Spotlight continued

patients have an Enfoque Ixcán sponsored surgery on his right eye. The doctors determined that there was too much damage to the left eye to recover any sight. The cataract surgery with a lens implant went well and he now has good vision in the right eye.

Diego has six children: two boys and four girls and somewhere between 25 and 30 grand children. His youngest grandchild, a girl about 2 years old, is one of his favorites and he likes her to visit him and play a bit.

We are delighted to have made Diego’s life more meaningful.

The other visitor was a 67 year old man named Roberto.

Roberto’s language is Kiche also and he had his son with him to help with translation. He is a sturdy builds man, nicely dressed in a pink shirt. About a year ago he stopped working in his fields due to his poor vision. He has also developed diabetes and a heart problem. When he walks he has to stop often to rest.

Roberto is in the Enfoque Ixcán office today so I can verify his need for cataract surgery. He came this morning from his village of San Antonio Chi- quita, about 3½ hours to the west. He now spends nearly all his time in his house. He lacks confidence to move around on the uneven ground outside.

I confirm the severity of his cataracts (his best vision is 20/200) and Felipe talks with him about the next scheduled group trip to the surgery clinic, in March. With the cataract surgery he hopes to recover his eye sight and he’s also hoping the diabetes treatment will improve his strength. He has four sons and nineteen grandchildren to keep up with and enjoy. He thanks us for our services and is looking forward to making the trip for surgery.

Read more about Enfoque Ixcán on our website EnfoqueIxcan.org or follow us on Facebook

FOCUSING ON THE IXCÁN

EYE CARE AND EYE HEALTH EDUCATION FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE IXCÁN REGION OF GUATEMALA

VOLUME 10, ISSUE 1

MARCH 2014

LOOKING FORWARD...

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We discussed their proposed collaboration with 4 Oregon Rotary clubs for a Rotary grant to fund equipment and supplies for our proposed clinic. We hope to have that grant ready for submission by mid-year.

Along with Pedro, Felipe and Arnulfo, our EHPs, Pat Rumor, a friend from Portland who speaks Spanish fluently, and I had some meetings in Ixcán. We met with the Mayor of Ixcán and his counsel to bring them up to date on our successes in 2013, to offer our thanks for their help in transporting patients to surgical care, and to ask for further assistance in 2014. They will be voting on our proposal in mid-March. The Mayor extended his deep appreciation for the wonderful service we offer to the people of Ixcán, something they have not been able to provide privately or publicly.

Another meeting was with Apolonio Gonzalez, the school supervisor in Ixcán who helps us during our August trip when the Amigos Eye Care optometry students join us. Apolo- nio will arrange visits to two schools in remote villages. We have worked with Apolonio for 12 years and have visited over 21 schools and villages.

A final meeting was with the Ixcán area Ministry of Health office. The administrator and chief doctor were called out to attend an emergency meeting in Guatemala City, so we met with 2 of their assistants. We discussed our planned clinic building and the work of Enfoque Ixcán. Last year this office offered a piece of land to build our clinic on. The land is located where they are building a new hospital. We were able to go to the hospital site which is currently being cleared for construction. Before we left, one of the assistants acknowledged that after 10 years of eye care service, Enfoque Ixcán has more prestige and local support than the government health clinic. I’m sure he was being generous and kind, but we have been more consistent than most Guatemalan government services in the region.

We’ll be telling you more about our clinic building plans in the weeks to come.
SLEEPING WITH MOSQUITOS

The Dalai Lama said, “If you think you’re too small to make a difference in the world, try sleeping with a mosquito.” That’s how I like to frame our success in 2013.

In 2013 Enfoque Ixcán examined 1426 people. We accomplished this with the wonderful help of our eye health promoters Felipe, Arnulfo and Pedro, plus 20 volunteers (7 Guatemalans and 13 from USA) and all of our donors. Our eye health promoters accompanied 112 patients and 13 from our eye health promoters’ ex-amplification.

All of this happened because of our generous donors, who contributed over $22,000. In the USA, the 57 cataract surgeries alone would have cost about $170,000. We were able to fund the surgeries and pay for food and lodging for the patients traveling to the eye clinics. In addition, we paid for the eye health promoters’ expenses and contract salaries, sent them for 3 days of training in July and covered the cost of rent for our office space in Canta-bal.

Our donor dollars go a long way! Over 95% of our donations go to patient care. And, we’re still growing. The Ixcán region of Guatemala has about 100,000 people, so we’ve only touched the surface. Because over 80% of the population live in poverty, there are no eye doctors in the area. We are the only stable source of eye care.

To meet the demand for eye care services in Ixcán, we are currently raising money to build a clinic so that Guatemalan doctors can volunteer for a few days during the year to help our eye health promoters test more people, dispense more glasses and...

by Scott Pike

Spotlight: Patients Diego and Roberto

Two gentlemen stopped by the Enfoque Ixcán office to share their eye care stories last month.

The first was Diego. He is a tall, slender man, slightly bent from hard work and his 85 years. His language is Mayan K’iche and he originally was from a region south of the mountains. He came to this region in 1969, this makes him an early settler to the Ixcán.

A year ago Diego was examined at Enfoque Ixcán and found to have a cataract in his right eye. His vision was reduced to 20/150. His left eye had suffered several episodes of trauma over his lifetime and had little vision. In the past he had been struck in the left eye, first with a fist (age 18), later by a sugar cane stick when working in the cane fields, and with a broom handle when he was cleaning in a church.

In May, 2013, he went with Felipe and group of.

SLEEPING WITH MOSQUITOS CONTINUED

Continued from page 2
diagnose more people who need eye surgeries. As the word spreads about our services, the demand grows.

We had a great year in 2013 and we expect 2014 to be even busier. You can help! Please join our winning team of volunteers and donors as we aid these unfortunate neighbors. It’s only chance that put them there and us here. We’re supporting the people by dignifying them and allowing them to be a part of something on-going and enduring. In this way we are creating a sustainable program.

Each of us, through Enfoque Ixcán is making a difference in the world.
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**SPOTLIGHT: PATIENTS DIEGO AND ROBERTO**

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In May, 2013, he went with Felipe and group of students waiting for exams.

Continued on page 3

**FOCUSING ON THE IXCÁN**

**2013 ENFOQUE IXCÁN DONORS**

A very special thank you to all of the donors that supported Enfoque Ixcán over the past year. It is your generous support which make it possible to provide life altering support to the people of the Ixcán.

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Madge Anderson
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Sally & Charles Arvidson
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**SLEEPING WITH MOSQUITOS CONTINUED**

Continued from page 2

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Scott with the administrative assistant at the Ixcán Health Office.