

## Moving Right Along

In the fall of 2007, two Madison physical therapists, Jacque Polorney and Nancy Wilke, accompanied Lisa Fernandez to Nicaragua and shared their skills and enthusiasm with both children and older adults in SRW-supported programs. They gave and learned, assessed and taught, moved and danced, shared and connected. Following is Nancy's account of their time in Nicaragua.

On Nov. 2, 2007, Jacque Pokorney and I arrived in Matagalpa, Nicaragua and met Mercedes and her three children, our host family for the next five days. The cobblestone road to their house was so steep that our driver had to back the pickup truck up the street, to best use the rear wheel drive. Mercedes works at *Familias Especiales*, a program that offers services for handicapped children and their mothers and which receives material support from SRW. She was a wonderful host and generously opened her simple home to us. Jacque and I enjoyed the sweetness and friendship she and her children extended to us.

Her brick house, like many in Central America, is in a constant state of construction and repair. It



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en—the only water source in the house. Showering was done using a small pail dipped into a large plastic tub on the floor, which was filled by the hose. Next to the shower is the typical concrete sink, where all the household laundry is hand washed.

The day after our arrival, we walked over to the complex of buildings that house *Familias Especiales* and met a group of Spanish physical therapy students

who were volunteering for several months. We also met the local Nicaraguan physical therapist, Gustavo, who coordinates the physical therapy program that *Familias Especiales* offers. Their program includes therapy at the center, home physical therapy

for kids unable to be brought to the center, and horseback therapy conducted on land with horses donated by a well-to-do local coffee farmer. Gustavo had learned horseback therapy techniques in Spain and returned to Nicaragua to implement this program—the only one in the country—for *Familias Especiales*. He also made the connections with the Spanish physical therapy school for a

student internship program which brings regular volunteers to *Familias Especiales* to learn and work.

Our day started early, as we drove from house to house in the *Familias Especiales* van, picking up the children and their mothers who were going to horseback therapy. They emerged from tiny, simple brick and corrugated metal homes, but each child was freshly bathed and dressed with pride in neat, pressed clothes.

Hippotherapy (horseback therapy) involves the child sitting astride the horse outfitted with saddle and reins, while the therapist walks alongside to give whatever assistance the child needs to stay balanced in the saddle. As an assistant steadies the horse, the therapist places each child in the saddle and off they go. The students from Spain and Jacque and I assisted with positioning and stabilizing the riders. As the children are placed on the horse, their trunks straighten and their heads rise gracefully above their spine with a look of pride, confidence and joy. Each child rides along a dirt track and up and down a hill for several minutes and no one wants it to end. The rhythmic grace between horse and child is a vision of hope for more independent mobility.

Another afternoon, Jacque and I assisted in the physical therapy clinic at *Familias Especiales*. Mothers brought their children in and we worked with one child after another on the mats and on the balls, seeing children with neurodevelopmental delay symptoms such as hypotonia, poor head control and the inability to roll, sit or crawl. Working side by side with the mothers is most important so they can learn the therapy and daily handling skills that can facilitate more functional movement in their children's everyday activities.

On Nov. 7, we were driven to Jinotepe, Nicaragua and met our new hosts, Raphael and Patricia

Manzanares, a retired couple who had lived and worked in Palo Alto, Calif., for thirty years. They are now working with Guillermo Monguia, a theologian from Jinotepe, who raised money for and built *El Hogar de Ancianos* (the Old Folk's Home) several years ago out of dismay at the situation of the many homeless elderly wandering and sleeping on the streets of his hometown. The *Hogar* was built in a grove of trees, designed in a U-shape with a central patio and covered walkway. One wing has the women's rooms and the other the men's, with a couple of quiet resident rooms to the side. Along the base of the 'U' are the kitchen and dining rooms, the laundry room, the office, a small pharmacy and the main entrance. Chickens pecked in the backyard and one resident wandered the grounds with his goat.

