

SEWHOPE TRIP REPORT

February 18-23, 2009

(for those with short attention span, see page 4 for summary)

Thursday, February 18th

We decided to try the Detroit to Cancun to Flores route this time. We left from Detroit at 6:10 a.m. on Delta. Good news: no charge for checking 2 bags each. Bad news: flying through Cancun may not be the best idea since they do random searches at customs, and Gladys' bags were chosen to be searched. Since we had surgical supplies with us, they were not going to let them through without some questioning, and eventually we had the choice of them taking the bags, and sending them to Flores at some point (once they were explored further?) or paying a \$20. tax. We tried to explain that we were only going to be at the airport for 2 hours, but they explained that these are supplies that people try to sell in Mexico for a high price, so they had to charge us a tax. We paid the tax. In order to make our connection, we had to take a shuttle to another terminal. A man outside the terminal initially told us that we had to pay \$20. for someone to take us to the other terminal, then told us that he could see if they would do it for \$15., okay, maybe \$10. After we continued to decline, we discovered that there is a free shuttle! ☺

Ismael's wife, Orfe, picked us up at the airport with his middle son, Jesse. She updated us on Ismael's progress. Initially she thought he'd be back to Santa Elena by about 9 or 10 p.m. But as the afternoon went on, the ETA got later and later. We spent some time organizing things in the cabana (the supplies that Anne sent in our suitcases), and went to see the storage area that they had arranged for the container contents. When she dropped us off at our hotel (we stayed at Hotel Sabana the 1st night because they didn't have our reservation at Casa Amelia and didn't have any open rooms until Friday night), the plan was that Orfe would come and get us about 3 or 4 a.m. when Ismael arrived so we could begin unloading the truck. Around 9 p.m. she called to inform us that they had not even left yet, so it would be closer to 7 a.m. when they would arrive with the truck.

Friday, February 19th

Orfe called and said that she would come to get us at 9:00 a.m. The Hotel Sabana is just a few doors down from "Cool Beans", a cute little coffee shop that Gary Collins highly recommends. He told me that he had 2 cinnamon rolls and coffee one morning when we were there in November. Gladys and I decided to try the cinnamon rolls (1 each), but could not even finish half!! Wow, Gary...must have been very hungry!

When we turned onto the street where the storage area was, I could not believe my eyes! A very large flatbed semi truck filled front to back with stuff...what an amazing sight! Ismael had arranged for his nephew and cousin to come and help since his 3 sons were in school. About half way through, the pastor of the local Nazarene church also came to help. Ismael's wife and I crawled onto the bed of the truck and started to hand down things to Ismael, the two young men, Gladys, and eventually the pastor. I used muscles that day that I forgot I had! And I paid for it the rest of the week! I want Rick Ellis to know that we unloaded each and every one of those KAH boxes one at a time...not with a forklift!! The exam tables and beds were quite heavy! We must have been quite a sight, because many times throughout the day people would stop and "gawk" at us. I'm sure they didn't know what to think about that huge truck with all that stuff! Gladys got the bright idea to use the wheelchairs to load 5 or so boxes of KAH food to take from the truck to the storage room instead of one at a time. Then, the groundskeeper of the storage area went and brought us a wheelbarrow to use for the same purpose! When the truck was unloaded, we had completely filled the storage room (with barely room to shut the door), and still had several things sitting in another covered area for us to take to Mango and Pueblo Nuevo later in the week. We took a few things to the other bodega and organized things there. We returned to the hotel late afternoon exhausted, but energized.

Saturday, February 20th

Marleni, one of the nurses in Mango, had asked Ismael if we would come and follow up with some women there whom we had seen in November, and do some ultrasounds on some of the pregnant women there, so we decided that Saturday would be the day for that. We went to the bodega to pick up the ultrasound, and one of the women who lives in the complex where the bodega is asked us if we could do a pap on her, since she had not had one in about 2 years. We offered that she could go to Mango with us and I would do it there, but she was reluctant to leave her family for the day. So we offered to do the pap in her room.

