



An international  
development  
and refugee aid  
organization

# Concern America Newsletter

In service to  
impoveryshed peoples  
around the world  
since 1972

Summer 2014

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

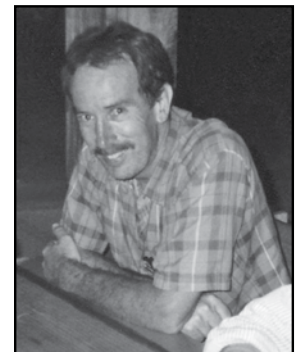
Dear Friends of Concern America,

Warm greetings! Concern America is an international development and refugee aid organization that provides long-term solutions to support economically impoverished communities throughout the world. Recognizing that lasting transformation begins by engaging communities in the solutions to their problems, Concern America's training of community members in health, sanitation, and income-generation, etc., builds upon their indigenous knowledge and experiences so that the villagers themselves become their own health care providers, water system builders, and cooperative business members. This approach maximizes resources, saves and sustains lives, and builds community and civil society in remote, often war-torn regions of our world.



A very good example of our approach to development has been our many years of involvement with the people and in the country of El Salvador. During that country's horrific civil war in the 1980s, Concern America supported Salvadoran refugees who fled to Honduras for safety, spending four years in the refugee camps, and then accompanying them when many were able to return home in 1984. As our longest running project, an incredible group of more than 30 field volunteers (see below) brought hope in a time of chaos by providing skills-training and support so that the Salvadoran people could provide their own health and related services in a region where none existed; where travel was dangerous; where health care was too expensive. As a result of these many years in the country, and the work that is now carried out by the Salvadoran people themselves, Concern America has transitioned out of El Salvador as of May 1 of this year.

We remember and honor all of those who served in the Honduran refugee camps and in El Salvador, and especially the organization's longest serving field volunteer in the region, Tom Gabriel, RN (1983-2014). Tom was the first Concern America volunteer in El Salvador, and he selflessly gave 30 years to the Salvadoran people. All of us at Concern America cannot thank him enough for everything he has done, and we wish him the very best as he continues his life's work in El Salvador.



Thank you to everyone who has been part of this incredible history!

With peace,

John Straw  
Executive Director



### The amazing group of Concern America field volunteers in El Salvador and the camps in Honduras:

*David Bedell, MD (1986-1993), Patricia Bellas, MD (1982-1983), Rob Boudewijn, LVN (1982), Paula Brentlinger, MD (1988-1989), Mauricio Calderon, MD (1993-2000), Carole Clarke, MPH (1981), Tom Gabriel, RN (1983-2014), Gordon Hannigan-Luther, MD (1994-1995), Kris Hannigan-Luther, BA/Sociology (1994-1995), Anne Hoff, RN (1983-1984), Bobbie Johnston, BS/Nutrition (1982-1988), Nora Kramer, RN (1987-1988), Diane Kuntz, MPH (1981-1984), Steve Lewis, BA/Sociology (1991-1994), Audrey Lindahl, RN (1982-1983), Mary Maloney, RN (1983-1990), David E. McCarthy, MS/Public Health Education (1982-1983), Maureen McKenzie, RN (1983), Cynthia Morin, RN (1982), Phil Myers, BS/Botany (1996-1998), Kathleen Owston, BA/Audiology (1991-1994), Jo Pasqualucci, MS/Developmentally Disabled (1983), Kathy De Riemer, MS/Zoology (1982-1983; 1992), Jake Rindfleisch, BA/Anthropology (1997-1998), Sarah Shannon, BS/Economics (1982-1984), Elizabeth Shepard, MPH (1984-1985), Michael Stone, BA/Anthropology (1982), Ellen Sudak, BA/Health Education (1988-1990), Joan R. Thompson, MPH (1983-1984), Martha Thompson, MPH (1983-1984), David J. Tipping, BA/International Relations (1982), Mark Tracy, MD (1983), Gus Vaninetti, BA/Health Education (1983), Ellen Willis, BA/Community Health (1982)*

# MARK YOUR CALENDAR! UPCOMING CONCERN AMERICA EVENTS

## EDUCATION EVENTS

Concern America's annual **"Developing a Heart that Yearns for Justice" seminar** will take place September 18 – 20, 2014, at the organization's *Anam Cara* (Soul Friend) Center in Santa Ana, California. The seminar is a unique, collaborative, and practical workshop that focuses on the themes of Building Community, Global Justice, and Spirituality. More information and registration forms are available online, or call Concern America.