Jacque and I have each been physical therapists for many years, both of us specializing in geriatrics, so we felt right at home at the *Hogar*. On our first morning we held a group exercise session with all 28 residents seated in a large circle in *El Rancho*, a round covered patio with open walls. Traditional Nicaraguan music played on the boom box, and we encouraged each person to stand, sway to the rhythm, greet their neighbors, raise their arms overhead, kick their legs, turn around and move to the beat. Some were quick, mobile and expressive. Others were very shy and physically impaired. Jacque and I gently persuaded each to come to their feet and move to the music. One gentleman, Alonzo, was a quadriplegic and was quite surprised to find himself helped to stand and dance, flanked and supported by two tall, strong women. Esteban, an 80-year-old woman with Parkinson's disease, found herself relaxing and stretching with a little assistance. The therapy balls came



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out and a wild session of roll, bounce and catch ensued. These beautiful elderly faces smiled, their bodies moved, they were touched and hugged and each one received attention. Although our Spanish skills were poor, we were

continued on page 2



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has three levels, with a dirt path connecting the levels to the backyard. The top level is the main living space, a combined dining/living room and a kitchen/bathroom. The bathroom consists of a toilet in a stall partitioned off by a curtain. The shower stall is next to the toilet and separated by a concrete wall. Flushing the toilet involves dumping in a bucket of water from the hose in the kitch-

Sharing Hands  
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# Miracles and Hardships

by Mary Dowling RN

Here in the United States, when our children need medical care, we generally hop in the car and arrive on time for our appointment at a nearby clinic. It is a very different scenario when SRW mission teams visit cities like Siguatepeque, Honduras or Arequipa or Lima, Peru as our team did recently. For parents in such remote locations, finding medical care is a journey fraught with obstacles. For many, SRW is their last hope.

It is only the impressive determination of intrepid parents that brings some patients to our screening clinic. Team members are sometimes mystified that families in such isolated regions are even aware that a medical team is coming to a city like Siguatepeque. The team arrived in September of 2008 to provide eye surgery and prosthetic eyes. We asked a beautiful young lady named Pauli, who had traveled with her mother eight hours for an exam, how she knew we were in the area. She gazed at us through her eyeglasses—made of plain glass and worn in an effort to mask the fact that her eyes were crossed—and told us she had heard a radio announcement by Providence World Ministries, our partner/host organization in Honduras. Pauli told her mother, “We have to go and see if they can help me.” Though her mother had known for the 16 years of Pauli’s life that there might be help in the capital city of Tegucigalpa, how would she ever get herself and Pauli there to see a doctor? Now her daughter, who hopes to someday be a nurse, was old enough and insistent enough to find help. So they found their way to our team in Siguatepeque and Pauli underwent surgery. She was most pleased with her new appearance—and pleased to see what the operating room and our kind of nursing is all about. If anything, she is now even more determined to accomplish her goal and become a nurse!

Despite all their efforts, patients sometimes miss their scheduled surgery times. To Americans it might seem inexcusable to run the risk of keeping a surgical team waiting, but we work in circumstances where sometimes it simply can’t be avoided. One family who missed their daughter’s scheduled surgery time explained

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able to communicate through music, movement and touch.

The next day we evaluated each resident individually, assessing ways to enhance their mobility. We made recommendations for each to Guillermo, the administrative director, and the staff. The majority of the staff at the *Hogar* are young women with families, untrained in formal medicine. They lovingly help to bathe and dress the residents, change beds, clean rooms, bathrooms and hallways and launder all the clothes and bedding every single day! The staff discussed residents who were difficult to transfer or care for, and we problem-solved solutions. Although the needs are great, the residents’ basic daily needs are met with compassion, patience and humor. The staff members do this work 10–12 hours per day, six days a week, for approximately \$50 per month. One of the most crucial needs of the *Hogar* is to somehow be able to increase the staff salaries (which are even below the minimum wage for Nicaragua) in order to motivate and support the staff. They give so much of themselves to the homeless elderly, in a country where living conditions are so marginal. It was a very rewarding experience to see the people supporting each other, where the government gives so little support to the poorest of its own citizens.



