

PANAMA MISSIONS

UPDATE SPRING 2019

Medical Mission Team Works in Remote Indian Community

The Embera Indian Village of Sambu, located deep in the Darien jungle (reachable only by boat or air) was the destination and focus of a Panama Missions medical team effort, February 11-19.

Arriving in Panama on Monday, the team traveled from Panama City to Sanson where they would stay overnight at the Clinic of Hope. Tuesday morning, the 16-member team traveled to Puerto Quimba to take the 3 hour boat trip to Sambu. By early afternoon, the medical team was seeing patients. Seven translators, including two Peace Corp workers, aided the effort.

Medical coordinator, **Diane Edrington, CFNP** from Long Beach, Miss., praised **Raul Cabrera**, a Sambu native and church member, for “an excellent job planning and coordinating all of the Sambu details.”



Raul Cabrera

~ Diane Edrington Posted This Report ~

“We were welcomed in Sambu by several area tribal chiefs along with the district mayor and police officials who were all very helpful with our security and transportation. We held clinics in Sambu and in several other jungle communities. Our medical team was excellent!

“**Charla Smith**, a nurse practitioner and midwife, diagnosed a pregnant teenager with pre-eclampsia. With the help of a local doctor and local military, we managed to have the girl airlifted to Panama City for an emergency C-section, saving both mother and baby.

Comments Charla: “It was a 2012 mission trip to Panama that inspired me to go back to graduate school to become a midwife. I feel like God has been preparing me all of my life for mission work like this. I hope the people of Sambu saw the love of Jesus through our actions.”



Cat Tyrney, RN, examines another pregnant teenager. In the Embera culture, most girls marry by age 16.

“Nurse Practitioner, **Mitzi Lakes** used her military emergency medicine training to perform several much-needed minor surgeries. Four of our nurses, **Shelly Logan, Celia Ware, Cat Tyrney, and Bridgette Martin**, had specialized training that was very helpful.

“We had a wonderful, mission-experienced pharmacist, **Kevin Winter**, which made treating patients much easier. Our team also distributed 20 bags of groceries and other necessities to church members in need. The money for this project was raised by **Beverly Martindale** of Batesville, Miss.”



The Clinic of Hope in Sanson was an overnight stop for the mission team headed to Sambu. The trip was sponsored by the Long Beach (Miss.) Church of Christ.



Left: Nurse Practitioner, Mitzi Lakes, uses her military emergency medicine training to perform minor surgeries.

The “MacGyver Team,” a group of men other team members believed “could do anything,” accomplished multiple construction and repair projects in the course of four days, including painting the local church building.

Left to right: Cory Williams, Anthony Smith, Robbie Kühnl and Jesse James pose for a picture after repairing the steps of this house.



Vision & Medical Mission Teams Serve the “Underserved” in Torti

The smiles on the faces of the eye surgeons, medical doctors, nurses and other support staff pictured at right are genuine. These selfless volunteers look forward to the annual trip to Panama to serve the “underserved,” and in many cases bring hope and healing to the blind and chronically ill.

Dr. Russ Burcham, ophthalmologist from Denver, has led a medical mission team to Panama since 2000, and many on his team have traveled with him for multiple years.

Torti, a small town 2 hours east of Panama City, was the selected location for the February 1-7, 2019 effort.

Renee Miller, RN, wrote this sincere and statistically impressive report on her Facebook page:

“Once again I am honored to be able to serve the wonderful people of Panama. Hundreds come to us each year in hope of receiving free health care and the possibility of restored sight. They so willingly put their lives in our hands to help them have a better life. Their complete trust in us is humbling.”

This year the eye team performed 164 cataract surgeries and almost 100 other eye procedures. More than 1,400 were evaluated and some 1,325 pairs of reading glasses were dispensed.

This 29 year old man was totally blind, unable to work or see his loved ones. Now his sight is completely restored.



General Medical Team Treats 1,200 Patients

The General Medical team led by Dr. Duke Jennings of Jonesboro, Ark., and aided by Nurse Practitioner, Betsy Dell, and other medical professionals, treated almost 1,200 patients and dispensed 225,000 OTC meds.

