

Dental Mission to Honduras

by Lynn Wakefield, Advertising Coordinator for DHPI

Our yellow school bus bumped up the dusty road into Villa Linda Miller to the smiles, waves and cheers of the village residents. The welcoming committee stood in the bright Honduran sun, with large colorful signs that held welcome and good wishes written in Spanish. Black haired children squinted in the sun holding little ovals cut out of construction paper, glued onto popsicle sticks, with one word printed on them, "Gracias".

The school bus carried us (The Honduras Dental Project [HDP], a Christian group that provides dental care and religious education) to the warm hearted people in Honduras.

I am grateful to have been able to participate in the 2006 mission, which was possible because of generous contributions from Dental Health Products, and from several of DHPI's vendors who donated supplies.

This year, The Honduras Dental Project consisted of an oral surgeon, an endodontist, two dentists, four hygienists, 9 assistants, three clergy and me,



the receptionist. In addition, five American missionaries who live there, joined us after we set up the clinic to help with coordinating hundreds of dental patients during 4 days of clinic.

We set up a clinic with purchased and donated supplies and equipment in the village school. The village population is about 300 adults and 500 children. Villa Linda Miller (VLM) was started by an American named Michael Miller when his family donated money

to help the victims of Hurricane Mitch in 1998 when their entire village was wiped out. The residents of VLM, were required to build their own homes. They are proud of them and have a strong community spirit.

The HDP served other groups as well: an orphanage in El Hogar, students from the local Agricultural school, and the boys from the Micah Project. The Micah Project is a program that takes homeless boys and provides them with food, shelter, education and love. There are



The village residents are very appreciative. They greeted us with colorful signs, cheers, smiles and lots of hugs. This photo translates, "Thank you for keeping us in your hearts. This community is fortunate to receive blessings from God."

about 20 boys, ages 13 to 19 in the program and four that have graduated and are now attending college. The boys are happy, healthy, strong and determined to become engineers, computer programmers, dentists, actors, teachers, ministers, veterinarians, and one boy who wants to be a Christian rock star (at age 15, he already plays four instruments). For more information and several success stories, see their website: www.micahcentral.org. The Micah boys were always with us acting as translators, bodyguards, tour guides and teaching and playing games with the younger children of the village.

The Honduras Dental Project started 8 years ago and has grown from a staff of 8 to a staff of 21 and still needs more dental professionals, equipment and funds to serve the vast needs of the Hondurans. The group has begun plans to build a permanent dental clinic at the village. Land has been donated, blueprints have been drawn, and part of the funds raised. The goal is to have the clinic built before the next dental mission trip in February of 2007. The clinic will be available for other visiting dental groups to use as well. It will have a caretaker's apartment, 10 chairs, a sterilization center, storage and a lounge area.

For more information on the Honduras Dental Project, or if you have questions or comments on this article, please email me at lynnw@dhipi.net