



NEWSLETTER

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Look out for our next issue in
MARCH 2006

NOVEMBER 2005

HURRICANE STAN WREACKS HAVOC



Residents digging out their home around Lake Atitlan

Guatemala is reeling from the devastation wrought by the recent Hurricane Stan, and the road to recovery is going to be along one. The official toll is 669 dead with 844 missing, but emergency workers put the real number at over 2,000. 34,968 houses in 15 of Guatemala's 22 departments have been destroyed or damaged, hundreds of communities are without water, electricity, food, medical supplies, and even

shelter for some. And the loss of agricultural income is estimated at a staggering \$388.6 million, with crop loss affecting the survival of many families.

WINGS' work has been impacted, as many of the communities we work in are cut off or without vital services. Some 526 miles of road and several major bridges need to be reconstructed. Our Coordinators have had to postpone or cancel several activities in rural areas. Pilar Marroquin, our WINGS' Youth Coordinator, is unable to finish the training she started in September with two new youth groups in Yepocapa and Acatenango. Yepocapa was cut off for several days with even

helicopters unable to get through due to the fog and Acatenango, like numerous other communities, has no running water.

Although recovery will take months, even years, WINGS will endeavor to continue its vital work. If you would like to make a contribution directly to relief work, our suggestion is: www.worldlinkpartners.org, run by a personal friend of WINGS, which will channel funds to small, grassroots NGOs working directly with those affected.



The despair of losing everything

BOARD MEMBERS GATHER IN GUATEMALA



Board Members with WINGS' staff in Zaragoza

WINGS just completed a three-day retreat for its Board Members in Antigua, Guatemala. This was the first opportunity for all Board Members to meet each other, WINGS' staff, and to visit some of WINGS' activities.

The board traveled to Sumpango to see an APROFAM mobile unit conduct a voluntary tubal ligation clinic (WINGS pays for these services). After stopping to see the making of Sumpango's famous giant

kites, we visited a typical temporary WINGS' PAP smear clinic (see photo).

Every year in October, hundreds of huge kites are made for the Mayan calendar's most colorful event on 1 November. These kites, some reaching 8 feet in diameter, are constructed every year for the Day of the Dead celebrations, when they are taken to the cemetery and launched into the sky to

release the spirits of the dead; a spectacular sight of hundreds of giant kaleidoscopic kites dancing among the clouds.

Afterwards the Board visited the new Women's Reproductive Health Center at the Behrhorst Hospital, Chimaltenango, and then observed a WINGS Youth training seminar in Zaragoza.

In the evening WINGS donors, Sally and Peter Nash generously hosted a dinner. This was followed by a

weekend of meetings in Sue Patterson's house with the assistance of volunteer facilitator Marlin Dearden. The main agenda was to create a 'Vision of WINGS' Future'; this was achieved by revisiting WINGS' mission, looking at where WINGS will be going over the next five years, and what factors might influence our direction.

The successful retreat will help WINGS management as we face critical decisions about when and where (or if) to grow. We will give more detailed information on the outcome of the discussions in our next newsletter in March 2006.



Temporary PAP smear clinic visited by the Board in Sumpango with kites hanging behind



MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO A GUATEMALAN FAMILY

(PLEASE WRITE IN CAPITAL LETTERS. THANK YOU)

All donations are tax deductible

I (name) _____ would like to help WINGS.

- I enclose a check for \$ _____
 - I would like to give a gift in the amount of \$ _____, in honor of (name) _____
- Address: _____

Please send your check and this tear-off slip to: WINGS, 793 Ashbury Street, San Francisco, CA 94117

Thank you for your support.

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BARRIER ANALYSIS RESULTS: NO REAL SURPRISES

Since January, WINGS' MPH volunteer Ashley Gamble helped create, coordinate and analyze a Barrier Analysis focused on identifying obstacles to the use of contraceptives among men and women in two small towns (one predominantly Mayan and the other *ladino*).

Participants between 17 and 50 years (50% women and 50% men) were asked a series of questions to identify eight potential barriers that can block people from taking action to improve their own or their children's lives. They represented varied demographic and religious groups (40% Catholic).