*Rosa and her mom await surgery in Honduras for her crossed eyes*

that they had started walking from their home to the clinic at 2 a.m., and were eventually able to catch a ride part of the way. They arrived tired and hungry—especially the patient, six-year-old Evelin, who had not had anything to eat or drink since midnight and would not eat for hours following her surgery which began at noon. Her parents’ determination to correct their daughter’s crossed eyes drove them to overcome many obstacles, obtaining medical care we would take for granted here.

Sometimes the circumstances of a missed appointment are extreme and tragic. When a patient did not arrive for a scheduled pre-op evaluation on Sunday, a local Honduran physician working with our team, Dr. Berta Turcios, tracked the patient’s family down by phone. “Oh doctor,”



*Pauli before surgery in Honduras*

A huge thank you to our team members who are an integral part of how SRW accomplishes its goals on the missions:

Marge Abegglen, RN  
Mary Dowling, RN  
Patricia White, CRNA  
Aviva Gal, MD  
Pat Kreibich, RN  
Neil Lucchese, MD  
Sally Goodpasture Schroeder, CRNA  
Mitra Sinha, ORT  
Julie Hajewski, RN  
Steve Hajewski, Photographer  
Carrie Messer, Ocularist  
Susan E. Tynes, Ocularist

her mother explained, “my daughter got sick on Saturday and died on Monday.” That’s why she was not there.

But on this recent September trip to Siguatepeque, 19 patients did receive new prosthetic eyes and 16 had successful surgery for crossed eyes. In the four days we were at the John Eaves Medical Clinic while working with Providence World Ministries, 68 eye exams were completed.

Many children and some adults will now have a much better outlook on life—thanks to our team members’ efforts and those of PWM.

The value of this service through SRW and the supplies and equipment donated was just over \$199,000.

Thank you for in-kind donations from Meriter Hospital Pharmacy, MAP International and Eye Prosthetics of Wisconsin. With all of these donations and our team’s efforts, our missions are a success.

## Partnering for Strength Sharing Resources Worldwide and Hospital Sisters Mission Outreach

Sharing Resources Worldwide is embarking on a collaboration with another medical surplus recovery organization that will enhance our ability to collect and distribute needed medical supplies and equipment to the developing world. Our partner, with whom we share goals and values, is Hospital Sisters Mission Outreach (HSMO) based in Springfield, Ill. By coordinating our efforts in the procurement and sorting of supplies for shipping, we will be able to facilitate the timely processing of donated supplies and equipment. This will allow for more goods to get to more people in need, thus furthering the missions of both HSMO and SRW. SRW will serve as a first-sort facility for donated medical supplies, which will then be taken to HSMO for further sorting, packaging and shipment to recipients in need. This partnership will help to expand the reach of both organizations and to increase the beneficiaries of our work.

A bit of background on HSMO:

Mission Outreach was organized in 2002 (the same year as SRW) as a humanitarian effort, working with healthcare organizations to recover and responsibly redistribute medical equipment and supplies to people in need around the world.

President/CEO Bruce Compton had experienced the challenges associated with equipment redistribution firsthand. As the director of administration and finance for a rural Haitian clinic that served 200,000 people, he

had received countless donations of supplies that were unusable because they either did not fit the needs of his center or were inoperable. With no mechanism in place in Haiti to pass on or dispose of the unused items, receiving donations often became more of a hardship than help.

Today, Mission Outreach distributes more than \$2 million in surplus equipment and supplies each year, with accountability measures in place to ensure appropriate distribution. Bruce Compton is still at the helm and, while the organization officially incorporated as a separate entity in 2006, its mission clearly continues the tradition that began when the Hospital Sisters came to Illinois from Germany to begin their Midwest healthcare ministry.

Today, Mission Outreach works with the 13 hospitals of Hospital Sisters Health System, along with two additional health systems and more than 20 individual hospitals throughout Illinois and Wisconsin.