Once in Mango, we spent some time talking to Marleni about Anne's upcoming trip in March and organizing things for that (see details of "March trip" below). We did several follow-up paps (from those who were treated in November. Although I thought it might be a little early for f/u, Marleni had called all of them and asked them to come, so I did them) and several ultrasound on pregnant women. There was a run on breech babies, so I have lots for Anne to follow-up on in March!

After returning the supplies to the bodega and cleaning up a bit, we treated Ismael and his wonderful family (wife: Orfelinda, and 3 sons: Hansen, Jesse, and Franklin) to Pizza Hut. We had a wonderful time of fellowship with them, and heard lots of details of Ismael's ordeal over the prior week to free the container and get the supplies to Santa Elena (see details of "Ismael's week at the port" below). I truly cannot say enough about Ismael and his family. We are very lucky to have them on our side!

Sunday, February 21st

We went to church with Ismael and his family. The church is next to the private school where Ismael's boys go to school. The pastor (Nelson) and his wife were very kind and talked with us quite a bit about some of the other missionaries who had worked in this area. They told a story about the Hammers (who gave money to build the church, school, and clinic there in Colonial Tikal, as well as other things). They worked very hard to have a crate of supplies shipped to the area about 10 years ago. Apparently they had even more difficulty than we did, because it took them 6 months to have it released from the port when it arrived! It made me feel so thankful, once again, that God was watching over the whole process.

We decided to use the afternoon for our trip to Sayaxche to talk to one of the doctors there, Dr. Sandra Sanchinelli, about Anne's upcoming April surgical trip. While we were waiting for her to finish lunch, we encountered a family with a small baby outside the clinic. They were taking the baby for evaluation by Dr. Sanchinelli. The baby appeared to be just a few weeks old, but on further inspection, we noticed that the baby was very pale/ gray and was "grunting" to breathe. They were instructed to go directly to the hospital, so were going to call and wait for a taxi. Instead, Ismael offered to drive them to the hospital, and Gladys and I rode along because at that point I was worried that the baby might stop breathing at any moment. On the ride to the hospital, we discovered that the baby was actually 3 months old, but that his mother was unable to breastfeed him because "she didn't get her milk". They had, instead, been giving him water with rice, or water with honey in a bottle. He appeared extremely malnourished and very dehydrated. We took the family to the emergency department, but they were told they would have to wait because they were very busy. We climbed back in the van with heavy hearts, knowing that there was nothing more we could do then and there, but that this type of problem has such a simple solution and could easily be avoided with just a few resources. (See "breastfeeding issues" below)

Our meeting with Dr. Sanchinelli was delightful. She is a Guatemalan trained physician who grew up in Flores, and has been in Sayaxche for 20 years. She seems to have a good handle on the community and its needs, and seems to be very sincere and caring. We discussed details about surgical needs (see "april trip" below), and exchanged some ideas for other future needs. She also proposed the intriguing idea that we could do a "cultural physician exchange" where a couple of us

would come and work there for a couple weeks, and she would come to the States. She has her Visa and is ready to go! ☺

Monday, February 22nd

Casa Amelia restaurant is closed on Mondays! We nearly had a breakfast emergency, but found another nice breakfast place just down the street on the other side. The plan for the day was to go to Pueblo Nuevo and Mango for some fact-finding and to meet with families who could benefit from the KAH food, and perhaps from some "sponsorship" from families in the U.S.

We had considered renting a small truck to transport the one exam table, 2 cabinets (to Mango), and 9 student chair/desk combos (to Pueblo Nuevo), but with Ismael's amazing puzzle solving skills, we got everything into his van after removing only one back seat! Just outside of Santa Elena, we encountered a group of angry teachers who were "protesting" (I think like a strike), but were blocking the main/ only road out of town to the east. After some consideration, the only course of action was to take the "shortcut" to Pueblo Nuevo (okay, not really—it actually took us 2 ½ hours to get there instead of 1 ½ !) The road took us to the south (too far), then east, then back north, but was filled with lots of interesting things, including snakes! We called ahead to ask the teachers in Pueblo Nuevo (through the "mayor", Juan), to keep the students a little longer than usual (since we weren't going to arrive until about 12:30 after all the detours), and they were kind enough to do so. We were excited to see the children's reactions to the new desks, the school supplies that Randy sent, and the "dulces" that Gladys had brought for them. We were not disappointed. They were very excited, and tried out the desks right away. There was a line for the candy, and lots of hugs and excitement.