Discouragingly, 43% of women and 59% of men stated their belief that contraceptive use would cause serious illness, making this myth one of the largest barriers. 6% of women wrote in cancer as a problem associated with contraceptive use. A typical comment made was: "because I am afraid that I'll get sick."

When asked who might disapprove of their use of contraceptives, 25% of women say their partners, 30% say the church, and 34% say their families. For men, 40% say the church would disapprove, 22%

mention their families, and 15% mention their partners, indicating that these are some other common barriers.

Examples of responses are: "My husband doesn't approve", "I cannot afford them", "I am afraid to use them", "I have no information about them", "It is a sin in the eyes of God", and "the church forbids it".

In summary, the study confirms what WINGS already suspected; the church, *machismo*, lack of knowledge, and cost are major barriers to accessing family planning methods. It also points out some new issues – myths regarding health effects and that men and women are working from two very different frameworks.



Don O'Neal

SUGGESTIONS/ COMMENTS?

If you have any suggestions as to how we can improve our newsletter or what information you would like more or less of, please be sure to send us an email: info@wingsguate.org



Don O'Neal

Would you like to organize a local fundraiser for WINGS through your company, church, school, or women's group?

We appreciate help at every level. If you would like to organize an event (including selling Guatemalan handicrafts), we have detailed information about WINGS and our work, we can put you in touch with other supporters living near you, and we have a DVD documentary we can mail you.

If so, please: **EMAIL US NOW!**

APPEAL!

We are making a **direct appeal** for items that we urgently need so that our Coordinators can work more effectively in the field. Please notify us if you can contribute towards the following:

- An autoclave / pressure steam sterilizer **\$150**
- Portable announcement sound system with microphone **\$500-1,000**
- Power-Point portable projector: **\$1050**

VOLUNTEERS TO THE RESCUE AGAIN



L i s a Olason is from Seattle, where she worked for six years for NorthWest Medical

Teams. She is in Guatemala for four months. With her experience covering a broad area of fundraising and non-profits, she is providing us with valuable advice on improving

WINGS' strategy.

Emma Jane Sunderland is British but lives in Guatemala City. She is a qualified nurse with a Masters



of Science in Public Health and Health Promotion and has been volunteering for WINGS for the past two months developing a database on family planning and PAP smear test results, including analyzing the data. She is also helped develop an evaluation for our tubal ligation/ vasectomy

FACES OF WINGS' YOUTH

ROMEO (14), from Zaragoza, has had a difficult life following an accident in which he lost a leg. He is mobile only with the use of crutches, and as a result, his kidneys do not work properly requiring him to undergo an operation soon.



Even with these personal difficulties, Romeo wants to help make a difference and talk to his contemporaries about sexual health and family planning, and its huge importance. "One of the most effective ways to achieve this is to get rid of ignorance, and the best place to start is with adolescents", he comments.



OSCAR is a youth of 14 with low self-esteem, who assisted

YOUTH WINGS in Zaragoza. He has suffered greatly from the disintegration of his family. His father has a second family in the same village and when he comes to visit Oscar's family, treats his mother, his oldest sister, and himself extremely badly. Oscar told Pilar Marroquin, WINGS Youth Coordinator, "I don't want to become like my father, who has made my mother, sisters, and me suffer so much. I want my life to be different and be able to give my family a better life and future than my own. That's why I want to help YOUTH WINGS."

CLARA (15) lives in Poaquil, with her parents and brothers. Her parents have an illegal, clandestine business selling moonshine. She has suffered from constantly being surrounded by drunken men using bad language. "I don't want a life like this for my own children. That's why I want to be able to advise other adolescents against the risks that come from alcoholism, such as unwanted pregnancies and HIV/AIDS."



WINGS (Women's International Network for Guatemalan Solutions) is a non-profit organization
Please send donations to: 793 Ashbury Street, San Francisco, CA 94117, USA
To donate on line: www.wingsguate.org For more information, email: info@wingsguate.org