We are excited about the increased ability for the procurement, processing and shipping of supplies and equipment that this relationship will bring to SRW. Our mission and vision remain unchanged, and our projects and programs will also benefit from this collaboration. We look forward to a year of helping more and more needy people worldwide.

Visit HSMO’s Web site at [www.mission-outreach.org](http://www.mission-outreach.org)

For more information on Sharing Resources Worldwide, check out our Web site at [www.sharingresourcesworldwide.org](http://www.sharingresourcesworldwide.org)

# Celebrating SRW'S Volunteers

by Lisa Fernandez

SRW's incredible cadre of volunteers exemplifies the exhortation to "be the change you want to see in the world." It is an honor and an inspiration to bring them together once each year at the annual SRW Volunteer Appreciation Dinner. It is also an opportunity for Mary and me and the SRW board of directors to take a few hours to express our appreciation for who they are, and what they do for SRW. This year's dinner was again held at the Avenue Bar, and close to 60 people attended. We all enjoyed a hearty meal, lots of lively conversation and sharing, plenty of hugs, and a very moving presentation by Sister Rebecca Trujillo of *Familias Especiales*.

Sister Rebecca traveled from Matagalpa, Nicaragua to be at the dinner and show her own deep appreciation for all that SRW and its volunteers have done to improve the lives of the hundreds of handicapped children and their families whom she serves. Her presence was a testament to the very real and concrete ways that SRW volunteers are changing the

Mary and I and the SRW board are to all the volunteers who give their time and energy, sweat and tears, love and skills to keep our mission of "recycling resources and restoring hope" alive.

*Thank you all for being the change you want to see in the world.*

A special thanks to the following for their donations of door prizes:

- Atlanta Bread Company
- Chet's Car Care
- Craig's Cake Shop
- The Flower Gallery
- Frugal Muse Books

- Gino's Deli
- Granite City Food and Brewery
- Hair Studio and Day Spa
- Hybrid Salon'
- Joey's Seafood and Grill
- The Melting Pot Fondue Restaurant
- Morgan Stanley
- Kaye Lillesand
- The Oaks Golf Course
- Martha Girdaukas
- Starbucks Coffee
- Style F Hair Studio
- West Towne Monona Tire

Endless gratitude to Marita Menard for organizing and orchestrating this beautiful event.

Thanks also to the following for their sponsorship of this event:

- Keith Kaetterhenry (Baer Insurance)
- Brandon Vincent (Genesis Painting)
- James Lord



lives of others. *Familias Especiales* receives several containers from SRW each year, full of items that support their many programs. Sr. Rebecca spoke of the seeds that are sown both here in Madison and in Matagalpa and how our combined efforts plant a garden of hope. She shared a moving slide show of the people and programs of *Familias Especiales* and the contributions that SRW volunteers have made. The very fact that she was willing to travel so far speaks volumes about the impact of the volunteers' hard work and generosity of heart.

There are no words to express how grateful



## Volunteers needed for the following tasks

Truly, SRW exists because of great volunteers and we know there are more of you out there!

**Sorting medical supplies at SRW warehouse**—work in our warehouse sorting medical supplies on a weekly basis. It is especially helpful if you have some medical background.

**IT/computer program and entry assistance for SRW/Mary and Lisa.**

Contact Mary Dowling at 608-445-8503 for more information.

*Founded in January 2002, Sharing Resources Worldwide makes surplus and recycled medical supplies, durable medical equipment, and related items and activities available to needy populations around the world. SRW endeavors to improve the health and quality of life of its recipients and to empower them to live with increased dignity, independence, and hope.*

*We do this through three areas—medical missions, shipping and the wheelchair project.*

*All donations are tax deductible.*

*Please make checks payable to:*

*Sharing Resources Worldwide.*

*Sharing Resources Worldwide is incorporated in the state of Wisconsin and is a tax exempt charitable 501 (c) (3) organization.*

### SRW Board of Directors

- Richard Thompson, President
- Michael Ross Menard, Treasurer
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Donation checks should be made out to Sharing Resources Worldwide.

Please return this card with your donation to the address above.

