

ACTS Newsletter

Americans Caring Teaching Sharing



November 2013

www.actshonduras.org

THE MISSION OF ACTS is to promote sustainable programs for health, education, and development in collaboration with rural Honduran communities and to foster cross-cultural understanding between us.



ACTS & Community Development

We are a group based in Norwich, Vermont dedicated to *Community Development* in rural Honduras, working to strengthen communities and help people help themselves. Our focus is on the Locomapa Region, a mountainous area in Honduras where we work with 11 villages. It all began, 26 years ago, in the village of El Rosario. As life in Rosario improved, our scope broadened. Over each mountain is another village needing help. ACTS' work includes teaching, encouraging, and helping people who have little hope to set goals and see options for progress. To provide this help, ACTS volunteers pay their own way to Honduras. ACTS' work also requires materials like tools, lumber, medicine, and books. To finance this, we request charitable donations from individuals and foundations.

Donate Online to ACTS!

www.actshonduras.org

All new website is a work in progress...coming soon!

Success Story in Micro Banking

El Rosario's 25-member micro bank, which got its start with low interest seed loans, is led by two farmers, Christobal and Dionisio. Originally trained through our relationship with Sustainable Harvest International, the small bank came to ACTS in January 2013 with a major proposal. With a grant from ACTS of \$11,000 to combine loans with agricultural education, they could achieve their



goals of sustainable diversified agriculture and higher yields that could be sold. Their proposal was thoughtful, comprehensive, and exciting; so ACTS agreed to invest in the plan. Ten months later, the results are exceptional. Fourteen more families joined the group as "clients" and the original eleven families have structured an agricultural education program that involves professional educators teaching onsite for a week at a time. The most recent topic was poultry including density, diseases, feeding, and economics.



New chicken coop made possible with a loan from the micro bank.

Bringing Cervical Cancer Screening to Honduras

In an unprecedented collaborative project, specialists from Dartmouth-Hitchcock Norris Cotton Cancer Center and La Liga Contra el Cancer from San Pedro Sula are developing a comprehensive plan to prevent and screen for cervical cancer throughout Honduras. Women came on foot, horseback, and by bus from 16 villages to El Rosario to be screened and learn about prevention. Their last stop was the El Rosario Regional Education Center for conversation and a warm plate of rice and chicken cooked in the new teaching kitchen. With hundreds of excited women crowded into the Center, the talk was loud and enthusiastic. As El Rosario Health & Development Committee member, Alba Rosa, said, "No one has ever come here to do anything like this for the women. Never."

Running the Medical Clinic



Village elders get a home visit from Rosa.

Rosa, the nurse at the Clinic, is beloved by local residents who find her caring and helpful. The Pharmacy provides critical medications, birth control, and first-aid supplies. ACTS contributes by staffing the Clinic with medical professionals at least six periods each year. They see more complicated cases, help with Rosa's continuing education, and consult on Clinic management. Though Clinic fees are very low, a Helping Fund assists families who cannot afford any payment and the Transportation Fund helps pay for their travel to the Clinic on the local bus.

Funding Need:

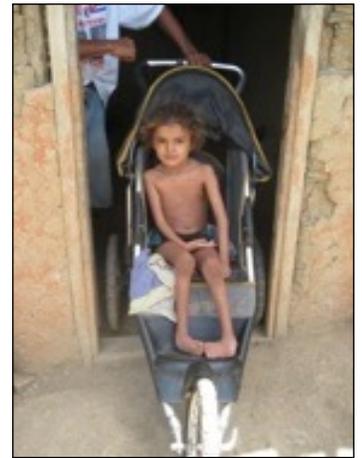
\$8,000 for medications

\$5,200 for Helping Fund

\$800 for Transportation Fund

Honduran Doctors Help Little Gloria

We are flat-out thrilled to be collaborating with Honduran medical personnel and building bridges with their institutions. Several have joined ACTS teams and their contributions have meant better understanding of culture,



politics, and medicine in Honduras. Dr. Roberto Zelaya, a physician from San Pedro Sula, and his colleague, Dr. Jose Ramon, are managing Gloria's case. Gloria is now six years old and was born with multiple skeletal birth defects. Doctors performed three surgeries on her feet and we have hope in 2014 she will learn to walk with just one crutch. Importantly, Dr. Ramon and his colleagues are raising money among Hondurans to pay for her family's travel and lodging in San Pedro when she goes for surgeries.

