

Summary Document Mission of Healing/Ferias de Bienestar Familiar 2019

Saturday, 2 Feb: 9 people from the US arrived at Hotel Villa Real in the afternoon. Linda and Tim Muth and Deb and Bob Adams were already in El Salvador to do election observation. The rest of the afternoon was spent organizing supplies from the many suitcases and boxes brought or delivered to the hotel. Dinner was at Villa Real, and bed time was early, since the travelers had been up since very early and the election observers had to be up very early Sunday for the election.



Sunday, 3 Feb: The team of 9 at the hotel (4 of us were election observing all day) finished the huge job of organizing the supplies and dividing most into 4 parts, one for each health fair day. When the election observers returned to the hotel, we had pizza and watched a little of the Super Bowl. This photo is typical of how our supplies looked for each day.



Monday, 4 Feb: By the end of the morning, the supplies at right were ready for the day 1 health fair. In the afternoon we visited El Boquerón, the volcano park at the top of the San Salvador Volcano. We hiked to the rim of the caldera and enjoyed the coolness, the view and the beautiful flowers. We stopped at Plaza el Volcan on the way down the volcano and also at the Monument to Peace and Reconciliation, which celebrates the 25th anniversary of the Peace Accords signed in 1992. Dinner was at El Arco, an eco-friendly restaurant with beautiful gardens and a great view.



Caldera of San Salvador Volcano



Monument to Peace and Reconciliation



Decor made from recycled stuff

Tuesday, 5 Feb: Day 1 Feria de Bienestar Familiar. We departed the hotel early for Las Minas. We were a little delayed in arriving there due to misunderstandings of what time we were picking up people along the way (gasolinera in Apopa and in Aguilares). There were many people waiting at the school by the time we arrived at 0845, but we got set up quickly, had worship and started our charlas. We had several classrooms in the school in which to set up, and some charlas were also outside in the school yard.

Reading glasses were on the patio and were very popular each day. The fair finished at 1300 and was followed by lunch, words of thanks, a gift of hand-made crosses from Pr. Joel and the trip back to Villa Real. The team working in the hotel Sunday and Monday had things so well organized that we were quickly able to get ready for Day 2. Dinner was at the hotel. Several people were not feeling well by that evening (stomach and bowel problems).



People waiting patiently for us



Girl with kids' participation bag, Days for Girls kit & pipe cleaner glasses



Saige had lot of kids!

Wednesday, 6 Feb: Day 2. We arrived in good time at San Jose Buena Vista, a shorter drive than on day one. The Lutheran Church Rutilio Grande is nearby. Unfortunately, 3 of our team were unable to come due to being ill with gastrointestinal problems (the first time this has happened in many years). We had the use of 2 large school rooms and a long, wide veranda outside the school. This was a small community, so there were fewer people than on day 1, but we had good help with charlas from the local Pro-Familia Suchitoto. Especially good was a hand washing/diarrhea charla, which included a song performed by the very enthusiastic girls teaching the charla. At the end of each day, there was a drawing for a basket of food from the passport cards that were turned in at the last table. After a delicious lunch prepared by Pastora Martina and words of thanks, we returned to the hotel and then went to the Artisan Market for some shopping. Dinner was at Clavo y Canela near the hotel.



Heart Health and Diabetes charlas



Family Planning and Cervical Cancer



Plants that heal



Raffle winner

Thursday, Feb 7: Day 3. The fair in Nueva Concepción was on the grounds of an unused warehouse area and was very pleasant with shade from trees and a large canopy. A drawback was that the bathroom in a home nearby, which the owners had very kindly allowed us to use, was a very difficult climb down a rocky path. For that reason no urinalyses were done that day. Also, the local Unidad de Salud did not send anyone to teach or assist (we're not sure of the reason at the time of this writing). However, many people attended the fair and enjoyed the available charlas. We found the people in this community to be in poorer health than in our other locations. They lacked basic health care and knowledge about health and wellness. Many people with chronic conditions did not have medications. They reported that the clinic didn't have medications and that they could not afford to purchase them privately. We stopped at Boston for ice cream on the way back to the hotel and had dinner at the hotel. After dinner we met on the roof top deck to reflect on our experiences of the last 3 days.



