

CONCERN AMERICA

Quarterly Newsletter

SINCE 1972

Winter 2024

Dear Friends,

It always begins with an invitation. Every new Concern America project is a response to a request by a locally engaged and respected group, and our newest health project in the communities outside of San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, was no different. What started with a conversation in San Miguel in the Spring of 2022 is now a full-fledged health program with the first group of 40 health promoter practitioner students well into their first year of training.

The group of practitioners—39 women and one man, representing 23 communities in the region—has now completed five week-long courses. These courses covered topics such as Nutrition, Health Exams, Environmental Health, the Digestive System, the Respiratory System, and Essential Medicines. Between the courses, Concern America's program team of Pilar, a nutritionist, and Audrey, a physician assistant, have visited each practitioner in their community, working with them side-by-side as they see patients and become their community's health care provider. Even with just a few courses, this dedicated and passionate group is already leading health and nutrition campaigns, working with children in schools, assisting new mothers, and addressing sanitation issues.

Concern America's transformational model addresses communities' most pressing needs by working with the people themselves. Despite having limited opportunities and often no formal education beyond elementary school, individuals become the primary healthcare providers for their communities. Trained with a depth of knowledge, skill, and ability comparable to nurse practitioners and physician assistants in the U.S, these community health workers are able to diagnose and treat over 80% of the health issues they see in their communities. The cost to each patient? Less than US \$5 for their consult, lab tests, and most medicines, all without having to leave their community.

With the training of 40 health promoter practitioners, over 5,000 people in the San Miguel region will now have access to a local healthcare provider and affordable, quality care for the first time. And, none of this would have been possible without the incredibly generous Concern community. Thank you.

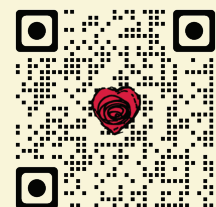
This is our year-end newsletter, arriving as many families are considering their charitable contributions. We are honored by all who have put their trust in Concern America, and invite you again to make a year-end donation. In addition to this new project in the communities surrounding San Miguel de Allende, your support also makes possible our health, water, education, and income generation programs in Chiapas, Mexico, Guatemala, and Colombia. Thank you.

May this time be one of joy and peace.

With gratitude,



Cat Quinn, BSN, RNC, MPH
Field Program Director



donate here!

Reflections on the First Year by the Health Promoter Practitioners

We started the first training full of nerves, with doubts about what would happen while we were together, whether we would all continue, if our families could manage a week without us, trying new foods, sleeping on a cot, but sharing many laughs and conversations with these new friendships that were starting to form.

“Last time I felt insecure, scared, wondering if I could do it or not... now I feel more comfortable, at ease.”
—Martha

Little by little, these course weeks have become a space of trust, where we find companions on our journey, people who make us smile, give us hope, and help us learn. We feel heard and supported in this dream of a better life for everyone.

Between courses, the learning continues. We make the seeds sown in each session flourish as we take what we have learned back to our communities, share it, and make it our own. Gardens, tree planting, talks with groups of adults and children about nutrition, measuring weight, height, and blood pressure are just a few of the actions that have begun.



“We’re all going together...”



“We discussed the topic of a healthy eating plate in the three communities, along with weight and height measurements. We prepared healthy dishes for pregnant women, children, and adults. It was empowering to work together.” —Tere

We have taken the first steps to understand our bodies. With each course, we learn more about the wonders of how they function. Perhaps now that we are getting to know them, we will take better care of them and ensure they have the health that allows us to develop and keep working together.

“Oh, I’m going to cry from emotion; this is the first time I’ve heard a heartbeat.” —Femia

Now we are woven together, diverse threads, strong, resilient, and colorful. We have come together to form a fabric that will allow us to keep moving forward. The nerves and fears have now transformed into excitement, a thirst to keep learning and sharing with our communities.

“We are walking together. For example, yesterday, I didn’t know about water, and you all taught me, you didn’t leave me behind; we’re all going together.” —Rita