After the children were dismissed for the day, we explored the rest of the village. The government paid for the building of a new classroom for the "kindergarten" (4-6 year old) children, which is very nice. The sign outside the school says that it cost them 140,000 Quetzales (about \$20,000) to build the building, but Ismael estimates that they probably did it for more like 30-40,000 Q (\$4500). We walked around the village with Juan, and discussed the new stove that the University student built (see "stove project" below), checked out the latrines that have been built, the gardens that have been planted, and took samples of the water from several homes (see "pueblo Nuevo issues" below).

We visited one very needy family there and spoke with them about receiving the KAH food and being one of our "sponsored families". Details of all the sponsored families will also be at the end of this report. We then returned to Mango, and delivered some more supplies to Marleni. She was happy to have another exam table and a couple of cabinets and will put them to good use. We visited 4 more very needy families in Mango and introduced the idea of using the KAH food, as well as following up to help with other needs. Again, see details at the end under "sponsored families".

We returned to the hotel tonight very tired, but happy about what we have learned and seen this week. As always, it is so humbling to spend time in this beautiful, simple country, without the hustle and bustle of my usual every-day life, and to focus on some things that really matter...things that are eternal.

I look forward to my next return trip...tomorrow morning we are on an early plane back to Detroit via Cancun.

--Coral Matus, and my trusty companion, Gladys

SUMMARY
(for those with short attention span)
(since I got really wordy)

- *Risky to fly through Cancun with medical supplies—risk having them taken or having to pay tax
- *Food, vitamins, and surgical supplies are all in a secure, locked area.
- *Talked with Marleni about Anne and Deena's trip in March.
- *Several pregnant women need follow up ultrasounds for breech presentations, and other issues.
- *Repeated paps on those with abnormal paps who were treated in November.
- *Talked with Dr. Sanchinelli about April trip. Got great ideas about other future needs.
- *Got lots of good information about the new stove, water concerns, gardens, latrines, school building, and some needy families in Pueblo Nuevo, as well as several very needy families in Mango.
- *The children and teachers are very thankful for the school supplies, and the clinic appreciates the medical supplies very much.
- *There are very many needy families, and I think that Ismael has a good handle on those who are the neediest and will benefit from the KAH food the most in the short term. He has a well-thought-out plan for how to distribute the food to these families, as well as to the schools so that the children get the benefit of the nutritious food, but there is some accountability by the communities and the families to use the food appropriately (for the children) and not to depend on it as their only source of nutrition. He has already been working hard to get this prepared and arranged prior to this week!
- *God's timing is impeccable! I worried all week coming up to this trip about whether it would even be worthwhile for us to go, and whether we'd have anything useful to do. The timing of our arrival and the arrival of the crate to Santa Elena couldn't have been coordinated any better (God does things perfectly!!) It was truly priceless to see the truck FULL of supplies, and to be able to help unload it and get things organized and started in the right direction!
- *I heard someone say this recently, and it really hit home during this trip (my paraphrase): "Don't ask God to bless your work. Instead, ask God to direct you to the work He is blessing."

Ismael's week at the Port

As many of you know, the road to get the container "released" has been a long one. Each time customs would ask for a form, Ismael would call Anne, then Anne would have Deena Ellis translate the appropriate areas, and they would send thing back. Finally, it seemed there was nothing else that "we" could do....Ismael said he truly felt like if they still needed something else, we could not supply it, and we were close to "giving up".

On Monday, February 15th, he decided to take a bus to the port to see if he could speak with SOMEONE face-to-face. He knew it was a leap of faith, but he went by bus so that if he could get the container released, he wouldn't also have his van there to transport home. The port is approximately 4 hours drive from San Benito.