Another not-to-be-missed education opportunity is **Concern America's monthly Education Night!** On August 22, 2014, long-time Concern America field volunteer Oliver (Oli) Style is traveling all the way from Spain to visit the home office and will give a talk on the organization's appropriate technology projects (water, solar energy, fuel-efficient stoves); Oli is a great speaker, and every month this event brings a new and engaging film, speaker, topic, and moving discussion.



## LEGACY YEAR UPDATE

Concern America's Legacy Year was introduced in the Spring newsletter, and includes:

- Legacy Gatherings of long-time supporters of Concern America to honor Marianne Loewe and Denis Garvey and the legacy of Concern America. Five gatherings have been held to date, and a total of at least eight more are being planned, including a live-stream gathering for anyone around the world to join!
- A new Legacy Fund for special gifts to Concern America which, to date, has raised more than \$50,000!
- A culminating event, the John O'Donohue Integrity Award, to take place in Spring 2015.



Contact Concern America for more information about any of these Legacy components, and stay tuned for personal invitations to get involved!

## SEVENTH ANNUAL "GROW A GLOBAL HEART" AUCTION: OCTOBER 25, 2014

Last year more than 120 people gathered for Concern America's "Grow a Global Heart" Auction event and raised \$45,000, more than doubling the results of the year before. We are already gathering items for the 7th Annual Auction, from beautiful, one-of-a-kind weavings to adventures in southern California. Join us on October 25 to learn more about Concern America and support our health, sanitation, and income-generation activities in Latin America and Africa. Call or email to make sure you are on the Auction mailing list!

## BINGO NIGHTS ARE BACK!

*Chapter One:* The Modern Local restaurant in Santa Ana will once again host Bingo Nights in support of Concern America, every Monday night in August from 7:00-9:00 p.m.

# STORIES FROM THE FIELD

Concern America and St. Joseph Health System, based in Orange, California, have built a deep and mutually supportive relationship over many years which includes visits by St. Joseph doctors, nurses, and administrators to the organization's health program in Guatemala. In May of this year, three physicians, their spouses, and Concern America Board member Doreen Chesebro, all from St. Joseph Heritage Healthcare, traveled to Guatemala to learn from the Concern America-trained Health Promoter Practitioners (HPPs), Midwives, and Concern America field personnel, as well as to lead an advanced course (as requested by the HPPs). What follows are two reflections from the visit and how Concern America's relationship with St. Joseph is a moving example of lives being touched and transformed, both here in the U.S. and in Guatemala, through the work of the organization.

From Concern America Board Member Doreen Chesebro (Director of Mission Services, St. Joseph Heritage Healthcare)

*During our visit to the Health Promoter Practitioner teaching clinic in Las Cruces, Dr. Brian Boyd, Medical Director of St. Joseph Hospice, Palliative Care Services, led an advanced course with the HPPs on the treatment and care of people nearing end-of-life, bringing healing to these remote communities. We watched as he taught Concern America field volunteer Susan how*



*to administer a nerve block, who, in turn, taught the HPPs how to do the procedure. Within this advanced education course, three HPPs themselves were healed of long-term pain in their head or neck with this procedure. It was exciting to see the Promoters' response as they realized they could help the people in their communities by relieving such pain. Dr. Boyd also shared practices that could relieve the discomfort experienced by people as they approach the end-of-life. The Promoter Practitioners were touched by the idea that they are further able to address this important time of life by reducing discomfort and promoting greater wholeness for patients and their families.*

From Dr. Michael Gilbert, a Physician Leader at St. Joseph Heritage Healthcare (this was his third visit to Guatemala with Concern America)

*What makes this experience unique and important is the opportunity for physicians to both observe and to serve. By traveling to the Petén and delivering an advanced course to the HPPs, by hearing the Promoters' questions, and by seeing and directly participating in the care the Promoters provide, we physicians can see, feel, touch and understand both the need and the high level of quality being delivered. This grabs our attention, it connects us. We want to remain connected, to continue to serve, both the Promoters and the people of the Petén... We are made better for the experience, and our patients [in the U.S.] receive better care from our experiences.*



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