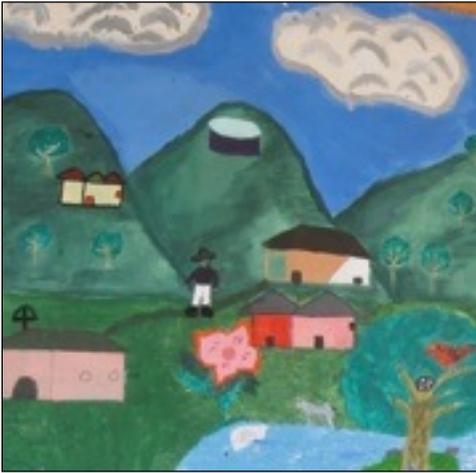
Improving Community Health



Women in Locomapa rural communities are highly motivated to improve the health of their families. Committees from five villages formed Committees and Communities United to share experiences and learn how to improve their community's health. Initially the focus has been eradicating intestinal parasites and diarrhea with hand washing and family latrines. ACTS supports families who make the commitment to dig latrine pits, with funding to build concrete slabs and proper latrine huts. The families and their friends do all the work. CCU's next topic is oral hygiene. The program will include education and training local people to clean teeth and apply fluoride sealants on children's teeth.

Funding Need: \$3000 to set up a sustainable program for oral hygiene

Water in Carrezelito



PROBLEM: The village of Carrezelito is perched atop a steep mountain. Its water source, la fuente, is far downhill; and fetching water is an all-day task for women and children.

SOLUTION:

Our partnering organization, Engineers Without Borders/Northeastern University, wrestled with possible solutions to the water downhill/people uphill conundrum for years. They eventually devised a plan for an electric pump to bring the water uphill. Seems simple enough, but there is no electricity in Carrezelito. So the first step is designing a system of poles to bring electric wires up the mountain. Dan Saulnier and his team of Northeastern alums, known as the A-Team, have raised half of the necessary funds, and we need to match their fundraising.

Funding Goal: \$12,000 to bring water to the 40 families in Carrezelito



The Library

Our wish list for the Dr. Dean Seibert Bibliotheca includes books, computers, and participatory activities. With ACTS' support, the leadership in El Rosario has developed a library so popular that usage is regulated. Teachers bring students for weekly enrichment. Some take the local bus; others walk up to 90 minutes in each direction. First-graders! The librarian, Lidenia, also works with teens studying through Maestro en Casa, a home-based middle school, and even meets with teenage boys

to mediate their issues. When we last met, she was planning an essay contest based on research materials in the Library, and oral histories from the villages' elders. Our Rotating School Library lives in eight plastic totes filled with fiction and non-fiction to supplement their standard government-issue workbooks. Each month the teachers put their current box of books on the local bus and the boxes rotate from one school to another. Now two more schools would like to join the group. In January 2014, The Children's Initiative which funded and continues to support the new middle school in El Rosario, will open its library and computer center for their students. This will further



enrich the community and promote literacy. Ethan LaRochelle oversees technology in El Rosario for ACTS, and keeps the hardware running.

Funding Goal: - \$1600 for two more Rotating School Library totes filled with books

More Micro Bank Successes



This family used their loan to build a more efficient stove. Better corn seed results in an improved yield. Seed from this corn will be sold

to other farmers next year for better productivity.





Teen Leadership in its Fifth Year

La Fuerza para el Futuro (The Force for the Future): this teen leadership development program exceeded goals in 2013 by involving 45 teens from seven villages in a busy week when they renovated three schools in three villages. Picture it: Construction negotiations led by Honduran teens, trucks full of paint, ladders, and teens descending on a village, a day of enthusiastic painting and renovation, followed by an educational health program outside under the trees. For fifteen Fuerza members, this was their fifth year. Half led the school renovation projects. The other half, 'traveling health educators,' studied oral rehydration of babies with diarrhea and preventing HPV to write the fact-filled skits. The Dartmouth Global Leadership Project led by seniors Christine Averill '13 and Juliana Ortego '13 coached the Fuerza. We are delighted that Christine and Jules are continuing their work post-graduation with ACTS



Three school were painted by the teens in one week as part of their community service.

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Donate online at
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You Can Join Us!

We are a working organization led by a Steering Committee and supported by hundreds of friends who participate with us on teams in Honduras, provide generous financial contributions, and jump into ad hoc support projects. As always, **this is a 100% volunteer organization**. If you have an idea, a skill, or a resource, we want to hear from you. Specific needs right now include know-how and materials in:

- Dentistry including oral hygiene
- Library development and training
- Educational software
- Veterinary medicine
- Agriculture

Help ACTS save \$\$ and go green!

Include your email address and we can update you electronically. ACTS will never share your information.

Thanks!