

Feb. 24, 2010

Hola!

We are in full swing and still up for the race . Very few of us have become sick but those that have are taking their cipro and bouncing back rather quickly. It only takes opening your mouth slightly while in the shower to change things for you. The kitchen help here at the University are outstanding! Every day , 3 times a day the chairs are lifted up and the floors washed with a bleach solution. All workers serving or preparing food wear hair nets, plastic gloves and face mask. They are meticulous in all they do. As we walk in to the dinning area we are met by a worker who dispenses to each one of us a generous dab of hand sanitizer. The nutritionist has worked for this school for 7 years now, she has everything down to a science. Her day starts at 5 a.m. and she is done at 9:30 P.M. I am sure she does leave at some point during the day for a siesta but for the most part she is right on the job. Our meals have been well varied and filled with every kind of vegetable you can think of. Today we had a veggie meat stew with tomatoes and cactus plant, peeled and chopped in to little cubes. It was tasty and unusual. Our drink for lunch was made from star fruit. Some of the dishes have had a little kick to them with the typical Mexican peppers but for those of us who can not handle that there is plenty of other things to choose from. One thing is certain, no one here is going to be low on any of the vitamin groups. We had an especially tasty 'mock fish patty" the other day that was made with cauliflower and a little bread crumbs. Beans are served with almost every breakfast and usually with one more meal.

The medical group headed to one of the Indian villages again today. There was a little controversy from our bus driver about driving there as he said the roads were to bad. But after Bob spoke with him about it he changed his mind and brought the team with no driving problems. They were met by happy smiling faces and not the scared suspicious faces like on the pre trip visit. They were ready for us and excited. The state had found out we would be at this village today and decided to send several doctors to perform pap smears on the ladies. Their reasoning being was because they knew all the Indians would be gathered together today in expectation of our arrival and they wanted to take advantage of having them all in one place. It has been a very cool wet day and we are all uncomfortable. There has been a mist in the air all day, not quite a drizzle. The wind that is forever blowing here and has been so welcome on those hot days, is making the cold go right to the bones. The temperature in the dorm today was 59 degrees. It poured rain at the work site and they were forced to stop working for almost an hour. So they all piled into the old church building and sang a song and then discussed what the reason was for the electric to go out at exactly 7 p.m. on Monday night for the meeting.

The construction team put down 216 blocks today. Now there are only 10 more to be put down to finish. There might be 100 or so more to finish the wall. Dr. Mark had a local dentist work with him today . They saw 75 people and did 125 extractions. The teeth of these folks were in much worse condition than those in the town of Jitotol Dr. mark said they had zero knowledge of dental hygiene. Tooth brushes were handed out to each patient to use. The medical clinic were not able to get a total to me today but it was many people! They did give 373 vaccines though for sure. Dr. Eloise said the most common complaints she saw were gastritis, headache and diarrhea. There was

more high blood pressure in the village than in Jitotol. This is exactly the opposite of what we found in the Guatemala Indian villages last year. Those groups had the best of health of any group around. And that was because they had stuck with the old ways of eating. I heard of a very touching story today, so typical of our Berkshire Mission team. A little girl in the village had nothing on her feet and it was so very cold. It was pretty obvious that she probably didn't own anything to put on. Alene took off her own socks and put them on the little girl, fastening them with rubber bands to stay up.

When we pulled in to the church tonight for the meeting adults were already sitting in the church and children were lined up on the benches, just waiting in anticipation. The little ones enjoyed shaking our hand so much as we walked by. Kim takes close up pictures of the children and she puts it into a slide show that will be displayed on Friday night. This is pretty exciting stuff for little ones like these to see their own picture go across a big screen.

Inside the church 8 men with guitars and one with a cello played and sang beautiful music to the congregation before Pastor Rigo began his sermon. His message tonight was on the signs of the second coming. He has such a powerful voice that it would be impossible for anyone to drift off to sleep in one of his sermons! At the end he had a plea for those who wanted to give their life to Jesus and 17 came up for prayer. The plans are to have the baptisms on Friday evening in the Central church. That will be the last meeting. Then on Sabbath we will go and worship in the newly built church as to make a connection to these folks before we leave. It was 48 degrees tonight and of course nothing is heated in the buildings or houses here. But even under those circumstances we had a huge turnout, but did lose some to the weather. Please make it an issue of prayer that the weather turns back warm for the baptisms.

Jessica gave the health nugget to the VBS program tonight and Brendy translated it for her. During the puppet ministry time the children sat glued to their seats, eyes wide not to miss a moment. When it was over Kim asked them if they liked it and you could hear a loud chorus of "Si". "Si". She then told a story of Joseph's dream and had one of the little boys come up and dressed him in a coat of many colors. The little boy stood so tall and so happy to have been chosen for such an honor.

Two of our team members received some tragic news from their home church which is the Church of the Nazarene. One of the young men who attends with them died in his sleep at the tender age of 22. We are all saddened and have gathered in prayer for them. Our prayers go out to all our Nazarene friends in Dalton during your sorrow. May Jesus comfort you at this very sad time.

Keep praying faithfully for us dear brethren. We are at the critical point of all our work and the devil is working over time.

Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail, they are new every morning. Great is your faithfulness. Lamentations 3:22,23

Smiles across the miles,

Jennifer Young, Mission Reporter