



Sweetwater
Club of
San Diego



Primeros
Pasos

Rotary Sweetwater Club of San Diego Medical Mission in Primeros Pasos



Quetzaltenango, Guatemala

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Civil Association PASOS for Prevention and Health Care
Primeros Pasos Clinic
Cantón Llanos del Pinal, Valle de Palajunoj, Quetzaltenango (Guatemala)

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Palajunoj Valley
Quetzaltenango, Guatemala

1. INTRODUCTION

The Primeros Pasos clinic is a program of Asociación Pasos. Founded in 2002, Primeros Pasos is a women-led independent, non-profit organization that delivers comprehensive, high-quality, and affordable health care services to the ten rural communities of Palajunoj Valley, a region just outside the urban center of Quetzaltenango, Guatemala.

The region experiences disparities in health outcomes and healthcare access, including high rates of child malnutrition and chronic poverty. During the Covid-19 pandemic, Primeros Pasos has been the only clinic in the region that kept its doors open, bravely providing a variety of medical services with priority to primary and women’s healthcare, as well as nutritional and dental services to over 4,000 patients annually. Primeros Pasos also offers a robust service-learning program to train Guatemalan medical students and international volunteer-interns, as well as, works closely with community leaders and stakeholders.

This report demonstrates the impacts of the mobile clinics conducted in the most isolated and vulnerable communities of the Palajunoj Valley. Thanks to the generous support and contribution of \$4,000.00 USD made by the Rotary Sweetwater Club of San Diego, Primeros Pasos delivered free medical, dental, and nutritional services and medications to 1,004 patients in the communities of Las Majadas, Bella Vista, Chuicaracoj, and Tierra Colorada Alta. Table 1 displays a summary of the mobile clinics costs and impact.

Table 1. Mobile Clinics Cost & Impact Summary							
MOBILE CLINICS COST	Services	Medications	Transportation	Supplies	Extra Dentists Pay	Lunch for Staff	TOTAL
	\$2,517.33	\$2,923.57	\$199.66	\$847.42	\$92.15	\$41.83	\$6,621.96
	Total Rotary Contribution						\$4,000.00
	Total Cost Difference Paid by Primeros Pasos						\$2,621.96
PATIENTS SERVED	Children			Adults			TOTAL
	418			586			1004
CONSULTATIONS PROVIDED	Dental		Medical		Nutritional		
	236		266		502		
	Medications Provided						13,012

2. MOBILE CLINICS

2.1 Mobile Clinics Objective & Description

Objective: Equitably deliver medical, dental and nutritional services to the furthest and most isolated communities of the Palajunoj Valley to promote health prevention and maintenance by offering personalized and safe treatments.

Description: The mobile clinics were carried out in the four most geographically isolated communities located in the Palajunoj Valley, Quetzaltenango where health care access is extremely limited compared to the rest of the region's communities. Only two of the four communities offer governmental public health services that are only provided once or twice per week, and they do not offer a varied inventory of medications. Thus, the mobile clinics provided important and much needed support for patients.

2.2 Patient Distribution & Services Provided

Table 2 displays the distribution of attended patients during the mobile clinics: 1,004 total patients were served (418 children and 586 adults), Las Majadas was the community with the highest number of patients, representing 39%; a greater number of adult female than male patients were served, mainly consisting of girls under 5 years of age and elderly women.

Table 2. Patient Distribution & Services Provided

Communities	Dental Care			Medical Care			Nutritional Care			TOTAL PATIENTS SERVED
	Children	Adults	Total Patients Served	Children	Adults	Total Patients Served	Children	Adults	Total Patients Served	
Las Majadas	36	59	95	27	76	103	63	135	198	396
Bella Vista	12	35	47	25	28	53	37	63	100	200
Chuicaracoj	25	28	53	26	19	45	51	47	98	196
Tierra Colorada Alta	19	22	41	39	26	65	58	48	106	212
TOTALS	92	144	236	117	149	266	209	293	502	1004

2.3 Las Majadas

Las Majadas is the most isolated community of the Palajunoj Valley, located behind the slopes of the Santa Maria Volcano where people work in agriculture growing flowers, and masonry to earn income for their family.

