Note from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

It’s been an exciting first quarter for Health Horizons this year. We kicked off January with another successful Medical Service Trip composed of a team of HHI veteran volunteer doctors and a new group of Physician Assistant students from Quinnipiac University. Also in January we welcomed a brand new staff member to the HHI team—Elizabeth Geier, the new Director of Public Health Programs (learn more about Elizabeth below in this newsletter). In February, we inaugurated a collaborative sanitation project implemented in two communities through HHI, funded by the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Dominican Republic. 2014 is also a year of making new friends through events and developing collaborative partnerships to better achieve community health in the Dominican Republic. Please remember to stay up to date with HHI’s activities on Facebook, Blog, the website and Twitter!

With warm regards,

Paul
pguggen@hhidr.org

January 2014 Medical Service Trip
Thanks to the January 2014 MST team for carrying out yet another great medical service trip. Impact, efficiency, and fun were key themes throughout the week of January 11-18th. Thanks to all the visiting volunteer MDs including: HHI Board Vice Chair Dr. Brad Wilkinson, HHI Board Chair Dr. Craig Czarsty, Dr. Anne Brewer and Dr. Sandra Hughes. Also a special thanks to all the volunteer Physician Assistants students from Quinnipiac University: Mary-Kate Almeida, Nicole Cottle, Heather Dimock, Loriann Giovanelli, Patricia Kazak and Jennifer Platt. Together with the HHI Staff and extended team including 17 Community Health Workers, four translators, and local doctor, HHI consulted with nearly 400 patients over four days in the communities of Negro Melo, Arroyo de Leche, Severet and Pancho Mateo, growing its Chronic Care Program to 150 individual patients receiving year-round medical attention for diabetes, hypertension, asthma and epilepsy.

**HHI Welcomes Elizabeth Geier**

In January Elizabeth joined HHI as its new Director of Public Health Programs. Hailing from New Mexico, she brings six years of experience managing public health programs in Asia and Latin America. Elizabeth holds an MS in International Health through the TropEd program, including study in England, Germany, and Thailand. Her work has focused on community-led approaches to improving health as well as health system strengthening in the areas of disease prevention, behavior change and health promotion, monitoring and evaluation and improved engagement between government health systems and communities. Read more about Elizabeth [here](#).

**Inauguration of Community Sanitation Project**
On February 24th the communities of Negro Melo and Arroyo de Leche celebrated the inauguration of 50 new latrines and septic tanks for their citizens. The project was made possible by a $20,000 grant from the German Embassy, and a special working partnership between HHI and the communities.

Special guests attending the event were Anja Kersten, the Commercial and Partnership Attaché for the German Embassy to the Dominican Republic and Dr. Vicente Depeña, the Coordinator for Health Programs for the Ministry of Health for Puerta Plata. Representing both communities were Mr. Gregorio Alcántara, the Towns’ Council President, who was joined by Mr. Valentín Sánchez and Mrs. Ortensia Sosa of the local Sanitation and Hygiene Committee. Additionally in attendance were all the beneficiary families and the HHI team.

HHI Participated at Mojito-Extreme Festival

On March 15th members of the HHI team and CHWs provided free blood pressure readings of visitors of the Mojito Extreme Festival in Cabarete. The fair allowed people to shop local crafts, learn about HHI and enjoy a good time.

Piano Night Event
On Friday, April 11th HHI will host an exceptional evening of piano music at Maraja restaurant in Cabarete. Doors open at 7PM. Thomas Törnheden, a classically trained jazz pianist and professor of music in Stockholm, Sweden, will explore Caribbean and Brazilian rhythms, as well as innovative and standard jazz numbers, joined by renowned vocalists Anthony Jefferson and Mary Horan.

If you are in the Dominican Republic, don’t miss this chance to share an evening of musical talent and meet Health Horizons International’s team and learn about HHI’s work promoting community health. More information here.

Thank You to Our Winter 2014 Volunteers

Bilingual Physician Assistant Liz Ortiz accomplished an important feat when she stepped off the plane in the D.R. from the States this past January to volunteer for 2 weeks with HHI, providing patient care in our partner communities. Liz became the first certified PA to come serve at HHI who had also previously been here as a PA student. A graduate of the Quinnipiac University PA Program, an HHI partner, and now working in a New England Clinic, Liz first came to serve on a medical service trip with HHI in 2009 when HHI was just a new upstart and our treatment and education programs were just beginning. This January, as she went home to home visiting Chronic Care patients with the HHI Community Health Workers (CHWs) and providing Health Worker education, Liz said she was impressed by how far HHI has come in the areas of patient care, making a larger scale impact, and sustainability. Huge thanks to Liz Ortiz for supporting the CHWs and providing great patient care in our partner communities this winter. And congratulations to the HHI-QU partnership – it’s official! Our first graduated HHI-QU professional PA returned to the D.R. this year!
HHI was also pleased to welcome back medical student Eric Weber from Tufts Medical school for his third volunteer experience with HHI this January. Eric collaborated with the CHWs, PA Liz, and the clinical programs staff by providing patient care, wound care, and training to the CHWs. Big thanks go to Eric for spending his "time off" helping HHI’s patients year after year!

An HHI Success

HHI was pleased to welcome HHI patient Jansel Garcia back home to the Dominican Republic in January 2014. After almost 2 years of multiple surgeries, recovery and rehab at Shriners hospital in Boston following a motorcycle accident in the D.R. that nearly cost him his leg, Jansel - who entered treatment as a teen and finished as a young adult - was able to return to his family in the D.R. healthy and walking this New Year. He and his family send special thanks to Shriners, and to all of the HHI supporters who helped raise special funds to get him to Boston, as well as those from HHI who welcomed him and made him feel at home there in Boston during his long stay at the hospital. Now that he can walk again and is back in the D.R. Jansel plans to finish high school, get a good job, and help take care of his family.

Your contribution will enable us to provide medication, preventive health care services, and specialty medical care to families living in poverty. It will also support on-going efforts to build community health through our year-round community health workers program, medical service trips, and diverse public health programs.

Please considering making a donation today to support our cause.

DONATE

Our mission is to improve community health by building local capacity for quality primary care and public health.