When he arrived at the port, he tried most of the day to contact the person who was "in charge", but was sent to office after office. It seemed noone would take responsibility or tell him what still needed to be done. He felt at many times that they simply wanted him to "give him some money" (a bribe), but he refused each and every time, saying that this is how the corruption continues in his country. He held his ground, and eventually God blessed him for it.

He continued return to the customs offices each day, and felt that after awhile people would see him coming and run the other way! He expressed concern about continuing to stay and wait (and spend money) because each day he was paying for a hotel, buying food, using the internet, etc. He also had to take a taxi back and forth a few times between Santo Tomas (where the container arrived and was waiting to be released through customs) and Porto Barrios (where the container was actually sent and scheduled to be unloaded), which is about 25 minutes drive.

After 3 discouraging days, he had decided in his mind that he would go to the offices on Thursday, do his best, and if he still could not get the container released, would return home. To is amazement, a man at the port told him that morning that the container would be released that afternoon. Ismael says that he asked the man for his name, but he wouldn't give it, but assured that he knew that it was scheduled to be released. He says that he wanted to feel happy, but was still very nervous because of the experiences of the last few days and weeks.

Finally, late morning, he got the confirmation that the container would be transported in 2 hours to Porto Barrios, its final scheduled destination, where it would be opened and inspected. He took a taxi back to Porto Barrios to wait. Several hours later, when he inquired again, they informed him that the container was inside the customs building, had been opened, and was being inspected. Ismael was very frustrated by this because he had asked, and was told it was possible, that he be present at all times during the inspection. Never the less, there were no major issues, and the container's contents were sent on to the Allianca site.

Ismael had arranged a truck driver to transport the contents of the container on a large flatbed truck, but the problem was that he could not have him come and sit and wait for the container to be released; he would have had to pay him for every day to wait. So when he called the driver and said that he was ready, the driver was 8 hours away and had another job. Thankfully, the driver's brother was available and willing to transport. Although the man said he was close by and would be there in "a few minutes", it was actually 5 hours later when he arrived. (Ismael thinks he was probably actually in Guatemala City when he called him). Ismael set out to arrange a forklift owner to come to help load things onto the truck, and bought rope to secure everything, and black plastic to cover it (it was raining quite hard that day). Although the forklift driver became quite impatient waiting, and Ismael had to pay him by the hour to wait, the truck finally arrived and everything was loaded and secured.

Finally, they left around 4 a.m. and arrived in Santa Elena around 9 a.m. on Friday. Ismael gives all the glory to God for all that has been accomplished. Ismael is truly a man of God.

March Trip

I updated Marleni on your plans for your March trip. There is a community center that holds up to 300 people, and there are seats for 80 which can be used for this. Marleni thinks she may be able to get a projector to be used, and there is electricity in the building. She will let Ismael know later this week whether she can get the projector, but if not, we can bring one to use. She thought some simple food would be fine, but not necessary. We also discussed that it might be good to have some organized activities (maybe the students could help with this) for the younger children while the moms are at the sessions so that they can feel comfortable to sit and listen and that their children will be content.

Marleni will invite the 27 health administrators from the Santa Ana area, and thinks it would be a good idea to have a specific half-day for them. She proposes the following schedule for the week:

Monday: education sessions for health promoters and comedronas

- * a couple of topics we talked about, in addition to those you mentioned, are things such as dealing with breech presentations and shoulder dystocia, since these are certainly things they see. They seem to have a pretty good idea of how to deal with them, I think some "protocols" would be great. (I could give you the ALSO information, which is very useful).

- * They could definitely use supplies! The people have to buy things such as cord clamps and bulb syringes themselves.

Tuesday: education sessions for the women of the village (and Marleni will invite women from the surrounding villages.) She will try to have women write down some questions head of time so they can be asked anonymously if desired.

- *She proposes that, in addition to having separate sessions for women >35-40 and <35-40, that you also have a specific session for "las juvenes" (girls 12-17) during school time. She will ask the teacher to bring the girls over from 2-4 p.m. which is during their school time (1-5 p.m.) so that all the girls can come and ask questions, and you can concentrate on reproduction, contraception, and menses issues.