Dental charla with fluoride application



Sonia doing menstruation charla and distributing Days for Girls kits



Jade's charla: stress reduction

Friday, Feb 8: Day 4. Our final feria of the week was on the wrap-around veranda of a large home in Santa Barbarita. Pastor Santiago Papá and Pastora Gloria had publicized the fair all week with signs, radio ads and loud speakers through the community, so there was a big turn out! Many staff members from the Unidad de Salud came to give charlas, administer vaccines and help in other ways. The hand washing/diarrhea charla continued to be taught by the very enthusiastic trained Lutheran Health Promoters. We were very busy, and it was noisy at times due to all the participants. After lunch, we distributed gifts to the people who came to help (that was done daily) and also to the pastors and church workers who had been with us all week. After a final loading of the bus, we drove to Suchitoto and took a relaxing boat ride on Lake Suchitlán. The bird-watching was excellent! We also had time to relax or shop around the town square followed by a delicious dinner at La Lupita del Portal. We returned to the hotel, unloaded the supplies and were happy to go to bed after a tiring but successful week of teaching people how to stay healthy, use their meds and care for themselves.



Water purification & rabies vaccine for pets



Bob's game table



Hand washing and diarrhea prevention



Lake Suchitlán

Saturday, Feb 9: Tourist Day. Our tourist day started in the Port of La Libertad where we spent a little time on the pier where boats are launched and retrieved from the sea and fish are sold. It was a short drive from there to the Mandala Eco Villas where we spent the rest of the morning and the afternoon walking on the beach, swimming in the pool, sunning or just relaxing and enjoying the view. Drinks and food were delicious and just what one would expect at the beach.



Fish market La Libertad



Relaxation at Mandala Eco Villas

In the late afternoon we left the eco villas for El Tunco, a famous tourist area with shops, hotels and restaurants. We had fancy drinks while waiting for the spectacular sunset. Dinner was after sunset at the Roca Sunzal resort.



El Tun



Refreshing drinks!



Sunset

Sunday, Feb 10: Los Héroes. Bob and Sally left in the wee hours to return to WI. The rest of us left later to attend church at Héroes en la Fe, our sister congregation. Worship was followed by a celebration of Valentine's Day (el Dia de Amor y Amistad) during which we revealed our secret friends. (Names had been drawn in Los Héroes and at our hotel in anticipation of this event.) Everyone enjoyed this immensely! We took a group photo; then enjoyed a piece of delicious cake. Lunch was in preschool area of the church – delicious bean soup, avocados and tortillas with jello for dessert. We were able to visit 2 families in the community who are unable to attend church due to disabilities, so we also got to see some of the other parts Los Héroes. We returned to the hotel to reorganize all our supplies, decide what to store and organize items to be given away. Dinner was pupusas at Nelly's, a typical restaurant not far from the hotel.



Los Héroes Celebration



Observations from the Ferias de Bienestar:

- There remains a lack of knowledge among the people we serve about what constitutes a healthy lifestyle as well as how they can care for themselves if they have a chronic condition like diabetes or hypertension.
- There is lack of understanding of the reason for prescribed medications as well as how to store and take them and the necessity of taking some for the rest of their lives.
- People generally don't go to a clinic unless they're sick. This is especially true for men.
- There is a high incidence of diabetes as there is in the indigenous people here in the US
- There continues to be and to develop many stress-related conditions as a result of Civil War memories as well as the current socioeconomic conditions in El Salvador.
- There are still areas where health care is not easily accessible.

US team members:

Name	Home	Partner church
Bob and Deb Adams	Chippewa Falls, WI	Héroes en la Fe
Jenny and Saige Buckley	Chippewa Falls, WI	Héroes en la Fe
Susan Holty	Milwaukee, WI	Héroes en la Fe
Diane Koss	Chippewa Falls, WI	Héroes en la Fe
Carol Mohr	Eau Claire, WI	Héroes en la Fe
Jade Mueller	Milwaukee, WI	Héroes en la Fe
Linda Muth (and Tim)	Milwaukee, WI	Héroes en la Fe
Bob and Sally Puranen	Muskego, WI	Tepeagua
Laura Warrick	Chippewa Falls, WI	Héroes en la Fe



Our team members and the Salvadoran team members in Las Minas