



# ACTS Newsletter

Americans Caring Teaching Sharing



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

Fall, 2015

Welcome to ACTS Honduras and our 2015 Newsletter. We are an Upper Valley based non-profit solely devoted to Community Development in one rural area of Honduras. We define Community Development as helping people to help themselves.

## EDUCATION

### Schools, the Library and Technology

**Big News: Our 8' X 14' Doctor Dean Library must double in size to meet demand!**

Just six years ago we built the Library and stocked it with books published in Central America. Teachers working in schools without books began to schedule weekly two-hour blocks and bring entire schools to the Library to take advantage of the books. To extend the reach of the Library and enrich schools without books, we created the Traveling Library, which is a set of ten large plastic tubs full of books that rotate among ten schools.

The next step was installing computers and in May, teachers from 11 schools convened for a full day meeting with ACTS veteran educator Lisa Bisceglia and our new recruit Betsy Rybeck Lynd to learn from Horacio the librarian how to use the four new laptops purchased in November 2014.

Ethan LaRochelle who is ACTS leader of all-things-technical was on-hand to observe computer usage and the teachers' understanding so that he can appropriately respond to their needs. While it will be several years until the Internet is available in mountainous El Rosario, Ethan created an "intra-net," for use within the village, and stocked it with educational software, Wikipedia, and other information in Spanish. The addition to the Library will house the computers in a space designed by architect Don Metz that will have an ingenious system to keep it cool without mechanical ventilation.

**Upgrading the Library space costs \$4,000; computers and linking technology are \$2,000; refreshing the well-used Traveling Library is \$2,500.**



First time on a computer with Ethan LaRochelle

## HEALTH

### Dental

We are just a few months away from opening The Smile Clinic, which will provide the only professional dentistry within a 75-mile radius of El Rosario. Our dental team, headed by Brad Taylor and Linda Kennedy, took a great leap forward when Bob Keene, DMD joined the ACTS Steering Committee and brought not only professional dental training and decades of operating a dental clinic, but significant experience in low income countries, including Honduras. With Bob's leadership, we've defined our scope of services and priorities to focus on preventive care for children, education about dental hygiene for the community, and a move from crisis dentistry to basic restoration such as fillings. Bob said, "Using new techniques developed for low-income countries, we can do prevention and restoration for a fraction of what they cost in the US."

**Budget for The Smile Clinic is \$15,000 per year.**



The new dental chair arriving



Setting up the new dental clinic



## MEDICAL

Nurse Rosa sees patients at the Medical Clinic and operates a pharmacy stocked with medications provided by ACTS. Our medical team headed by Peter Mason, MD, and Sue Burgos, PA-C sees patients in the clinic eight weeks per year and monitors ongoing concerns by telephone. Each year, we purchase and pack as luggage, about 200 pounds of medical supplies and equipment ranging from Tylenol to antibiotics. Patients who can afford it, pay a small fee for their medication, but many receive it at no cost. Nelson Mejia, the local president of the Clinic Committee said, "We work very hard to provide care to everyone. Even the poorest families know they can come to us and we will help."

**Budget for the Medical Clinic is \$12,000 year.**



Treating a patient in the El Rosario clinic

**VISIT OUR NEW WEBSITE**  
(Online Donations Accepted here)  
[www.actshonduras.org](http://www.actshonduras.org)

## CANCER PREVENTION

In collaboration with Norris Cotton Cancer Center at Dartmouth, La Liga Contra el Cancer and Universidad Catolica de Honduras, ACTS is proud to have facilitated ongoing research to improve screening for cervical cancer. Based on an initial population screening of 472 women in 2013, a group of 69 women have been identified as having high-risk HPV, which is the cause of cervical cancer. Suyapa Bejarano, MD, an oncologist from La Liga leads their surveillance and recently said, "Early detection of cervical cancer can mean saving a life with a simple office procedure. Unfortunately, about 50% of women with cervical cancer in Honduras present at such a late stage that their disease is fatal."

**This initiative is at no expense to ACTS or the Medical Clinic.**

## FAMILIES WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Though we don't do pediatric orthopedic surgery, select medical therapies for rare genetic diseases, or treat patients with breast cancer, we have partners who do. Honduras is a tough place to be sick, but for a number of families in the El Rosario area, ACTS has played a pivotal role in making initial assessments, involving subspecialists from the US and Honduras who donate their time, and coordinated long-term care. For example, a widow heads one family with three children who have debilitating homocystinuria and another with tuberculosis. Their needs are complicated and ongoing.

**ACTS budget to facilitate specialty care includes medicine, transportation to clinics, and special nutrition – about \$5,000 year.**



Gloria with Dr Mandujano



## AGRICULTURE

Honduras, along with the rest of Central America continues to deal with the effects of a drought that has now lasted two full years. Not only has there been less rain, the timing of the rainy seasons has been off, resulting in decreased crop yields across much of the country and outright failures in many locations. Almost all the agriculture in Locomapa, where El Rosario is located, is devoted to corn and beans, the traditional dietary staples. When there is a crop failure of one or both of these crops, hunger can become a serious problem very quickly.