Resources: Water is scarce as most families do not have running water in their homes and must walk for approximately 2 to 3 hours to a spring to obtain water.

Transportation: There is an urban bus that provides service 4 times a day. However, during the months of March and April, the service has been suspended due to a territorial conflict between the Palajunoj Valley and the municipal authorities, making it very difficult for residents to access health services located outside the community.

Mobile Clinics: Primeros Pasos received great support from the Las Majadas governmental health center, who kindly lent their facilities for the mobile clinic. The entire health center leadership and staff played an essential role: they helped distribute nutritional supplementation, promote a vaccine against COVID-19, as well as administer vaccines to eligible children.

Dental Care in Las Majadas

A total of 95 patients were served, 62% were adults, of which 69% were women.

The 95 patients received a dental check-up, fluoride application and a total of 36 dental extractions were performed in cases where the tooth was no longer salvageable.



Medical Care in Las Majadas

A total of 103 patients received medical care, 26% were children and 74% adults, of which 75% were females.

Table 3 displays the main reasons patients sought medical consultations, presented in order of highest to lowest prevalence:

Table 3. Reasons for Medical Consultations in Las Majadas	
1. Common cold	8. Eye irritation
2. Routine gynecological check up	9. Acute & chronic alcoholism
3. Hypertension	10. Arthrosis
4. Peptic ulcer disease	11. Tension headache
5. Urinary tract infection	12. Sinusitis
6. Intestinal parasitic infection	13. Dermatitis
7. Diabetes Mellitus Type 2	14. Anxiety crisis



Nutritional Care in Las Majadas

Nutritional care and counseling were provided to a total of 198 patients, 68% adults and 32% children. Each patient was evaluated and received personalized nutritional education and treatment. Nutritional supplementation was indicated for most cases, and was provided at the end of each consultation. The supplements provided were ferrous sulfate, zinc and amino chelated iron.

2.4 Bella Vista

The community of Bella Vista is located approximately 4 kilometers before reaching Las Majadas. Here, families also work in agriculture growing flowers and masonry to obtain economic income.

Resources: Bella Vista does not have its own health center. Thus, residents seek health care at the health center located in Las Majadas, although as mentioned above, services are not available every day.

Mobile Clinic: Residents of Bella Vista attended the mobile clinic held at the Las Majadas health center, whose staff helped coordinate delivering services to Bella Vista residents.

Dental Care in Bella Vista

A total of 12 children received dental care, 58% were female and 42% were male. A total of 35 adults received dental care, of which 80% were female.

The 47 total patients received dental check-up services, fluoride application and 12 dental extractions were performed for indicated cases in which the teeth were too damaged and needed to be removed.



Medical Care in Bella Vista

A total of 53 patients received medical care, 47% of whom were children, with a predominance of males. Of the adults, 64% were females.

The main reasons patients sought medical care are displayed in Table 4 and is presented in order of highest to lowest prevalence:

Table 4. Reasons for Medical Consultations in Bella Vista

1. Common cold	5. Urinary tract infection
2. Routine gynecological check up	6. Intestinal parasitic infection
3. Hypertension	7. Diabetes Mellitus Type 2
4. Peptic ulcer disease	8. Eye irritation

Nutritional Care in Bella Vista

A total of 100 patients received a nutritional consultation, 37% were children. Each patient received an anthropometric assessment and nutritional counseling, and supplemental treatment was also indicated depending on the individual condition of each patient. The supplements provided were ferrous sulfate, zinc and amino chelated iron.



2.5 Chuicaracoj

Chuicaracoj is the smallest community in the Palajunoj Valley, it is located approximately 20 minutes from the region's center. The main source of income for families are agriculture and masonry.

This community is adversely affected year-round by pollution, as the municipal dump is located in the community, and large tons of garbage and waste from the city arrive daily.



Resources: In addition to the pollution the community endures, another major problem is the lack of water, as they only have access to this service twice a week.

