

March 22, 2009

We are requesting your support with a very worthwhile project. At our annual brunch recently, Our Lady of Perpetual Help CWL invited Dawn Christenson to speak. Dawn is a CWL member who is part of Project El Salvador. Project El Salvador began with a high school teacher named Dennis Kuzenko, from St. Alphonsus parish.

The project focuses on a small village of about 300 people called Loma Linda. The major income for the area is from subsistence farming and the poverty is extreme. Dawn and Dennis told of children dying from malnutrition, diarrhea and simple treatable illnesses. Malnutrition is a huge problem in the community and of course leads to multiple other health problems. The life expectancy of the population is well below North American standards. The women begin to lose their teeth in their twenties because of the calcium depletion that comes with pregnancy and they have no calcium supplements or good sources of dietary calcium available to them. The people have no dental care or tooth brushes and tooth paste.

Last summer Dawn and Dennis lead a group from Winnipeg to work with the community in Loma Linda. Dawn reports that the Red Cross built a health clinic in the community, but there are no Doctors or nurses in the community. Health care in Loma Linda is provided by a lady name Lorena. Lorena has education equivalent to grade 9 and she has been trained by her diocese to be the Popular Health care Worker for the community. Dawn, who is herself a registered nurse, was very impressed with the knowledge, understanding and seriousness that Lorena brought to her work.

On their last trip to Loma Linda, Dawn and Dennis brought with them as many over the counter medications as they could carry. These were turned over to the community's Health Council (all women) who decided that the medications would go the clinic and be dispensed by Lorena for a fee of 10 cents. The fee was required so that they could continue to provide electricity to the clinic. Dawn had some donated monies last summer and she found a pharmacy in a distant community that gave her a very good deal on Pedialyte. Pedialyte is an electrolyte supplement that can save the lives of children who have diarrhea. It is best purchased in El Salvador because it is too difficult to transport.

Project El Salvador also offers micro loans to people in the community to enable them to start small businesses. They may loan \$50 and when the loan is repaid, the borrower is eligible for a \$100 loan and so on. This has proven a successful way to improve the income for families.

Our CWL would like to support the work that Dawn and Dennis are doing through Project El Salvador. In response to the question, How can we help?, Dawn indicated that they and 13 others, including some youth are going to Loma Linda again on June 26, 2009. They are collecting over the counter medications and some basic hygiene products to take along again. This is where CWL ladies throughout the diocese can help. There is a list of what is most needed on the next page.

Project El Salvador is hosting a fund raising perogy supper at St. Alphonsus in the parish hall on Friday, May 1, 2009 at 6:00 p.m. There is no charge for this except for a free will offering. Please RSVP to Dawn (christenson@shaw.ca) or to Dennis (dkuzenko@shaw.ca).

In 2010, Project El Salvador is planning an all CWL trip to Loma Linda. This is open to CWL members throughout the province. Think about joining this group, and if you cannot join in person, please join and support them in prayer.

Below is the list of medications and other items that Loma Linda needs. Please collect what you can from your council and bring it with you when you come to the Diocesan convention on April 17 and 18.

Over the counter medications (generic is just fine) with a good expiration date (very important, if the drugs are expired, we are not permitted to bring them into the country)

Tylenol (acetaminophen) – infant, child and adult

Ibuprofen – infant, child and adult

Immodium – diarrhea being a leading cause of death

Gravol – infant, child and adult

Vitamins (very important) - Infant, child, and prenatal

Polysporin

Band-aids

Toothpaste (most people begin to lose their teeth in their twenties)

Toothbrushes

Soap – plain old soap.

Project El Salvador would also gratefully accept cash donations to purchase Pedialyte (the electrolyte replacement I spoke about) and to support the micro-loan program.

Ladies, anything that you can do to support this project will be happily accepted. On behalf of OLPH-CWL, Thank you.

For more information, please e-mail Monika Bingham @ ambingham@shaw.ca or contact Iris Langlois at 895-7750. Thank you.