



Houston
SHOULDER TO SHOULDER
Foundation

8TH EDITION
DECEMBER 2016



Dear Friends,

2016 was a momentous year for the Houston Shoulder to Shoulder Foundation. Since completing construction on a comprehensive healthcare center and dormitory in July 2014, our physicians have been equipped with the resources to treat patients who at one time lacked access to healthcare. Together, and in partnership with our Honduran colleagues, we are empowering the people of Santa Ana with better health while also building a new generation of health professionals who can provide optimal care and improve health in rural, resource-poor areas.

But our work is not yet done. This year, we are working to improve dental and eye care for patients by providing expertise and equipment during our international brigades. We are also implementing a comprehensive Zika tracking and prevention program with the help of the local health committee in Santa Ana. Your generous support makes all of this possible! Please continue to join us as we work shoulder to shoulder with our Honduran colleagues to promote health and prevent suffering.

With deep gratitude for your continued support,

Robert Parkerson, M.D.
President, HSTS Foundation



IN HIS SHOES: A MONTH IN SANTA ANA

University of Houston undergraduate Swati Mahapatra recently sat down with HSTS board member and M.D./Ph.D. candidate Neima Briggs to discuss his research and how his month working in the Santa Ana clinic brought him closer to understanding the challenges faced by those living in rural Honduras.

Can you briefly describe your research and how it helps the people living in and around Santa Ana?

First and foremost, research has allowed us to know the prevalence of eight of the most common gastrointestinal parasites. That information gives us a chance to look at new treatment options for children and adults which means we can provide more specialized care. Second of all, we bring down more equipment like microscopes that allow the clinic to diagnose parasites, not just during brigades, but year-round. Our research samples are also being used to develop vaccines against neglected tropical diseases. Human samples are used to screen vaccine candidates to see if any illicit a protective-like response or allergic type response.

What did you take away from living in the community long-term?

A month long trip allowed me to feel connected to the community. I got a better idea of what life was like day to

day. I was filled with a real sense of understanding of what it's like to live with parasites, hunger, and fear.

Here, we are blessed to think five, even ten, years into the future. There, they don't have that blessing. It really galvanized my desire to continue with global health work.

Do you think these experiences will affect how you interact with patients in the future?

In Honduras, and other parts of the world, doctors have an expectation of fulfilling social, community, and other needs along side medical needs. In the US, doctors have a narrower role. People

leave their countries for so many reasons and it's difficult for us to visualize what it must be like fleeing from violence, hunger, or the drug trade. Once you are able to recognize that, I think you are able to see the patients as people and not just individuals trying to take advantage of a system.



M.D./Ph.D. candidate Neima Briggs.

REFLECTIONS FROM THE BEDSIDE

This past August, riding the bus along the bumpy and hardy Honduran mountains to the clinic, my first glimpse of the Honduran fortitude and unmet medical needs was a pedestrian we passed. An older gentleman laboriously limped along the rocky terrain with his right leg supported by a crutch and left arm placed in a sling, seemingly without any town or shelter nearby. Arriving at the clinic, the exposure to orthopedic, minor trauma, and puncture wounds continued. Other conditions we encountered included high blood pressure, general aches and pains, headaches, anxiety, insomnia, rashes, and chronic coughs. Often patients walked 2-5 hours in the dark for an early morning clinic arrival.



While we were eager to provide medical attention, my heart was more burdened to leave them with lasting healing - Jesus' eternal healing. Learning more about the difficult medical, familial, or social challenges faced in the community, there was much that human hands could not fix. Many times my 'tools' consisted of a listening ear or prayer. My experience in Santa Ana has brought me great satisfaction as a provider. However, my greatest joy is knowing that I will get to see some of these dear brothers and sisters again in heaven one day!

Joy Vonk, PA-C

Casa El Buen Samaritano

CONFRONTING ZIKA: A STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Shelby Ragsdale
Undergraduate, University of Houston

When we first arrived at the Santa Ana clinic in May, the news of the growing Zika epidemic was still fresh in our minds. Our group of pre-medical students was immediately divided into teams and tasked with one of three goals: educate the community about the virus and its vectors, minimize potential mosquito breeding sites through trash collection, and develop a system for community-wide fumigation. We knew that our group had just one week to make a lasting impact on the long-term health of the community, but we also didn't have much of an idea of how to accomplish this.

Thankfully, Dr. Carol Gomez, the clinic's medical director and local Honduran, was there to help us along the way. With her experience educating physicians and students about healthcare in Honduras, Dr. Gomez guided us through the many challenges we faced throughout the week. When one group struggled to communicate with the volunteers participating in the fumigation training program, she suggested they create a manual with photos and instructions translated in Spanish. Before our feet hit the gravel in Santa Ana, Dr. Gomez was coordinating with the local schools so we could have a space to speak with families about preventing mosquito bites and the possible risks associated with Zika infections. Without the knowledge and support of locals like Dr. Gomez, the possibility of implementing a self-sustaining health program would have been inconceivable.

During one of our last nights at the clinic, after holding a ceremony for the volunteers that had completed the fumigation training program, everyone gathered upstairs to celebrate. As one of our team members put it: "We watched the volunteers of the fumigation team become the leaders of the community." Sitting around the table, the pride on the faces of the volunteers we had worked alongside proved that whether or not Zika could be stopped, there would always be people in Santa Ana willing to work to establish their right to healthcare.



The volunteer fumigation team from Santa Ana.



5 WAYS YOU CAN HELP

1 Shop

Register your Amazon account at smile.amazon.com and Amazon will donate 0.5% of your purchase to our organization each time you shop.

Donate 2

Make a donation online or by mail by visiting our website or sending checks to our P.O. box. Learn more about how your donation will be used on our website.

3 Celebrate

Join us April 8, 2017 at the Forest Club in Houston for our 9th Annual Gala and help support our mission to establish sustainable healthcare programs in rural Honduras. Tickets are available at our website.

Join us 4

Learn more about our brigade program on our website, or send an email to brigades@houstonshouldertoshoulder.org to find out about our upcoming trips.

5 Stay in touch

Visit our website to sign up for our email newsletter so you'll never miss another step on our journey to sustainable healthcare.

"I love being able to see my community grow and flourish. Sharing the clinic's resources with my community has given me a lot of happiness and introduced me to kind and generous people around the world."

Olinda Diaz
Pharmacy technician, Santa Ana clinic



"When we were introduced to the group of volunteers from Santa Ana, the first thing they said was thank you, and the second thing they said was how can we help."

Ahad Azimuddin
Undergraduate, University of Houston

JOIN THE MOVEMENT

Your donations equip the community of Santa Ana with the resources and skills necessary to confront the many factors that contribute to both poverty and poor health. Please help us continue this journey by making a contribution or visiting our website to learn more about how you can help.



"Our month in Honduras provided me with a far greater understanding of international field research and the nuances of conducting research in cultures outside of our own."

Viviana Salom, M.D.

"It was a pleasure seeing the children's enthusiasm and how both their communities and teachers strive to help them develop healthier habits and incorporate the knowledge the clinic has provided them with into their lives."

Myrna Katalina Serna, M.D.



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