Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

I am constantly reminded of the meaningful value of collaborative efforts of people involved with Health Horizons in the Dominican Republic. In our most recent Medical Service Trip (Operativo) in early September, a new friend of the organization, Dr. Nuyerling Vargas, a young Dominican physician from Santo Domingo, volunteered for the entire week alongside our team of doctors visiting from the US. Like the American MDs and medical students who volunteer with HHI, she spent her vacation contributing her time to provide health care to fellow Dominicans with scant resources in need of quality services.

In the Dominican Republic, as in many parts of the world, the culture of volunteerism is not widely embraced, with little opportunity for personal participation. Yet Dr. Vargas continuously inspired all of us working alongside her while she gave her time and talent, playing an important cultural bridge-building role throughout the week.

To wrap up this Fall’s Operativo week, the Board of HHI planned a special Friday afternoon BBQ to thank and recognize all the Community Health Workers who contribute year-round to their communities’ health through numerous efforts and activities. However, in a surprise twist, it was the Community Health Workers who caught Chair Dr. Craig Czarsty and Vice-Chair Dr. Brad Wilkinson off guard by presenting them and the HHI staff with plaques of recognition for their tremendous efforts over the years giving through HHI!
Vice-Chair Dr. Brad Wilkinson and Chair Dr. Craig Czarsty with CHWs

While HHI continues to provide access to quality health care, training and accompaniment to communities organizing and advocating for improved standards of community health, none of these accomplishments could be possible without you, our friends who have continuously supported these efforts. Please consider making a donation today to Health Horizons. Your contributions are making our efforts at ensuring improved health a reality for communities in the Dominican Republic.

Thank you so much for your continued support! Please feel free to write me with any comments or questions, and visit our Website, Facebook page, or the Blog!

Many thanks,

Paul
guggen@hhidr.org

September Medical Service Trip
The Fall 2013 Operativo was very successful with four full days in the communities of Arroyo de Leche, Negro Melo, Pancho Mateo and Severet. We had a wonderful team of physicians, staff, and volunteers. Visiting us were four international MDs and one international medical student treating patients in the clinic. Two Dominican MDs and a pharmacist also served in the clinic throughout the week providing excellent service across the board. Sixteen trained Community Health Workers worked in lab, triage, pharmacy, translating, intake, and organizing clinic flow, and five interpreters translated for the doctors seeing patients.

- **300+** patients from age 2 months to 101 years old were treated for everything from heart disease to parasites.
- **140** Chronic Care Patients with Hypertension, Diabetes, Epilepsy and Asthma were provided with trimestral medical consult and on-going medication.
- **27** Chronic Care Patients in the community of Pancho Mateo signed up for the new Healthy Lifestyles Program.

It truly was a great Operativo! A special thanks to Farmacia Montellano for providing a local pharmacist, Ana, for three days to help in the clinic’s pharmacy. Also, of course, thanks to CHWs, translators, doctors and pharmacists, drivers, and food providers. And thanks our visiting volunteers! Lucy Hornstein, Bill Metzker, Andrew Ropp, Sarah Banks, Nuyerling Vargas, Linda Gifford, and Brad Wilkinson. Now we look forward to the next one in January 2014!

## Healthy Lifestyle Program

On September 25 in Pancho Mateo, HHI launched the new Healthy Lifestyle Program "Sano y Feliz" meaning healthy and happy in Spanish. HHI's Chronic Care Program patients will now have the chance to come together weekly to support each other and learn about healthy cooking, physical activity, and how to set achievable goals for healthy living.

### Sanitation Project in Arroyo de Leche and Negro Melo
The project is in full swing! Over the past two months we've held numerous community meetings and activities focused on latrine construction, team-building and health education including:

* Applying the community needs assessment/census results to ensure 70 families in need receive latrines
* Community maps focused on poor sanitation and contamination risk areas
* Electing Sanitation Committee members and assigning roles and responsibilities

*Identifying "good, bad and normal" health and hygiene behaviors and discussing the potential effects of these behaviors on community health

In August, beneficiaries began digging their latrine pits. For two days the community came together to fill a truck with rocks from the nearby river for construction. The masons are working continuously—busy fortifying latrine pits with river rock and concrete in preparation for placing the concrete slab and upper structure. This important step prevents erosion and improves stability. The soil is so poor in the area that many old latrines collapsed because they lacked proper foundation. Marc Evens and Kelly Vlasklamp conducted health and hygiene education sessions at the local public school in Arroyo de Leche.

CHW Spotlight: Carlos Castillo
Nearly three years ago, Pancho Mateo resident Carlos “Carlito” Castillo began his work with HHI as a Community Health Worker (CHW) in his town, caring for a caseload of elderly patients requiring special help and supervision to treat their hypertension and diabetes. One year ago, having demonstrated exceptional leadership, medical monitoring skills, creativity, and earned respect by his peers, Carlos was promoted into the position of Community Health Worker Coordinator. With one foot in the office and another in the field, Carlito has thrived as the CHW Coordinator, providing in-the-field training and support for all of the CHWs both in preparation and follow-up for HHI’s Medical Service Trips and throughout the year. Additionally, he helps manage the HHI Pharmacy and Medical Records System, and serves alongside HHI’s year-round Dominican Internal Medicine Physician, Dr. Medina, in managing patient care. Carlito’s ability to take initiative, think outside the box, and approach challenges with creative solutions is moving HHI forward. Thank you Carlito!!

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.