“We treated heart disease, diabetes and infections,” reports Jill Ewing, RN. “Many suffered from parasites, a common condition in Panama. One child had scabies with a secondary infection. Fortunately we had plenty of medicine to give for these conditions and other common complaints such as headache, stomach ache, diarrhea and constipation.”



Help was available for many conditions.



The medical and surgical teams bring all of their own equipment and supplies - equivalent to multiple thousands of U.S. dollars' worth of goods and services.



Blindness from cataracts strikes all ages (and sizes) in Panama with its proximity to the equator.



A crowd of 400 was waiting for the medical teams' arrival.

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Operation Christmas Joy: Volunteers are the Backbone

“Thanks to all who make this program possible,” is Larry Brady’s annual message to the leaders and workers in more than 75 congregations of Churches of Christ across 14 states who contribute to the effort. “Without your hard work, none of this would be possible.”

Just about every year, Larry is also quoted as saying, “Probably the best ever!” Needless to say, the Director of Panama Missions, who willingly dons a Santa Claus suit in tropical conditions and pulls hundreds of eager children onto his lap one by one, **loves** this program!

Also, just about every year, Larry and his mission team try a new approach to distributing the gifts. Of this past December 3-15 effort he reports:

“Each day we loaded our trucks and headed for new communities, sometimes quite a distance away and in difficult to reach locations. Once we arrived, the first children to see us would spread the news, and soon we would have a crowd of excited children and parents. This hopefully opens opportunities for future evangelistic efforts.”

Leaders of established congregations were provided gifts to conduct their own parties. Panamanian co-worker, **Raul Cabrera**, helped to deliver “Christmas Joy” to several remote Embera communities which required traveling five hours by boat. “Many sets of clothing and water filters were also sent to the Indian villages, where the needs are great,” Larry adds.

Visiting hospitalized children in Panama City is always part of the program. Representatives of the U.S. Embassy, the Sentafront Police and other Panamanian officials often come to observe and participate.

Anyone interested in participating in Operation Christmas Joy 2019 is urged to contact Larry Brady or Sara Bills for a Guidebook (see page 2 for contact information).

OCJ Shoppers Find Bargains at Dollar Stores

Larry and Betsy Brady stop at just about every Dollar General and Family Dollar store they see, looking for big discounts that often occur, especially at the end of summer and after Christmas. The pictured “payload” was a 90% off deal at Family Dollar in Long Beach, Miss. It produced \$810 worth of useful items, including quite a few Christmas stockings, for only \$81. Dollar General gives a helpful \$5 off \$25 coupon every week.

Tina Foster of the Ft. Deposit (Ala.) Church of Christ, shops on a regular basis for the “penny items” at Dollar General stores.

These are items that have been marked for “clearance” but for some reason, are still on the shelves at regular price. Anyone who can identify these items can purchase them for only one penny each.

Want to try? Google: “How to find penny items at Dollar General.”



Larry Brady gets a great “deal” at Family Dollar in Long Beach, Miss.

DOLLAR GENERAL



Can you find the penny items?



What do Panama children love getting for Christmas?

A Santa Claus Visit

Filled Stockings

School Backpacks, New Dresses, Dolls, Stuffed Animals & A truck full of gifts arriving in their community!

MISSION CALENDAR

Saturday, May 25 ~ 1:00 p.m.

Barbecue Picnic at Larry & Betsy Brady’s New Address

383 Ridgeway Lane ~ Hope Hull, AL 36043

Lunch at 1 p.m. Bring a side dish or dessert.

RSVP to panmission@bellsouth.net or 334-288-2458

June 3-7

Evangelistic campaign to Santiago led by J.W. Furr and sponsored by the Luverne (Ala.) Church of Christ

June 7-15

Medical, VBS & evangelistic campaign in the Darien working with the Clinic of Hope and the Sanson Church of Christ
Contact Larry Brady for details.

