



MEMO Cuba Christmas Report

MEMO Cuba Newsletter
December 2012

Glancing back at the last several reports, I'm struck that they all begin with the same type of comment, "It's been a long time" "Finally - here I am!" etc. And I'm afraid this time is no exception. My correspondence has been sparse.

On a personal level 2012 has been a year of loss on one level or another for the Harvey family. In January Jerome lost his older brother to a heart attack and in March his older sister died of cancer. In June we experienced a home invasion in the middle of the night and lost my computer and purse. Not on the same level of loss by any means, but it is rather unsettling to lose all your I.D. and time consuming to replace it all. The greatest loss was when on Oct. 2nd our youngest son Jerry, died one day before his forty-ninth birthday. Jerry had been diagnosed as a diabetic at ten days of age and

outlived all predictions by at least thirty years but we all felt "not yet" when the time came.

All of these events helped to remind us that life (ours and that of others) is precious and we want to make a difference in our world through the opportunities God presents for us now. We have experienced peace and a sense of purpose throughout this year.

Now, what of MEMO? Well, that trip which was planned for June 2nd had to be cancelled at the very last minute when the Cuban government did not send the special D1 visas the teams always travel with. There was no problem other than inter-departmental differences within the Cuban government. Finally the trip became a reality on August 18th. Talking directly to hospital directors and health officials is so helpful. We then know who needs what and what

to put in each container. We asked specifically for permission to send 4 containers (one from Sioux Lookout and 3 from Thunder Bay) in the next three months. One comment Jerome made in a letter to some supporters as he was pointing out that that would require \$30,000 for shipping costs sums it up "If it wasn't for your support and prayers that strengthen me, I would probably give up." And the "miracles of MEMO" continue.

On September 8th, container #45 was packed with 70 hospital beds for Cuba. The whole community is involved in the town of Sioux Lookout in the task of slowly and steadily packing the container with the medical equipment from their amalgamated hospitals and district ambulance services etc.



They are now set to ship their third container to Cuba. We are astounded at what this town of 5,000 people has accomplished together to collect,

pack, ship and **pay for** these containers under the direction of MEMO. Another miracle!



The month of September was busy with ongoing inventory of donations sent, shipping a container (#46) and setting up a wheelchair repair shop in the our big warehouse. The big news is that the City of Thunder Bay has now taken ownership of the large warehouse we have been sharing with two other charitable organizations and has said we can continue in the building at least until late spring while just paying the utilities. Another miracle!

Plans for our annual fundraising dinner for MEMO began with the invitation presented to Dariel Leon Sanchez to come from Cuba to speak to us on the topic of MEMO from a Cuban perspective. Dariel has been Jerome's interpreter as he has travelled in

Cuba, speaks English fluently and was indeed a gifted speaker.



This year our MEMO dinner was held at the Airline Hotel (as Jerome said "We kicked it up a notch.") and all 280 seats were filled. Our theme was "For Such a Time as This" and we were thinking of the comments made to us by several Cubans, that this is a critical time in the life of the Cuban government. October 26th was fast approaching and since Dariel still had not been granted his exit visa, he emailed what he planned to say in case someone might have to read it. As we read his words we had tears in our eyes. This was powerful and we were really praying he would be the one to say these things personally. On October 23rd, Dariel sat in that office in Havana again, pleading and waiting and at last, finally the stamp was

applied to his exit visa and we booked his flight!



The night of the dinner, the room was full, the meal was good, the crowd was expectant and Dariel was truly electrifying as he told of his familiarity with the hospital at Placetas (his mother was a nurse), the impact equipment from MEMO had on his family's life (very personal), and the survival through childbirth of his two year old daughter. He thanked Canada, he thanked MEMO, he thanked Christians and he thanked God! There was a spontaneous standing ovation and the people opened their purses as well as their hearts. After expenses we had \$18,000 to ship two more containers. Another MEMO miracle!

For a transcript of Dariel's speech, call Maureen or Jerome @ 346-8170

Two days later, October 28th, Jerome went with a team to spend a week in Cuba, once more planning further cooperation.



A nurse met to teach nurses how to use some of the amazing wound care dressings we now have available;



Dr. Tim Wollin spent time teaching urologists from Sagua hospital how to use the special instruments he had brought to do prostate surgery through a scope;



Dr. Jane Taylor, newly retired professor from Lakehead University was taking it all in (and taking notes for Jerome) as she prepares to join the MEMO volunteers as our fundraiser for Corporate Sponsors of MEMO. Do you know a company that might like to become involved? The trip was summed up as "challenging, but important progress was made and



Dr. Jane Taylor, Professor Emeritus of Kinesiology at Lakehead University talked to the Provincial Head of Rehabilitation and began a relationship for further collaboration."

Now we look forward to packing and shipping the last container for this year - #47 - on November 24th.

So another year of MEMO Miracles draws to a close and we approach the Christmas season. Christmas - when we celebrate the time of that first amazing gift to all people. That is what the word means isn't it? The birth of the Christ, God's gift of love, forgiveness and acceptance of us. So let's look around us with thankful hearts---not necessarily fixing on what we want, but what we do have. I want to be more thankful!

Blessings,

Maureen Harvey

for [MEMO Cuba](#)



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infomemo@tbaytel.net

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Contact MEMO Cuba

Address: 380 N. Court Street
Thunder Bay ON
P7A 4X1

Phone: (807) 346-8170
or
(807) 627-6360

E-mail: infomemo@tbaytel.net

Website: www.memocuba.org

Sending Donations

Address: EFCCM
PO Box 850
Langley Stn. LCD1
Langley BC V3A 8S6

E-mail: info@efccm.org

Phone: (604) 513-2183

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