

# CONCERN AMERICA

Quarterly Newsletter

SINCE 1972

Winter 2023

Dear Friends,

Warm greetings. As this year comes to a close, we are overwhelmed with gratitude by the year we have had at Concern America. From the inspiring work happening in the field to the incredible show of support and excitement from our Concern community, we are regularly reminded of what is possible when global hearts come together.

### Here are just a few advances to celebrate:

- We officially began our first new program in 20 years: The Integrated Community Health Program in San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato, Mexico. The first group of 40+ health promoter practitioner students will begin training in February of 2024, making health care services accessible to over 5,000 people.
- Health promoter practitioner students in Guatemala, Colombia, and in Chiapas, Mexico, completed their first and second years of training, expanding access to health care services to an additional 17,000 people.
- The first John Emrich Education Award recipients, health promoter practitioner and team leader, Eva Lanuza, and field team member Julia Kim, are graduating with advanced degrees: Eva as a physical therapist, and Julia as a nurse practitioner. Both are already passing along their new skills and knowledge by training other Guatemalan practitioners and midwives.
- Our home office staff grew to include Norah Dopudja, to lead the outreach to faith communities, and our new marketing and communications staff member, artist Ali Zambrano.
- Concern America was recognized with the highest rating of 100% and 4 of 4-stars by Charity Navigator, the largest nonprofit rating entity! This rating is based on financial health and organizational accountability.

All of the above, and so much more not mentioned, were a result of the generosity of the Concern community. We had the confidence to expand this year because of you. We have an amazing team, from the field, to our home office staff and board of directors, to you, who make Concern America possible.

We will continue to grow and expand our impact in 2024, further turning need into self-sufficiency, and we look forward to walking this path with you. We invite you to consider a final gift this year, or perhaps starting as a monthly donor, as you are able, to help launch the new year. Thank you for all you have done, and what we will do together in the months and years to come.

With deep gratitude and peace,



John Straw  
Executive Director



Charity   
Navigator



✦ FOUR-STAR ✦

# Re-weaving Communities

While Concern America seeks to bring health care, clean water, education, and so much more to people that have little access and opportunities, our goal is, first and foremost, to empower communities to be their own change, to transform need into self-sufficiency. We have seen time and time again that lasting change comes when rooted in a strong-woven community. As the new program in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico begins, our new field team there emphasizes this community-building focus of the work as they visit each community with health promoter practitioner student candidates. The team shares:

*“During our visits to 21 of the communities, we have realized that they have achieved so much through their struggles and experience, but they have not learned to recognize that knowledge. Each of these community leaders, most of whom are women, have done more for their community than any government or church, but they have not learned to have sufficient autonomy, self-recognition, and be empowered by what they themselves can do.*”



*“Much of the community fabric has been lost over the years. The communities have been made to believe that they need someone from outside to reaffirm their knowledge, to make it valid. They need the doctor, the politician, the organizations to arrive. All the while, it is they that are the main force of knowledge in their community. Most of the new practitioner students barely finished primary school and some middle school, and very few reached high school, but they are the experts of their own realities and needs. They know their land, their people, their work, they know each other. But that fabric has been disrupted so much that they need someone else to reaffirm them.*”

*“This work of starting a health program, this dream, begins there, in the re-weaving of the community. Together, they exchange knowledge with each other and other communities, which is strengthened by the education that we share. Once again, trust is generated amongst each of the members of each of the communities. And they will know that among them, they have each other as companions who can work together, shoulder to shoulder, each developing a different role, respecting that role and educating themselves more to be able to meet their communities’ needs together. They each become empowered little by little and then this begins to multiply in others around them, weaving a stronger and self-sustaining community.”*

## Save the Date



**Saturday, February 24, 2024**

Evening with Alicia and Ilhui

Concern America Field Volunteers in Chiapas, Mexico

**Saturday, March 23, 2024**

Walk Out of Poverty

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