her mattress for her to lay on so that she doesn't get back pain. She's got a little fridge and a small stove. Her eating and cooking utensils are on little plastic wire holders that are suspended by strings!! Not only is there no air conditioning but the air flow is awful; humidity is terrible. Honestly, I can't see how Jody (or anyone) could agree to living there. Sr. Pam doesn't seem bothered by it at all. She's trying to get to know the "neighbors" better; plans to start teaching the little children in the building.

I asked Ismael if there were any other possible accommodations; possibly a house could be rented. We need to get our little "hostal " built!

Vehicles - Red truck that Sr. Pam drives - new tires - seems reliable - lots of mileage - no power steering.

Van - had it repaired. Has 375,000 kilometers. Good if we could keep it a while since we can transport a lot on it so probably better not to use it much now.

Clearly need new vehicle. We looked at used cars/trucks. For price and reality that we wouldn't know anything about a used vehicle. a new one seems to make more sense. We narrowed it down to 2 Nissan trucks with extended cabs. One was Q164,900 (Frontier) and the other Q202,000 (Navara). The more expensive (Navara is the equivalent of a Frontier in the U.S.) was a new 2013 and was dramatically better in terms of comfort, air bags, power windows/locks, much better suspension, slightly bigger, horsepower 176 vs 136 for the Frontier. For 37,000Q more, it seemed like a better deal. Since it was a 2013, it was reduced in price from Q269,000. Looking at Consumer Reports, it is rated highly and actually costs more in the U.S.

If we had our nonprofit status, we could save 12%! Yikes! Could we consider having Rudy buy it with his NGS status and then we buy it from him once we have ours?

Education:

The students were having exams this week which somewhat limited Jody's ability to interact with the schools but she did a couple of the "SOLES" sessions. She was very well liked. Her Spanish is completely fluent. The Parvulos teachers actually invited her to stay in their homes if she decides to come for a year.

During the week, the Parvulos teachers talked to Ismael and said they no longer wanted to have the computer program. At first, they would not say why but he finally got them to agree to a meeting where they had a long series of complaints about Sr. Pam ranging from her showing favoritism to some of the kids (especially MariCruz's daughters), to being too strict, to her giving little gifts to some children and not others; honestly, a lot of very minor issues. They made him promise not to tell me which of course was absurd if we are going to move forward. So, I got him to convince them to meet with me which they did. They gave me the same list of complaints; mostly they felt that she doesn't really like to work with small children. I completely defended her to them and told them that I have heard her say nothing but incredibly positive things about them and that she would be completely surprised by this information. We agreed that she would not teach the Parvulos children.

Then I spoke at length with Sr. Pam. She agreed that she really doesn't like to teach the younger children but she was confused because she really doesn't teach them at all. She only teaches the tel-secundario and the children in the Primary school (English and math). She couldn't understand where the negativity had come from.

Sr. Pam doesn't feel that the SOLES program is good without the internet. She has continued meeting with that group 2-3 times a week and she talks about all the benefits to the program. She feels the children have learned a lot and it is overall positive. I got the sense that she's just not comfortable with it herself.

On the last evening, we had a 2 hour meeting with Sr. Pam, JOdy, Ismael and ORfe regarding several issues one of which was education. For now, the plan is that Sr. Pam, Orfe and Ismael will meet with the Primary school teachers to make sure that we are doing what they want and to get a sense of how the computers program is going. We all agreed that just giving the computers is useless and that we will continue to have a presence there if they want the computers.

Orfe's program is going very well. She has expanded it now to several different groups of children in Santa Ana and in Mango. She and I spent several hours finding great educational videos about issues concerning public health and the environment. We filmed and downloaded them so they are available without internet.

Everyone in Purusila GREATLY misses Peter and I think this may be some of the hostility about Sr. Pam. I think that in retrospect, Ismael and Orfe are sorry that they were so negative about him. Apparently, he is the one who started the garden beds at the school and although he himself didn't physically do much work, he taught the people that the soil was good if the rocks were removed. They give him all the credit.

The SOLES program that he was doing was going well. The 25 students that were in it are still coming 3 days a week with Sr. Pam.

Birthing Center

Catalina came to the clinic one day with the mom of the baby with the seizures to receive the meds that Coral sent. I asked her about the Birthing Center and she said that they haven't started on the floor yet. She seemed fine with this although Ismael was visibly upset. He has already bought all the tile and they have it. I believe he will be following up on this this week.

Community Center

Jonathan spent a full 3 days there (2 before I arrived). He surveyed the land, made copies of all the documents, interviewed all of us extensively about plans for the Center. We spent several hours refining the document we had previously prepared, He visited the Birthing Center with Ismael and learned a bit from the construction that Ismael did in his own house. He and Ismael drove to Sayaxché to visit the clinic that Anita has. Ultimately, he feels that block is the most reasonable way to go and that actually, solar panels will have limited use in this center. He has many good ideas and will be drafting a proposal soon.

