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## Note from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

I hope this finds you well, enjoying your summer, engaging the outdoors, nature, friends and family. The summer of 2013 has been a busy one for Health Horizons International and its partner communities, as a number of exciting projects are underway at full speed!

HHI is currently hosting several academic researchers and interns working on a variety of projects, ranging from the community sanitation project covering Negro Melo and Arroyo de Leche, and setting the baseline for a long-term impact study of HHI's work with patients living with chronic disease, to developing locally validated community health education materials and launching new institutional partnerships.

As always, I am humbled by the generosity many of you have shown by supporting HHI and its partner communities in the Dominican Republic. With your contributions, be they monetary, in-kind, or through service as a volunteer, you have proven that the HHI network of concerned, global citizens can provide tangible support in the form of access to health care services, prevention education, skills-building and access to vital medicines for those facing the dual burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases, compounded by poverty.

Just about everyone within the HHI network agrees that our talented, committed team of Community Health Workers form our most inspiring group of stakeholders. In HHI's relationship with them, we continue to learn, while striving to support them with professional development opportunities in community organizing, leadership, community health care and prevention. With mutual commitment and respect, HHI's extended team really is like an extended family!

So please, as you are enjoying your summer months, consider making a contribution to HHI to help it meet its mission, together with solid community buy-in and commitment. Thank you so much for your continued support!

Please feel free to write me with any comments or questions, or visit us on Facebook or the Blog!

Many thanks,

Paul

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**Thank You Utah Valley Regional Medical Explorers  
and Dream Project**



In mid-June, HHI received a visit from the Utah Valley Regional Medical Explorers—a group of about forty high school students and medical professionals visiting the country on an annual service learning expedition, with an emphasis on exchange, health and education. The visit was facilitated by our good friends at the Dream Project, based in the town of Cabarete. The group helped us organize and file

hundreds of medical records to our new updated standards, which was a huge help, saving our local staff many many hours of work. We are very grateful to them for their efforts and wish the students the best of luck moving forward and getting involved in the health field!

## CHW Spotlight: Dania Balbuena



*Dania, center, with fellow CHWs*

Dania Balbuena is a Community Health Worker in Pancho Mateo known for excellent rapport with her HHI patients and a clear understanding of medical issues that affect her community. Dania is not afraid to speak very directly with her patients related to lifestyle change to improve their health. She was one of the first HHI CHWs to initiate a walking group for weight loss in her community. When many of the women in the walking group actually gained weight, due to increasing their eating while increasing their exercising, Dania laughed and said "Well, I guess we learned we need to address the eating too!"

Dania was the first HHI Community Health Worker to have a patient permanently go off his medications for hypertension due to lifestyle change decreasing his blood pressure. With her high level of knowledge and skills, Dania provides one-on-one orientation about the CHW program and HHI's patient care to international medical students, interns, and volunteers. Her willingness to both learn and teach others is strengthening HHI and her community. Muchas gracias Dania!

## Community Health Worker Annual Family Celebration



On Saturday, July 13th the entire team of HHI's Community Health Workers and their families enjoyed a celebration of pool-frolicking, music, an abundance of fresh fruit and of course, pizza! There was volleyball, basketball, dominoes and checkers, as well as many games in the pool. Also very exciting was the surprise appearance of HHI's former Executive Director and current Board Member, Laura McNulty, to share in the celebration! All the CHWs collectively read their "Oath of Commitment to their Community," which





served to ground everyone in the importance and impact of their service, and it was very impressive. Stories were shared, and all were beaming with pride. This annual event is always a great way to recognize our extended team. Many thanks to all the CHWs and their friends and loved ones, and HHI staff and volunteers who participated.

## Thank You Leniza!

It is with great enthusiasm that Health Horizons thanks Leniza Tineo for her hard work and dedication over the past 12 months volunteering with Health Horizons as a Medical Case Manager within HHI's Clinical Program. Leniza split her time between HHI in Montellano and the Dream Project, based in Cabarete, enabling her to gain valuable experience working with two organizations as an agent for change in both the health and education sectors in the Dominican Republic.

Leniza helped patients, whom HHI doctors had identified with serious health conditions that HHI could not independently treat, to navigate the often complex and burdensome local health care system to access needed referral health care services. She accompanied patients to medical specialist exams, surgeries, and follow-up appointments, supporting them from beginning to end of their case processes, including post-operation home visits. Leniza supported HHI patients in need of gynecological surgeries, vision surgeries, physical therapy rehabilitation, orthopedic surgery, kidney treatment, and more. Read more about the Referral Program [HERE!](#)

Leniza, who is bilingual, with a BA in Social Work from NYU but born in the Dominican Republic, is known for her "can do" attitude, positive rapport with all of her patients and local medical professionals, and as an outstanding team player on the HHI clinical team. Check out her recent blog post about her experience assisting a father help his son on the [HHI BLOG](#).



## Latrine Community Organizing



The first community meeting for the Arroyo de Leche and Negro Melo Sanitation Improvement Project spearheaded its efforts in the church in Negro Melo. Members drew community maps with roads, homes, rivers, mountains, and potential sources of contamination.

The sanitation project is funded by a [grant from the German Embassy](#), and is being co-led by CHW Ribe and summer volunteer Kelly. The goal of the project is to ensure adequate sanitation facilities for approximately 65 households across the two communities.

## Welcome Dr. Jutta Lindert!



Jutta Lindert, PhD, MPH, MA comes to HHI from Ludwigsburg, Germany. She and her graduate student, Elisabeth Schenker, are working with HHI to evaluate the impacts of Health Horizons' programs and to research public health conditions and trends in the region where we work. Jutta is a professor of public health and is widely published on the subjects of epidemiology, mental health and well-being. Among the vast number of positions held, Jutta has been an Adjunct Scientist at the Harvard School of Public Health and Head of the Research Institute of the University of Ludwigsburg. She is President of the Public Mental Health Section of the European Association of Public Health (EUPHA) and is also an Advisor for the World Health Organization for Europe.

## Welcome Elisabeth!

Working closely with Dr. Lindert is her graduate student, Elisabeth Schenker, from the Protestant University of Applied Sciences in Ludwigsburg, Germany. Together with Jutta and input from HHI, Elisabeth is preparing and implementing research instruments including pilots, questionnaires and case studies.



## Welcome Jessica and Kelly!



Jessica Gaulter, a medical student at the University of Iowa, is here for the summer with the goal of researching and creating a catalog combining existing health materials and developing new culturally-adapted materials in Spanish and Kreyol to be used by Community Health Workers, specifically on the subjects of diabetes and hypertension.

Kelly Vasklamp, BA (former AMIGOS volunteer and field supervisor), joins us this summer from Houston, TX to support the implementation of the Sanitation Project in Arroyo de Leche and Negro Melo.

Health Horizons International is committed to improving community health and expanding access to primary health care in partnership with communities affected by poverty in the Dominican Republic.

**Thank you for your support and belief in our cause.**



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