- *other things that I would propose include: normal discomforts of pregnancy and how to deal with them (I heard lots of complaints about back pain, etc.), as well as importance of drinking lots of fluids during pregnancy especially, since most of the pregnant women complain of dizziness/orthostasis.

Wednesday: ½ day education session for health administrators

Remainder of week: ultrasound, pap, clinical

- **I have a list of women who I'd like you to see, and Marleni has their names and contact information as well. I will send excel file to you, Anne.

Marleni will see if she can identify any women who might need surgery, and if so will arrange for them to see you in March.

Ismael will check with Bio to see about a nitrogen tank. Dr. Sanchinelli also gave us a lead in Guatemala City where she thinks we can get nitrogen, as well as other surgical instruments if needed.

April Trip

Our meeting with Sandra Sanchinelli was very productive. She is a delightful woman who has been in the community of Sayaxche for 20 years. She reports that there are 2 OR's in the hospital there, and they have 1 surgical technician who can do epidural and general anesthesia. They have gynecologic and general surgeons there who feel comfortable doing things such as hysterectomies, post-partum tubal ligations (they do not have a laparoscope to do non-post-partums ones), hernias, cholecystectomies, and simple abdominal surgeries. They generally do surgery 2 or 3 days a week, but lately have only been doing "emergency" type surgeries because one of their anesthesia machines is completely broken, and the other is in poor repair. She does not think that there are a lot of patients waiting for surgeries there, but she did suggest that there are a lot of patients on waiting lists in San Benito, and it might be possible to see if some of them would want to come to Sayaxche for surgery during the time that you are there.

They do have a sterilizer for equipment, so this will not be a big problem. They have basic instruments for your use.

They do not have mesh for use for hernia surgeries. They require patients to go and buy their own mesh in Guatemala City prior to surgery if needed.

They do not have extra anesthesia meds, so you would have to bring these.

She reports that the biggest need in the region is for:

- *GI (endoscopy and colonoscopy)—there are none in the region, and patients must go to Guatemala City if they need these. There are NO screening colonoscopies done, but colon cancer is a big problem. It costs Q2000 for an endoscopy and Q5000 for a colonoscopy in the city. She repeated at least 3 times that this is a very big need. The general surgeons would have the capacity to do this if they had the equipment, and some basic training.
- *Urology—for kidney stones and other issues.
- *ENT—for tonsils
- *?General surgeon to do neck surgeries for thyroid cancer/ goiter
- *plastics—for cleft lips

She would like you to e-mail her some more details about how many and what type of surgeries you would like to do while you are there. I did let her know that you plan to hook up with her when you are there in March.

Her contact information is: e-mail: sanchi301163@yahoo.com

She also mentioned that you should contact the Presidente del Salud de la Area (the man in charge of the area that includes Sayaxche, La Libertad, and Las Cruces). His name is Roy Flores, M.D., and his information is: cell: 5332 3273. office: 7928 6135. He was not available on the Sunday that we were there.

Breastfeeding Issues

It is common for women to give their babies water with honey from a bottle to supplement because they feel that their milk production is inadequate. Sometimes they will also make a solution of milk with powdered/ ground rice or corn. This is obviously a major problem, and should be addressed with health promoters, comedronas, and the general population of women. We saw a first-hand case of this in Sayaxche, and the 3 month old baby, who was cachectic, dehydrated, and very sick. The aunt reported that his mother's milk hadn't come in, and they had been feeding the baby sugar water.

Marleni estimates that in the region of Santa Ana, about 40 women/ yr have difficulty with breastfeeding and end up supplementing with some fortified water substance. She was very happy to receive the supply of formula.

Mango Issues

Marleni is in need of anticonvulsants for several patients, as well as antibiotics for adults.

She is asking if, when we do paps, we could take "2 samples" from each woman: 1 to bring back to be read and reported from here, and 1 to be sent to Poptun. They keep records of how many women are having paps, and it makes her numbers look bad if they don't get any samples. The problem is that women do not like to come and get paps from the government providers because they never get results, or if they do it is 8-9 months later, so it is still important that we do them because the women trust us and want us to do them because they get results. She can provide the slides for us to send (they do the traditional pap on slide with fixative).