I will be meeting with him in Chicago on Oct 12th and by that time, he hopes to have plans drawn for the general layout (where the 3 buildings will be put, gardens, etc). He has given a lot of consideration to sun, wind, air flow, etc. Also, plans to have the layout for the clinic building at that time.

Once done, Ismael will get an architect in San Benito to sign off on it and a permit for building.

Ismael would like to hire a guard for the evenings once we start construction. We agreed that a security **wall** is necessary and Jonathan will give a recommendation on how much of the land will need to be enclosed.

The property next to the our property is now for sale (same owner). We paid Q115,000. He is now selling the same amount of land for Q160,000. Ismael is concerned that if we don't buy it, someone else will quickly once they know what we are planning and they will put in stores. There are plans to put a road in between the 2 properties. I see a lot of value in buying it. Ismael called the owner while we were there to see if we could consider selling it for Q115,000 but he said no. Our board will need to discuss this.

Clinic

I saw patients for 3 days. Most of the patients that I wanted to follow-up about previous abnormal paps came. I did some cryo's and LEEPs. Also, I saw about 12 prenatal patients (many in follow-up to Coral's last trip).

About half remembered to bring the form that COral gave them.

Both ultrasound machines no longer function.

High priority to get another one!

Isabel's friend, Tita, had mentioned last year that she may have a relatively new one that we could get. I'll contact her about this. If not, prayers please!

The clinic continues to be so disorganized - hard to find things, etc. Can't wait for the new one!!!!

I gave the meds to the child with the seizures and also the depakene to the family of the other child with seizures.

A couple of patients told me about families in their communities who are very poor and also have "especial" children - clearly implying that we should help them also. This is something we should discuss at next med committee meeting.

Electronic Medical Record

Before I left, Jim and I worked on getting the "OPENMRS" system from Partners in Health installed. It was fantastic!!!

There is a special router there now with a network called "Labnet" so that all the computers being used for the patients have access. Orfe can put in all the patient's demographic info, vital signs, reason for visit, etc. I put in all the past history, reason for visit, plan, etc.

It has all kinds of capacity to generate reports, access data, etc. Coral, Gary and I need to spend some time together so we're all up to speed with it.

Only negative is that for now, there is not a way to keep it there and access the info here. Jim and I are working on that.

Also, it doesn't have an easy OB program but I think we can design it fairly easily.

Carmen

Carmen is a 21 year old "auxiliary" nurse (like an LPN) who finished her degree last year and has not been able to find work. Sr. Pam "found" her in Purusila and suggested that she meet us. She worked with me all 3 days and I can't say enough good about her!!! She was phenomenol!!! Learned extremely quickly, very interested and motivated. She's kind of quiet but the patients liked her a lot and she is clearly intelligent and could be a great asset for us. I paid her Q300 for the 3 days and Ismael and I talked with her about possibly working with us. I told her that for now it would be part time (she can do things like the diabetes project and follow up on pap results, etc) and can be available for jornadas. She was delighted. Ultimately, I think she would be great full time once the clinic is up and running.

Ismael does not think that Maricruz is doing much with the health promoter position. We are paying her Q450 per month. She sometimes prepares the KAH food but doesn't do much else. Apparently, she has a reputation for being a "gossip" and so, we probably don't want to expand her role. Ismael is a little hesitant to cut off her salary right now since she could cause a problem. Ultimately, Carmen could do much more in the village from a health care standpoint. She can read and write (her handwriting is very legible!!!) and can do many nursing functions (vital signs, history taking, injections, med administration, etc)

Gardens

Phenomenal!! There are many (?#) in Purusila and Mango. About 10 beds of vegetables at the Parvulos.

35 boys have been working with Ismael on a very large community garden (about 1-2 acres) in Purusila. One boy, Sergio, (age 18) has been outstanding and Ismael would like to get him more involved in our work. I met with him. Sr. Pam highly recommends him. He is one of the sponsored students and took the little bit of money from the sponsorship and actually started his own fish farm! Obvious that Ismael and Orfe have been putting extensive time into this.

Water filters

They are all sold now and more are needed. Randy, can you contact Ismael about this and see how many more we need? Maybe I can bring them in October.

Stoves

Stove program has been a great success. Rudy has been back to make sure that all are installed properly. Kinks in the program seem to have been worked out. Rudy was supposed to come and meet with me but he called because he was sick and couldn't come. Need to follow up with him

People don't have as much interest in the smaller stoves and so Ismael is thinking about a "package" deal where we add the smaller stove in for the men to use in the fields.

Tippy taps

Very desired now! They are to be seen in many places!

Bottom line -

We need mucho dinero to continue at the pace we are going!