One of the primary goals of the ACTS-supported El Rosario micro bank is to promote diversification in the local agriculture. The local climate is appropriate for a wide variety of food crops. What is needed is technical training for the local farmers and access to seeds and plants. With financial support from ACTS, the micro-bank continues to demonstrate and propagate alternative crops and to bring in experts to teach workshops addressing diversification.

**Updating farming practices requires planning, resources, and effort \$5,000.**



Animal Husbandry workshop taught by Brad Taylor, DVM

## LOCOMAPA, HONDURAS



El Rosario is located in the state of Yoro, Honduras, and is in the Locomapa Region. Our catchment area includes the population of El Rosario (about 800) and ten smaller surrounding villages. Residents are subsistence farmers growing corn and beans. School is provided through sixth grade, but many children leave earlier. Because of ACTS' involvement and support, residents in this catchment area have substantially improved lives.

## WATER

As Dean Seibert says, "With water, anything is possible." This year, after three years of testing and rejecting as unworkable, and four years of design and construction activities, a fully functional drinking water system came online in the village of Carrizalito. These fine people live on a spectacular mountaintop a long walk from the nearest source of fresh water. Imagine, when every drop of water has to be transported up a mountain by women and children, each drop is precious and used for the bare essentials.

Hygiene takes a backseat to food preparation at the expense of overall health. Our partnering engineers led by Dan Saulnier are from Northeastern University Engineers Without Borders, and ACTS was fortunate to have the funds necessary to support their work at a critical juncture. Water began to flow in Carrizalito on June 8, 2014, but construction of a 4,500-gallon water storage tank, and a network of pipes to all the homes took an additional ten months of hard work. The system has been fully operational since March, 2015.

**ACTS provided \$9,650 funding for the 25% of the system's materials and skilled electrical work to provide water to 40 families.**



Julio Lopez, president of the water board in Carrizalito



## OUR ORGANIZATION

So what is Community Development? We define it as “helping people to make their own communities stronger,” and it matters because strong communities are places where people can thrive, and not just survive. For more than two decades, ACTS Honduras has been working on Community Development in and around El Rosario, Honduras. Our commitment and tremendous results are fueled by donors who give generously so that others may live with dignity and achieve more for their families.

## “DOCTOR DEAN” SEIBERT

At 80+, Doctor Dean, as he’s known throughout the Honduran villages, is picking up speed with a host of new projects. He often begins a sentence with, “It’s conceivable to me,” and what follows will be a new and ambitious way for ACTS to reach a little farther, to help another group, or to get involved in a new way. This year, a simple call from the Hanover New Hampshire Fire Department asking if he might have a way to use their cast-off fire-fighting clothing, resulted in contributions from fire departments in Vermont and New Hampshire and pounds of gear redistributed to scantily supplied firefighters in Honduras. That led to collecting 2-way radios and dozens of units shipped so that police and fire can communicate. And these were just his “side projects,” Doctor Dean continues to be a core part of the ACTS Steering Committee.



Dr. Dean & Mr. Vieda in Los Planes

## Amazon Smiles on ACTS



If you shop on Amazon, consider signing up at amazon.

smile.com so that Amazon will donate .5% of your shopping total to the charity of your choice. If you choose Americans Caring Teaching Sharing, ACTS will benefit from your selection. Thanks!

## WE ACKNOWLEDGE THESE FINE ORGANIZATIONS FOR THEIR WORK WITH US IN HONDURAS

Dartmouth Alumni and Students for Honduras, New York City NY  
Engineers Without Borders Northeastern University, Boston MA  
Dartmouth’s Norris Cotton Cancer Center, Lebanon NH  
La Liga Contra el Cancer, Honduras  
The fire departments of Lebanon and Hanover NH, and Brandon and Shelburne, Vt.  
Zondervan Foundation, Norwich VT  
Department of Pathology, Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth  
The Children’s Initiative, Portland ME  
CEPUDO, Honduras  
Universidad Catolica de Honduras  
Daniels Transportation, Hartford VT  
New Holland Apparel, New Hope PA and San Pedro Sula Honduras  
New Hampshire Charitable Foundation  
Alice Peck Day Hospital, Lebanon NH  
Gifford Medical Center, Randolph VT  
DYN, Manchester NH  
Coverys, New York NY

## ACTS HONDURAS STEERING COMMITTEE

Suzanne Burgos, PA-C, medical care, Bethel VT  
Michael Harris, educator, Etna NH  
Robert Keene, DMD, global health, dentistry, Etna NH  
Linda Kennedy, global health, cancer prevention, Thetford Center VT  
Ethan LaRochelle, computer technology, Hanover NH  
Peter Mason, MD, medical care, Lebanon NH  
Juliana Ortego, leadership for teens, NYC, NY  
Betsy Ryebeck Lynd, elementary education, Plainfield NH  
John Sanders, MD, thoracic surgeon, Lyme NH  
Dan Saulnier, PE, water systems, Boston MA  
Dean Seibert, MD, public health, Norwich VT  
Hart Silverwood, treasurer, Bow NH  
Brad Taylor, DVM, farming support, Canterbury NH  
Judith Wallick, fundraising, Grafton NH  
Helen Whyte, community development, Lyme NH

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Jaime Lee, webmaster, Poultney VT

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