I asked Marleni specifically about pneumonia incidence and treatment. She estimates that she sees approximately 3 cases/ wk (mostly in children) during the months of Nov-March and about 1-2/wk during the rest of the year. The nebulizer machine has been a huge help, since she can often keep the child there at the clinic and give repeated aerosols throughout the day instead of sending them into San Benito for treatment.

Pueblo Nuevo Issues

8 latrines are done. Supplies for 22 more are to be delivered this week so that construction can begin. This will supply nearly all of the 33 families in the community. Some of the families have mentioned that the latrines are hard to access because the "steps" are very narrow/ steep. Ismael wants to experiment with the new ones on making a more gradual approach/ ramp to make access easier. I reviewed with Ismael the process of using the urine from the latrines to "fertilize" the gardens with nitrogen. He does not believe that they are doing this currently.

There are 3 very nice gardens in the village, which were helped by the University student working there as well as Ismael. (I have pictures!) Continuing to purchase seeds may be part of the limitation, since an ounce of carrots or onions costs about Q35 (\$5) each. Perhaps we can look at taking some packets of seed when we go. Ismael is also looking into Yucca and Malanga as 2 crops that will grow more easily during times of less water (they require little water to grow well), such as the past year.

We looked at the water pump and I took some pictures. Ismael says that initially they were charging each family Q20 (\$3) per month, but since they have run water to the homes and have the water tower, they are asking Q45 (\$6) per month. Not all of the families pay, but Juan (mayor) does try to collect the money. It costs Q150 per day (\$20) to run the pump for 3 hours. Ismael originally helped them by purchasing 10 tanks of diesel fuel, 10 gallons each. Juan has been refilling them as he gets the money, and he does have some supply now. One element of the electrical part of the pump is not working correctly, and Juan thinks this is why it is costing so much to run the pump each day. He says that the municipality will not replace the element because it would cost Q6-7000 so it is too expensive. I took some pictures of the elements (electrical) so that Ed can look at it and see if he can determine any problems.

Apparently the municipality is doing a survey to see if the people in Pueblo Nuevo want them to run electricity to the city.

Ismael believes that some of the families in Pueblo Nuevo may have bed nets, but most do not. Mostly it is a cost issue, as they can purchase them in San Benito. He believes they do not understand the importance of the bed nets, and need more education. The government does send groups of workers yearly to the villages for education and testing, but many of the people not very accepting of the program. (They even "pass out medications" to some of the people?)

We spoke with the brother of the man who is selling the lot. They have had it surveyed, but have not received the official paperwork for it yet. The selling price is Q13,000.

Ismael's wife, Orfe, is taking classes at the University to become a social worker. Part of her training involves doing a "practicum", and she has requested, and been granted, to do it in Pueblo Nuevo. As part of her assignment, she must spend time getting to know about lots of things in the community including their history, who were the first families there and why they came, their current government and current health care system, needs, etc. I reviewed the list of things that she had to find out as part of her assignment, and added several things to it that we have been interested in finding out. Her work will be very valuable to us, and I think she will be successful in talking to the people and finding out information that we have had difficulty discovering. She will also be doing some projects with the children, such as examining their hair for lice, and with the women, discussing their needs.

One of the big needs that Marleni identified for Pueblo Nuevo, and also has been a concern to the community, according to Ismael and Orfe, is not having access to first aid/ a health promoter there. They have tried to find someone willing to go to training to be a health promoter, but this is difficult since it means leaving their family once a month, taking a bus to Santa Ana, and being away usually overnight. I asked Orfe if she would specifically see if she could identify anyone, even if it was a young woman, who might be willing to go for training if we could help subsidize the cost. They also asked if we could help with supplying a "first aid kit", with things like saline, hydrogen peroxide, antibiotic creams, bandaids, IV solutions, ORS, infant formula, splints, slings, sutures, C-collar, and meds for fever and allergic reactions. Even if a health promoter is identified, he/ she must purchase his/her own supplies.