For your convenience, SRW can now accept your donation by credit card online. Just go to our website at [www.sharingresourcesworldwide.org](http://www.sharingresourcesworldwide.org) and donate via credit card on our secure site.

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<http://www.sharingresourcesworldwide.org>

## 2008 in Review

With your support, we at SRW accomplished the following in 2008:

Medical/Surgical Mission to Lima, Peru

Medical Surgical Mission to Siguatpeque, Honduras

Eye Prosthetic Mission to

Siguatpeque, Honduras

Wheelchair Project continues in Nicaragua

Six shipments left our docks in 2008 but over 100 tons of materials were shipped to those in need worldwide and saved from Wisconsin landfills

## Looking forward to 2009

With your support we can accomplish much in 2009:

Wheelchair project continues in Nicaragua

Medical/Surgical Mission to Arequipa, Peru in January

Medical/Surgical Mission to Honduras in March

Eyeglass mission to Guinea, Africa in June

Eyeglass and Eye Prosthetic Mission to Honduras in September

Medical/Surgical mission to Honduras in October

## Riley's Race for SRW

*In September my co-worker, Riley Rhoads, participated in the Ironman triathlon and dedicated all her fundraising efforts to SRW. Her efforts moved me so much—what a demonstration of support for Sharing Resources Worldwide. She raised over \$600 for us, and her spirit and dedication is a model for others to find creative ways to help Sharing Resources Worldwide. She thought outside the box and we thank her for it!*

—Lisa Fernandez



On Sept. 7, 2008 I completed my fourth Ironman distance triathlon at the Ford Ironman Wisconsin in Madison. The Ironman triathlon consists of a 2.4-mile swim, 112-mile bike ride, and 26.2-mile run. After a training season that was interrupted by a cycling crash that led to a concussion and seven stitches, I started the race knowing that it would not be my fastest finish. In fact, the 2008 Ford Ironman Wisconsin marks my slowest finish ever. But that is the great thing about the Ironman: even a slow finish qualifies as a personal victory.

I was lucky to have perfect weather on race day. The swim went very well for me. I was out of the water in one hour and twenty-five minutes. This is a little slower than I

usually swim, but not a bad time for me. Out on the bike, I averaged 13.5 miles per hour. This is quite a bit slower than I usually average. Knowing that I did not have the training season that I usually have leading up to race day, I had decided to take it easy, stop for sandwiches and enjoy the beautiful day. When I started the run, I was tired. I had already swum 2.4 miles and biked 112. So, I walked a lot during the marathon. This was my slowest marathon, ever, but I had such a fun time talking with other runners out on the course.

As you can see, the theme of my race day was "much slower than usual." One of the thoughts that kept me going all day was that this race was not just about me. I had the pleasure of making my training and racing a lot less personal. I had the opportunity to use the Ironman as a fundraiser for Sharing Resources Worldwide. So, even though I was shuffling along and definitely not winning, I had the feeling that I was part of something bigger and more important than just one day of physical exercise.

I encourage others participating in athletic events to fundraise for nonprofit organizations. While the Ironman has a structured "Charity Challenge" program, it is possible to fundraise for any event, like a local 5k run/walk, a marathon or an open water swim. As great as you feel crossing a finish line under ordinary circumstances, knowing that you helped others will increase the feeling exponentially.

—S. Riley Rhoads

## Contributors

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Beaver Dam Community Hospital

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UW Hospital and Clinics

St. Mary's Hospital, Madison

Wheelchair Recycling Program

Madison United Hospital

Laundry

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Medline

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Mercy Health System

Gunderson Lutheran Medical

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Meriter Hospital Pharmacy

MAP International

Eye Prosthetics of Wisconsin

Other companies/groups

Numerous individuals and volunteers

SRW accepts gifts of appreciated stocks and mutual fund shares. You gift of such qualifies for a tax deduction based of full market value of your stock or mutual fund shares plus you avoid the capital gains tax that would otherwise arise from the sale of stock or mutual fund shares.

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