

## Hope and Joy in Honduras Health for Life – Ten Years Together

A medical brigade from Trinity in Grand Rapids visited Honduras in 2002 knowing nothing about the companion relationship that had been forged between the Lutherans in Honduras and members of our synod. Vicky Carron says, “But then two of us became a part of early conversations and dreams with ICLH, and watched those dreams unfold as God blessed our work together.” She returned this year to celebrate 10 years of *Health for Life (Salud Para La Vida)*, a project that has had a profound impact on many lives.

“Some of the impact is easily evident” she says. “Whole neighborhoods are healthier because they have clean water to drink. Pre-kindergarten children are in school every day because they get a lunch there.



And their teeth are preserved through family dental education and provision of supplies. Middle schoolers learn the facts about HIV/AIDS while playing a board game

and are given a better chance at a healthier life. I’ve watched shy, self-doubting women grow into powerful volunteer forces in their communities, visiting neighbors affected by domestic violence... giving them comfort and hope”.

“As we celebrated this important milestone in the life of this program, health promoters from all the communities involved came together in several regional events to talk about living water and to mark this anniversary..... For me, one of the most inspiring stories was from Karla whose mother has been a health promoter since she was a little girl. Her participation with her mother in the trainings has led her to nursing school where she is always surprising her professors and fellow students with how much she already knows! God has richly blessed this program. It will be exciting to see the new developments in its next 10 years!”

Mary Campbell, ELCA Global Mission Staff

“I was thrilled to meet Sofia who is being sponsored by St. Luke’s in Grand Rapids to come to Michigan this summer for the Youth Gathering. Active in her church with the worship ministry, band, and fund-raising she also works part time in the Lutheran Church offices in Tegucigalpa.



While attending the Gathering she says, *‘I want to represent my church so that others may learn about the way that we are church. I want them to know that our church is young and small but the work is big and strong, especially with children and youth.’*  
Connie Lenkowski



“I saw God at work in the health volunteers who made confident presentations on the cervical cancer information they received. I saw God at work in the way he continued to weave together all the parts of our planning for the workshop on living water. I saw it in Josefina, the coordinator of Salud Para la Vida, and Pastor Suyapa, who serves Way of Emmaus, who both exuded joy despite difficulties.



Many of the families living in La Cañada have very few financial resources, so the daily meal at the Lutheran school is important. For many students, it is the only meal they receive each day.”  
Wendy Johnson

“In Honduras 70% of the people live in poverty and 43% in extreme poverty. Life can seem hopeless. For most except for the few wealthy the health system has essentially collapsed.

Yet what we witnessed was neither hopelessness nor despair. Rather in the members of ICLH, the Lutheran church in Honduras, we saw a remarkable hope. Our role in this trip was mostly to point out to our sisters and brothers the presence of this gift of hope planted deeply in their hearts. They do live in a *‘dry and weary land’* (Psalm 63:1) but simultaneously in a land of hope and much joy.” John Schleicher



