

Spring Update

Spring 2010

MEMO-Cuba Newsletter



This past weekend we just packed container #38!

On one hand I am thinking, "It can't be possible that six years have gone by since the formation of that first management team in February of 2004! On the other hand I am thinking, "Is it only six years and so much has been accomplished?" And the answer is "Yes."

Most of the reports have told of equipment ob-

tained, moved, shipped and then the arrival in Cuba.

The other day I met someone who responded to my statement, "retirement is not boring, but busy" with "what are you doing that would keep you busy?"

Did I ever have an answer for her! I thought I'd share some of the events of our last few weeks with all of you too.

We returned from a wonderful "New Year's Break" with family and friends in Langley, Maple Ridge and Vancouver, at the end of January with plans for a container to be shipped on February 20th and a team of five people to travel to Cuba on February 28th.

Leading up to this there had been e-mails back and forth to Cuba requesting parts for some malfunctioning equipment (a picture, perhaps, to be sent to a technician who could search it out)



Volunteers busy packing

Our volunteers are searching on E-bay for parts needed for bargain prices. These then must be picked up along with larger beds, tables, linens from clinics and hospitals, whole dental offices of equipment, X-ray developing fluids and film. All along, people continue to call to find out about MEMO and what we can send.



Donated medical furniture and equipment waiting to be packed and shipped

Permission is obtained for shipping from the Cuban government, and every item going into the container must be given a packing number and description and need to be inventoried and valued before packing. A packing list must be sent with the container and another to the government officials. Sometimes they require this in both English and Spanish so it is necessary to find a translator.

We have a nurse who looks after ostomy supplies- collecting all the



Volunteers collect and sort ostomy sup-

donations from hospitals, home care nurses and nursing homes. These supplies are put into sets, sized and packed into boxes to go into the container. We will have about 40 boxes in this container.

While all these things are going on, visa applications are applied for, for the team traveling. A travel agent has worked to find the best prices and discussions have gone back and forth



Negotiations with Cuban officials

regarding what supplies need to be purchased and brought.

This team includes painters (needing special paint to cover thick Kerosene smoke on the ceiling and upper walls of a hospital kitchen) and a nurse as well as Jerome, who will be checking placement and functioning of supplies (which are at the various hospitals now from previous containers).



Working together with Cuban volunteers to paint

One day last week we had a "pill popping party", one of our favourite retirement pastimes. Ten people came to our home to remove pills from extra "physicians samples" collected from pharmacies and doctors' offices to be carefully labeled and put in plastic bags in suitcases, as permitted by the Cuban government. These are given to Cuban doctors we work with, who have great difficulty obtaining medicines otherwise.

An account of this last week is amusing, I think. On February we finally obtained permission from the Cuban government to ship containers and the emails went out saying, "February 20th is our packing day!" Volunteers were busy responding when the next day the shipping agent sent a message stating that another company will ship for \$1000 less than our current shipping company! Shipping would have to be later in March. We then sent out another message to our volunteers, "February 20 shipping is off!" The next day another urgent message arrived saying that unfortunately that company is no



Volunteers "popping pills"

longer shipping. So it was back to "February 20th is once again our shipping day!" All that to say that now all is confirmed and the container was just packed and is on its way!

Now it is on to preparations for the team trip. Suitcases are basically packed and all arrangements made for the team going to Cuba to meet with our friends: People we have learned to know, trust and respect. People who need our encouragement and reminders that God knows them, loves and cares for them. They are not forgotten.

How we value working with them, spending time sharing not just our goods, but ourselves as well!

We thank you for your support in prayer and finances and letters of encouragement. Together we are doing something that truly matters.

We are thankful we have been given a busy retirement!



Maureen Harvey

GIVE THE GIFT OF LOVE TO CUBA !

\$2 will pay for the x-ray film for a mammogram.

(Without mammograms, women die needlessly.)

\$10 will buy 15 pairs of sterile surgical gloves.

(Without sterile surgical gloves, surgery is impossible.)

\$20 will pay for the lab tests necessary to maintain a patient on lifesaving ventilator for a day

\$100 will provide \$1,000 worth of antibiotics.

(Without antibiotics, many infections will end in death.)

\$200 will pay for a special intravenous line for administering chemotherapy.

(Without these PICC lines, patients suffer with painfully inflamed veins during cancer treatments.)

\$500 will pay to ship three comfortable hospital beds and linens.

(Without comfortable beds, hospital stays can be even more miserable.)

\$1,000 will pay for a part for doing breast biopsies.

(Without it, proper diagnosis can't be made.)

\$4,000 will pay for second-hand but usable surgical instruments for modern surgery.

(Without surgery, these people will suffer and die.)

\$9,000 will ship an entire container of life-saving medical equipment to Cuba.

(Without shipping, equipment is wasted.)

You can designate your gift to go to any of these needs directly

(Without your help, it won't get done)

Please make cheques payable to **EFCCM** and mail to:

MEMO Cuba, 380 N. Court St.,

Thunder Bay ON P7A 4X1

OR

EFCCM , P.O. Box 850, Langley Stn.

LCD1, Langley BC V3A 8S6

***Enclose a note directing donations to:*

MEMO Cuba #2-5055

Phone: (807) 343-4263

Fax: (807) 344-1902

Website: www.memocuba.org

Email: infomemo@tbaytel.net

Official tax receipts will be issued for donations of \$10.00 or more.

To donate by credit card, please call (604) 513-2183.

If you would like to receive future letters by email, please notify us at infomemo@tbaytel.net