In Chuicaracoj, there is a small room where medical attention is provided only on Tuesdays by a professional nurse, however, they do not offer the necessary medications for treating the different pathologies or needs of the population.

Transportation: There is no urban bus that services Chuicaracoj. Thus, residents must walk a slope that enters and exits the community if they do not have access to a personal vehicle.

Mobile Clinic: Thanks to the principal and teachers, the local elementary school provided the facilities to conduct the mobile clinic. Instead of patients traveling hours to access health care services, the mobile clinic came to them and offered free medical, dental and nutritional care, complemented with the appropriate medications to treat their ailments.

Dental Care in Chuicaracoj

Dental care was provided to a total of 53 patients, 47% of whom were children, with a predominance of males, and among the adults, 92% were women.

All patients received fluoride application and dental check-ups, 37 extractions were performed in patients with unsalvageable teeth that required extraction.

Medical Care in Chuicaracoj

Medical care was provided to a total of 45 patients, 57% were children, with a predominance of females, and among the adults, 73% were women.

The main reasons patients sought medical care are displayed in Table 5 and is presented in order of highest to lowest prevalence:



Table 5. Reasons for Medical Consultations in Chuicaracoj

1. Common cold
2. Intestinal parasitic infection
3. Diabetes Mellitus Type 2
4. Hypertension
5. Peptic ulcer disease
6. Urinary tract infection



Nutritional Care in Chuicaracoj

A total of 98 patients received nutritional care and counseling, 52% were children, and there was a significant number of adult patients who requested nutritional counseling and services, including recommendations for healthy eating and the delivery of supplements that contribute to improving the nutritional status of the patients. The supplements provided were ferrous sulfate, zinc and amino chelated iron.



2.6 Tierra Colorada Alta (TCA)

TCA is located at the top of a mountain overlooking the Palajunoj Valley region.

Resources: TCA does not have a health center, so residents must go to another community called Tierra Colorada Baja for health care services. TCA does not have a water source, which puts residents at high risk for intestinal and respiratory system diseases. Residents must walk long distances to the nearest towns to get drinking water.

Transportation: There is no urban bus that services TCA. Thus, residents must walk approximately 1 hour to find buses in a nearby town.

Mobile Clinic: Thanks to the support of teachers and the community, the mobile clinic was conducted in the local elementary school. The health center staff of Chuicaracoj, the nearest town, helped to administer vaccinations against Covid-19, deliver nutritional supplementation to women of childbearing age and nutritious food to children under 5 years old.

Dental Care in TCA

Dental care was provided to a total of 41 patients, 46% were children with predominance of males.

All 41 patients received dental check-ups, fluoride application, and 12 tooth extractions were necessary.



Medical Care in TCA

Medical care was provided to a total of 53 patients, 47% were children with a predominance of males, and among the adults, 64% were females.

The main reasons patients sought medical care are displayed in Table 6 and is presented in order of highest to lowest prevalence:

Table 6. Reasons for Medical Consultations in TCA
1. Common cold
2. Acute diarrheal syndrome
3. Hypertension
4. Peptic ulcer disease
1. Intestinal parasitic infection
2. Diabetes Mellitus Type 2
3. Eye irritation
4. Dyslipidemia

Nutritional Care in TCA

A total of 106 patients received nutritional service, 55% were children. Both children and adults received nutritional counseling and supplements to contribute to the improvement of their nutritional status. The supplements provided were ferrous sulfate, zinc and amino chelated iron.



3. CONCLUSION

The support and donation of the Rotary Sweetwater Club of San Diego was an invaluable opportunity for families in the Palajunoj Valley communities to access quality medical, dental and nutritional services.

Through these activities, Primeros Pasos carried out its mission to be an institution that promotes and offers preventive and curative health care services for all families in the Palajunoj Valley. Primeros Pasos offers services in an accessible, affordable, and culturally relevant manner that contributes to the improvement of the quality of life for entire families.



Thank you for giving us hope, love, and health.
Although we aren't together physically, your
generosity and kindness connects us!

Meet Our Team!



