

## AMAZON – LIMA MEDICAL MISSION 2012

This year the Wisconsin Conference/Oak Creek Community UMC IVIM team joined DB Peru for a Women's Health Project on the Napo River in the Amazon. DB Peru is an NGO that has been offering healthcare to 28 villages along the Napo River for the past ten years. The Napo River is a tributary of the Amazon approximately 100 miles north of Iquitos, Peru.



We met the DB Peru team in Iquitos on February 24<sup>th</sup> to begin our mission. The next day we traveled about four hours by boat up the Amazon to our lodge on the Napo River. Our 10 VIM team members were from 4 states in the North Central Jurisdiction and we also had 2 members from the Methodist Church of Peru, Volunteers in Action. We were truly international with members of the DB Peru team representing England, South Africa and several other US states.

Our home for the next 6 days was the Explorama Napo, a rustic and beautiful lodge built about twenty years ago. The lodge did not have electricity except for a generator in the dining hall. Our looking out at the jungle and our netting. We had kerosene lanterns our path to the baños at night. Cold really felt good after a long hot day. nights were good for sleeping. The insects, tree toads or the distant They were much louder in the morning giving us a built-in alarm clock.



not have electricity except for a rooms were open in the back beds had the usual mosquito in our rooms with lanterns lighting showers were the norm and they The cool and sometimes rainy sounds of the jungle at night were chattering of monkeys and birds.

Our devotions were after dinner and the remainder of our evening was busy setting up medications and supplies for the next day.



We visited five villages ranging in population from 100 to 300 people and saw over 300 patients during our time on the Napo. We also had games and stories for the children in each village. This was a big attraction and enjoyed by everyone, even some of the parents.

villages are islands, so we had a captive audience. Diagnoses ranged from infections, backaches, headaches and a few wounds from a saw or knife. There was a young girl who broke her arm in two places. On our return to Iquitos we took her and her mother to the hospital where surgery was performed to set the arm. This little girl would have lost the use of her arm if she had not had the surgery. A lady diagnosed with cancer was also taken to Iquitos. After lab tests were

The OB/GYN RNs gave talks on women's issues. The men were also invited and some did attend. Many



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completed, it was determined that there was nothing more that the hospital could do for her. Her cancer was terminal and she would be sent home in a few days. Several team members visited her before leaving Iquitos. Pastor Morley gave a prayer in Spanish and we said our good-byes. It was a very difficult and touching moment for all of us but we knew that God's promise was to take care of this lady today, tomorrow and always.

We did not see any churches in the villages, though they said they were Catholic. We did learn that missionaries travel through these areas from time to time. There are shamans that seem to serve their spiritual and medical needs. Over the past ten years, DB Peru has developed a trusting relationship with the people and the shamans to offer better healthcare and education for their villages.



Returning to Lima, the team set up for the next medical clinics to be held outside the city in Lomas de Carabayllo, San Juanito and Chorrillos. Our day in Lomas de Carabayllo was very busy with lots of children to entertain and be seen by the practitioners. We were very fortunate to be able to use the government clinic. It is the only clinic for over 200,000 people. Children were given sandals or shoes, socks and underwear. Women had the opportunity to receive a bra. Vitamins were handed out to the parents of all the children seen as well as anti-parasite medication. The next day we divided our time at Iglesia Metodista de San Juanito and Iglesia Metodista Chorrillos. Once again, vitamins and anti-parasite medications were given out. We also had a dentist on duty who gave fluoride treatments to the children. We saw over two

hundred patients at the three sites. No major illnesses were diagnosed, but some were referred for follow up to a local clinic. Good nutrition is a problem because of the poverty in these areas. Many patients suffered from asthma with the pollution of factories and dust in the air.

We did basic healthcare and education during our time in the Lima area. At the end of our mission we knew that there was still much to do and many people to serve. Our hope is that teams will continue to work in these areas and that we can all work together to bring hope and sustainable healthcare for our neighbors. Moving forward, we plan to work with Volunteers in Action of the Methodist Church of Peru. There are many opportunities for medical, construction and Bible school teams to serve. We are very grateful for the Volunteers in Action for their help in serving with our team during our time in Peru.



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