October 16, 17 & 18

October 16 is the deadline for Operation Christmas Joy gifts in Montgomery except for those that will be picked up on the truck route, October 17-18

December 3-15

Operation Christmas Joy trip to Panama

Clinic of Hope Serves Area Health Needs; Adjacent Sanson Church is a Spiritual Beacon

By Larry Brady

Without the Clinic of Hope in Sanson, Panama, many of the poor in this remote region would have few other options for medical care. The Clinic is staffed year-round by **Baudillo Leon**, a medical technician who can treat wounds and dispense medication for chronic conditions. For more serious conditions, he makes arrangements for transport to the nearest hospital. In many cases, Panama Missions helps financially for the extended care.

The Sanson Church of Christ is located adjacent to the clinic where minister, **Luis Tojin**, is readily available to offer spiritual guidance. On one trip, we visited in the home of a lady who had been coming to the Clinic for diabetes medication. She decided to be baptized! Because of Luis' leadership and the Clinic's valued service to the community, the Sanson Church is growing, and is highly respected in the area.

The Clinic of Hope has hosted many U.S. medical teams who work in the clinic and also travel to remote communities. A **dental office** is now completely operational, although we struggle to find U.S. dentists to travel with us. Sometimes local dentists will work with us if we provide essential supplies such as Novocain.

Each year a volunteer team of "handy men" travels to Sanson to keep the facility well maintained and to make needed improvements.

A **Special "Thank You"** to all who faithfully support the Clinic of Hope. Funds are needed more than ever since the government now requires us to buy medications for the clinic in Panama.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

By Larry Brady

"It's an inside job!"

That's what it takes in Panama: a competent "insider," like **Urian Ponce**, to handle the mounds of "red tape" required for Panama Missions to get the necessary "permissions" from the appropriate government agencies to conduct many of our programs.

For the past few years, Urian has been our valuable representative in Panama. She lives with her three children in Chiriqui, located along the Costa Rica border about 7 hours



Urian Ponce

from Panama City. Her father is minister of the Church of Christ in David, Panama.

Urian speaks fluent English and teaches in the "English as a Second Language" ministry in Panama. She is often called upon to translate for mission groups.

All of us who travel to Panama look forward to working with Urian. She demonstrates the spirit of Christ in all of her actions. She is quick with a smile or a burst of laughter. Urian, we love and appreciate you!!



The Clinic of Hope sits in a jungle setting in the remote Darien Province of Panama, constructed in 2010 by a team of ingenious volunteer builders from the U.S. Lives have been saved and souls won to Christ because of this Panama Missions' achievement.

~~ NEWS & NOTES ~~

Water Filters continue to be in demand in Panama, where many areas have contaminated water supplies. Larry Brady: "Clean water is something cherished and we are so happy to help people have it, while also sharing with them the message of "the living water" described in John 4. This program has resulted in several new Christians."



Anayansi Sanchez

Update on **Anayansi Sanchez**.

Panama Missions brought Anayansi to the U.S. in 2007 because of a serious eye infection which left her blind and in a great deal of pain in her right eye. "I will be forever grateful for the collaborative efforts of **Dr. David Floyd** of Hour Glass Optical and **Dr. Ricki Dobbs**, Ophthalmologist with 20/20 Vision, who diagnosed and treated her condition, and to

Jack Cates of Cates Optical for making the prescribed special contact lens that were needed to both relieve the pain and give her a natural look. When Jack Cates retired, Dr. Floyd generously picked up the role of providing Anayansi with the free cosmetic contact lens she continues to wear. Their concern and professional skills transformed a shy, disfigured teenage girl into the confident wife and mother of two she is today.

Yati Chami is about to complete her first year at Freed-Hardeman University where she is studying nursing. Although Yati has received some scholarship funds, she is not eligible for Federal Financial Aid. In addition to what the Bradys and several sponsors contribute, she still needs about \$6,000 per semester to continue at FHU. **If you have the heart to help Yati,**

please send donations to Panama Missions earmarked for Yati. Yati is an Embera Indian from a Christian family in Panama. She has lived with Larry and Betsy Brady since 8th grade and is an exemplary student and Christian young lady.



Yati Chami