Stove Project

The University student that has been working in the community built a new, more efficient, stove in the one building right next to the school. A couple of the women have used it, and really like it. They think that it is really easy to light and use, burns hot enough, and they like the fact the smoke exhausts out the side of the room, and doesn't fill the whole room with smoke. Ismael estimates the cost of the stove to be about Q600-700 (\$80) each. The top metal plate is a special unit that has 3 separate holes of different sizes to allow pots of different sizes to be used. This is the most expensive part of the stove, costing Q350. The rest is just bricks and mortar. He thinks women would be interested in having these built in their homes.

KAH/ Sponsored Families

We had the pleasure of visiting 5 very unfortunate families this week: 1 in Pueblo Nuevo and 4 in Mango.

The *Ortiz Rojas* family lives in a small house in Pueblo Nuevo. When we arrived at her home, Edelrmira Ortiz Rojas, the mother, welcomed us in and invited us to sit on one of the 3 beds in their one-room home where she was washing clothes by hand. It was necessary to watch carefully whenever we took a step since there were no less than 2 dozen baby chicks running around the floor, along with some larger chickens. Edelrmira has a husband, who works as a farmer, but is often out of work when it is not harvest or planting season. She has 13 children in all, the oldest a girl who was killed in "the city" when she was robbed for her cell phone at age 21. The children in the home when we visited included Olga, age 13 (who is very thin and appears to be only about 9 years old), Delmi, age 10, Nuelia, age 8, Joel, age 6, Julisia, age 5, Ervin, age 3, and Evelyn, age 16 months. They mostly eat beans and some tortillas. When the chickens are ready they can have some eggs, and often sell the chickens to buy more beans and tortillas. She was so happy to receive 10 packets of KAH food, and was very open to Ismael returning to see what other needs the family might have.

Bartola Chapas is a 60 yr old woman whose husband was killed in the war in the late 1980's. She lives in a small home with her 3 children and 2 grandchildren. Estela Reyes is 32 yrs old, and has

been unable to walk since she had poliomyelitis at age 1 ½ yrs. She used to have a walker, and could get around some using her upper body to propel herself, but this broke several years ago, and she has not been able to ambulate at all since. Estela has a 10 year old son, Ronaldo Daniel. Erick Raul Gomez is 20 yrs old, and is the only person in the family who can work to earn money for the family. He was hit by a car several years ago, and as a result does not have part of his temporal bone on the left side. He suffers from seizures, and often cannot afford his seizure medication. His right arm is weak and he does not have full range of motion and use of it. Maritza Gomez is 19 yrs old. She is healthy and has a 1 yr old daughter, Erika Gabriel Ortiz Gowes. The family was very thankful to receive 8 packets of KAH food, and we discussed what Estela might need to be able to ambulate once again. Ismael is going to bring one of the wheeled walkers with a seat that was sent in the container to see if she could use that. If not, he will see if one of the 2 wheelchairs might be useful, although the space in their house is very limited. He will follow up with the family to determine other needs, including carbamazepine for Erick.

Rosa Cruz Rosales is a 35 year old mother of 5. Her husband abandoned the family several years ago after years of domestic violence. She raises chickens for eggs and meat, and receives Q300 (about \$40) a month for helping another mother with her baby. Her children, Norma Maribel, age 16, Celia Yojana, 14, Magdalena Maydeli, age 10, Melinda Yulissa, age 8, and Emilsa Lisbeth, age 6, are all healthy and attend school. She became tearful when we offered her 6 bags of KAH food and told her that we would visit again to see if there were other ways we could help her family. We visited the home of *Irma Lucero*, age 34; she was in San Benito for the day, but we were able to speak with her niece, *Eleonor Lucero*, age 19, who has been raised by her aunt since her mother died during childbirth. Irma has 2 children, David, age 8, and Yefry, age 2. Yefry had a bad cut on his left ankle that had been sutured 3 days prior, and looked to be infected. Eleonor has 2 children, Hector Dardon, age 2, and Yosselin Paola, 10 days old (Eleonor just had a cesarean delivery). Neither woman is able to work, and they supply food for their family by raising chickens and turkeys and selling their eggs and meat to buy beans and rice. She was grateful to receive 6 packets of KAH food, and was willing to have us return to talk with her Aunt more at another time.

