

CONCERN AMERICA

Quarterly Newsletter

concernamerica.org

Fall 2023

Dear Friends,

Earlier this summer we shared some big news: Concern America began its first new project in nearly 20 years! In just a few short months, the new community health program around the San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato region of central Mexico is blossoming in incredible ways:

- More than 40 health promoter practitioner candidates from 26 communities have been identified and will begin training in early 2024 to bring local, quality, and affordable health services in their rural communities. Already they have gathered twice to review curriculum and confirm community participation.
- Joining nutritionist and project organizer Pilar Quintanilla, Dr. Deniss Recendiz became part of the new team on September 1! She will be one of the key trainers of the new practitioners.
- The team continued to deepen relationships in the region including with grassroots organizations, a local nonprofit, and a local diocese with access to a centralized training facility.
- As a direct result of the early generosity of the Concern community, we have already secured our office space, team housing, and a project vehicle, so essential even in these early stages!



In support of our new effort, we launched a campaign to fully fund the project through 2026, an estimated cost of \$280,000. As mentioned, a generous family has pledged to match all donations up to half of this amount, and to date, we have raised \$80,000 towards our \$140,000 goal! If you would like to support this new project, please return the enclosed insert with your gift. **All donations will automatically be doubled, including everyone who becomes a monthly donor.**

As we are in these initial stages with this project, we are inspired by how community-based health care has transformed the communities and people that we work with elsewhere. On page two of this newsletter, we share stories of the advanced health promoters of Concern America's health program in Guatemala, as they train the new generation of practitioners there.

Please join us in welcoming Deniss to the Concern community, supporting this expansion of our impact in Mexico, and in ensuring that all of our community-centered development programs continue to grow. Thank you for making all of this possible.

With gratitude and peace,

John Straw,
Executive Director



Donate here:



New San Miguel Project Field Volunteer, Dr. Deniss Recendiz

We are overjoyed to welcome Dr. Maritza Deniss Recendiz Villa to the San Miguel de Allende Integrated Community Health Program team! Deniss was born just a couple of hours from San Miguel de Allende and attended medical school in Mexico City. She did her year of medical residency working in rural communities in the state of Chiapas - where she met a Concern America field team member, the late Dr. John Emrich. Deniss shares "with humility, good humor, and kindness, John showed me a different way of approaching health care. He taught us that in the most isolated and materially impoverished communities, community members are being trained and providing vital care. As I continued with my social service, I realized this fundamental importance of having health promoters in the communities. When this opportunity opened up, I had no doubts about joining Concern America."



When Students Become the Teachers

When the midwives and health promoter practitioners complete their trainings and are working in their communities, a key aspect of every project is continuing education. Advanced courses are held a few times every year, and for our Guatemala project this summer, these trainings were all led by the local team members themselves. In addition to being incredible health care practitioners, they all naturally excel in different areas, organically following the paths of their hearts and skills. Here are just a few examples of these practitioner-led advanced courses.

Eva, Physical Therapy:

Eva is the first recipient of Concern's new **Dr. John Emrich Education Fund** which fully supported her studies in physical therapy (she will graduate at the top of her class this fall!). While constantly teaching new skills in the clinic, Eva led a course focused on how to treat inflammation and techniques for supporting injury recuperation.



Judith and Maritza, Childbirth Complications:

Though many communities now have experienced midwives, the health promoter practitioners are often called on in emergencies and for support. Both Judith and Maritza are accomplished midwives AND health promoter practitioners, and they led the group on a review of the stages of labor and of the complications that may arise after childbirth.



Manuel, Skin Grafts:

Health promoter practitioners become the primary care providers of their communities, but many are able to do quite advanced medicine and procedures (like suturing tendons). Manuel is exceptionally skilled at skin grafts, which accelerate the healing of large, open wounds, and he taught the group various techniques using raw chickens.

Tis' the Craft Season! New Crafts Have Arrived



In addition to many of the craft program favorites, we are excited by all of the new items we have received from the artisan cooperatives this summer. To see all of the new items or make a purchase, give us a call, stop by our office, or check back regularly at marketplace.concernamerica.org. Also, we are looking for volunteers to help sell the crafts at local venues. It is easy, fun, and a huge support!

Visit
Craft Marketplace:

