

MAMA News

September - October 2012

*5 month old twins,
Kristel & Christopher
were brought to the
Nutrition Center severely
malnourished,
weighing only 11 lbs.
After less than a month
at the Center, they are
more alert, stronger, and
gaining weight.*



Photo: Brenna Benner

MAMA Project

Mujeres Amigas-Miles Apart
(Women Friends-Miles Apart)

Nutritional Rehabilitation
Medical & Dental Brigades
Work Teams
Preschools
Cross Cultural Training
Deworming & Vitamin A
Campaigns
Donating Medical & Dental
Equipment & Supplies
Community Development
Scholarships
Child Survival Training

MAMA News is a bimonthly newsletter that provides updates about MAMA Project, Inc.'s programs and service to communities in Honduras, Haiti, and Nigeria.

The MAMA News is available for free to anyone who would like to receive it.

To add, remove or change your address on our mailing list, contact:

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All photos were taken by MAMA Project Staff or Service Team Members.



In this issue of MAMA News, we will continue our reflections of the past 25 years of work in Child Survival. For the previous articles, please see our MAMA News Archive available for download at www.mamaproject.org/archive.html

*Taken from a slide show used for presentations in 1989.
Written by Ruth Cole*

Poverty surrounds us and we know it's here to stay.
After all, what can we do they live so far away?
Hungry little children have their hands outstretched.
Begging for a piece of bread; when will their needs be met?

Most of us are familiar with the many problems that plague the Third World today. From where we are, it's almost impossible to comprehend that the vast majority of the people who share this world are grinding through the vicious cycle of poverty, disease, lack of education, unemployment and malnutrition. The wealth of the earth's resources has remained out of reach for these people. The most frightening fact is that the gulf that separates the wealthy from the impoverished grows wider each year.

Honduras is rich with natural resources. Yet this wealth remains largely in the hands of the elite minority. The majority of Hondurans work long, hard days, receiving little reward for their labor. Building shacks from scraps of wood, cardboard, metal and plastic, they find themselves trapped. In despair, many give up hope of ever breaking out. Looking on, we ourselves are often overwhelmed - dulled and numbed when faced with the pressing needs. It is more pleasant to focus our eyes on the healthy, productive environment that surrounds us. But if we are following our Lord Jesus, walking in the way He walked, we cannot join in this turning away. Instead our hearts remain vulnerable to the sting of the misery so many endure. And as Christians, we follow Him as He seeks out the sick and the suffering, the poor and the needy. God, Himself, is wanting

to restore these people, to lift them out of this pit of poverty. And MAMA Project is playing a part in this process.

As we approach to help, we soon realize that there are no quick or easy solutions. Though donations play a part, the problems cannot be solved by giving away material goods. To make a lasting change, we must deal with the internal deprivations these people experience - lack of job training, illiteracy, poor understanding of health and hygiene, along with a fatalistic mindset and lack of hope for the future.

In light of this, MAMA Project seeks to confront these problems person to person. We are working side by side with them in their struggle to feed, clothe and educate their children.



Photo: Priscilla Benner

Photo: Angel Landis



Nutritional Rehabilitation Center

*Written by Priscilla Benner, MD
Director, MAMA Project, Inc.*

In the early years, MAMA worked exclusively in the squatter villages surrounding San Pedro Sula. The project consisted of feeding programs that used the Super-Bar made by volunteers in Pennsylvania as the backbone of nutritional rehabilitation efforts. We have also worked with adult literacy, handicrafts, sewing academies, micro-enterprise loans, health guardian training, community organization, gardening, water wells, housing, latrines, scholarships and preschools. Periodically, floods and other natural disasters have required extraordinary mobilization of resources.

But our main focus has always been the plight of families struggling to survive and raise healthy children in very adverse circumstances. Our staff and visiting service teams dewormed children, gave out vitamin A capsules, and evaluated children for malnutrition. When we encountered extremely sick and malnourished children, we sometimes found that we could not adequately meet their needs in the community. However, when we tried to get children into the hospitals for treatment of extreme malnutrition, they were often turned away. We were told repeatedly, "Starvation is a social problem, not a medical problem." So, we began to dream about having our own center for the rehabilitation of malnourished children. We envisioned a place that would focus on training the mothers and community volunteers.

This dream turned into a reality in the mid to late 1990s. Now, MAMA's Nutritional Rehabilitation Center is located in San Francisco de Yojoa, Cortes. It is situated upon a beautiful hill overlooking the Sula Valley where it was built by volunteer teams over a few years. Many families have found hope and refuge in this place.

There have been many families and children whose stories are unforgettable. Thinking about the impact that the center has had in saving children's lives and giving families hope and a vision for a better future keeps us motivated to continue this work of love.

Pictures and words fail to convey the experience of seeing a father (left) overcome by emotion holding his alert and active infant son that he did not expect to see alive again. Three days prior, he had brought the nearly lifeless baby and mother to the center as his last hope. Mother and father did not know that the baby was at the brink of death from dehydration and malnutrition. When mother learned how to give the right fluids and nutrition, she was happy and proud. Within a few hours, baby Alexander was revived by oral fluids and mother was amazed. When Dad returned to check on his baby, his fear turned to joy, and Alexander's siblings were delighted that their little brother was going to survive. We felt very blessed to be part of bringing hope to this family.



Photo: Brenna Benner

A Typical Day at the Nutrition Center

Families and MAMA Staff participate in daily devotions with prayer.

Children spend time in activities such as drawing, coloring, playing with balls or other toys, riding bikes, playing on the swingset. Activities vary depending on the age of the child. When a child enters the Nutrition Center, usually they do not participate in many activities because their bodies are weak with sickness. As their health improves, the child becomes more active.

Mothers have a daily lesson. There are 20 different lessons that they learn while at the Center. All lessons are around the idea of healthy living and hygiene.

If supplies are available, mothers also learn a handicraft such as knitting, crocheting, embroidery, or sewing. This gives them a skill that they can use to possibly make money for their family in the future.

All meals served at the Nutrition Center are prepared with the micronutrient powder. Mothers are taught healthy foods that they can prepare for their families as well as how to use the micronutrient in their daily diet.

Children are given the necessary medicines to treat their illness and see a doctor weekly. However, the treatment that most of the children need is food.

Currently we have a waiting list of families with children to come to the Nutrition Center.

Years later, MAMA's Nutritional Rehabilitation Center continues to help children in need. The only difference now is that the Center is no longer located in the middle of the most need. . . instead the families come from hours away, in very remote villages in the beautiful mountains of Honduras. We continue to educate, train, and help those in need. One day, we hope, our work will no longer be needed in Honduras at all.

Looking to Christ, we are amazed at the example He set. 2 Corinthians 8:9 tells us, "Though he was rich, yet for us He became poor". God, Himself, left the privileges of Heaven to come to earth to show us how to live.

He is in the pain. . . He is in the need.

He is in the poor, we are told to feed.

Thank you to all who have given a gift for
MAMA'S 25th Anniversary!

. . . There's still more time for you to be part of this celebration!

Name _____

City, State _____

___ I/We give MAMA Project, Inc. permission to use my name as written above and any comments written in upcoming publications or website.

My anniversary gift is enclosed:

___ \$25 ___ \$250 ___ \$2,500 ___ Other

Please feel free to share below your reason for continuing to support MAMA's programs of child survival.

COME! JOIN THE FUN!

Annual Banquet & Silent Auction

Saturday, November 10, 2012 at 5:30pm
Quakertown Christian School
50 E. Paletown Rd, Quakertown, PA

**Hot Dinner
Buffet**

**Great Silent
Auction items**

Gift Certificates for many area restaurants & stores
Sight & Sound 2 Adult passes
Perkiomen Tours Gift Certificate
Baseball Signed by Erik Kratz
Homemade pies
Handmade Afghan
Framed Photography
Gourmet Cupcakes
and LOTS MORE



Photo: Kristen Love

**Update about
MAMA'S work**

Suggested
Donation:
\$25/person
(Freewill Offering
will be received)

RSVP by November 3:
215-679-4338 or
mamaproject@enter.net