Misael Recinos Sagastume is a 48 year old farmer who lives with his wife, Aura Esperanza, age 43, and their 9 children: Selvin, 18 yrs, Mirlyin Yojana, 17 yrs, Arely Maybely, 15 yrs, Ferdin, 12 yrs, Glendy, 10 yrs, Yulma, 8 yrs, Jose Luis, 6 yrs, Breyni, 3 yrs, and Cinthia, 1 month. Last January, Ferdin began to have difficulty with urinary tract infections, and then blood in his urine. He was ultimately diagnosed with a kidney tumor and sent to Guatemala City for surgery. He had a 6 pound tumor removed, along with his left kidney. During his 3 month hospitalization, his father stayed with him at the hospital, and was unable to work to help provide for his family. Many families in the community did help the family during this time. Currently Ferdin is doing well, but has to return to the City for examinations every 3 months to be sure the tumor does not return. This family was so kind and sincere, and Misael thanked God over and over for all He has done for his family, despite their extreme poverty. They were very thankful to receive 10 packets of KAH food. In fact, Breyni was grinning from ear to ear when we handed her a packet, and hugged it like it was a prized possession! Ismael will visit again to determine if there are other needs with which we could help this family.

Another family, who we didn't visit, but Ismael will follow up with, is the family with the boy with hemophilia. There are 12 children, and 3 of them are quite ill (1 with hemophilia, 1 with MRDD, and 1 with a psych issue). They have looked at options for getting the factor closer to their home, but the government will not allow it to be given anywhere except Guatemala City. They must spend Q480 (>\$60) each month for the child and mother to go round-trip to Guatemala City for treatment.

I was so impressed with how Ismael represents our organization. At each home he would explain the mission of SewHope, introduce each of us, and ask permission to find out more about the family. He would explain that we wanted to follow-up and help, and we would pray with the family before we left. He is truly a wonderful representative for us, and has a heart of compassion for these people in great need.

OTHER FACTS:

- *255 families in Mango currently. More moving in each year.
- *33 families in Pueblo Nuevo.
- *There is no cemetery in Pueblo Nuevo, so families have to pay to have the body transported to Mango or some other village in Santa Ana. The municipality is looking for a location.
- *Minimum wage in Guatemala is Q1650 (about \$200) per month for 40 hours/ wk.
- *Women usually do not have access to pads/ tampons so must use rags/ towels during menses.
- *Dry eyes is a big problem. ?eye drops/ sunglasses?
- *Dr. Recino is the Presidente del Salud for Santa Ana (which includes San Benito, Poptun, and Mercor)
- *Health providers in Santa Ana (entire region) include:
 - Medicos ambulatorios: 0
 - Medicos institucionales: 0
 - Enfermeras: 0
 - Auxiliares de enfermera: 2 (Marleni and Cerilla in Mango)
 - Comedronas: 38 (4 in Mango; 2 in Pueblo Nuevo, but 1 is quite old, and the other very young and women don't trust her very much)
 - Vigilantes de salud (health promoters): 40 (8 in Mango; 0 in Pueblo Nuevo)
 - Volunatrios de vectores: 16 (manage malaria program)
- *If we could obtain non-profit status in Guatemala, this would also be very helpful for Ismael since we could get an account for transactions and the money would not have to always go through his account. He has had to account for the money for taxes, and it sometimes makes it difficult for him. He mentioned that we could consider joining with Alianca (becoming a member?) since they already have non-profit status. I'm not sure what this would involve, and did not talk to him any more about that.
- *Ismael also reports that when I wrote him a check in November, it took 30 days to clear (which is very uncharacteristic).
- *APROFAM is an agency that supplies volunteers and supplies to communities to especially help with family planning and reproductive health, but they have interest in all areas of health. They have a hospital with an OR in San Benito. It is part private and part government funded. Orfe knows a woman (Eleni?) who works for them and could get us more information.
- *The villages in Santa Ana include:
 - Mango
 - Pueblo Nuevo
 - Juleque
 - Nuevo por venire
 - Brusidad
 - Lapita
 - Cartucho (a quite wealthy community...2 cars in each driveway)