Panchito Gonzales is a 27 year old Tarahumara man who fell off the roof of his house last June in a very remote village of the Sierra Madre and injured his hip and pelvis. Unfortunately it took almost two months for him to arrive at Hospital Misión Tarahumara where X-rays showed that he had a very severe fracture which is difficult and dangerous to treat. When I practiced in the United States I wouldn’t have dreamed of operating on this injury, but rather would have referred the patient to a sub-specialist at the nearest university.

But now a patient with this injury was in our hospital. I sent the X-rays to several experts in the US seeking advice. The chief trauma surgeon of the US Army said that this fracture should only be fixed by a surgeon with specialized training in this injury, and in a specialized hospital with a well-stocked blood bank; this described neither myself, the hospital nor our blood bank.

I sent the patient to a surgeon with more experience than myself in the regional medical center in Chihuahua City, but he was unwilling to tackle the problem. So Panchito was back in Samachique and I was left “holding the bag.” To do nothing would leave him a cripple for the rest of his life; to operate was dangerous since he could literally die from blood loss. I fretted over the problem and lost sleep. Finally I called up MMM board member and orthopedic surgeon Tim Schmidt who lives in Virginia, and asked if he would come to Samachique and help me with the surgery. Tim agreed, so he traveled to Mexico, and together we got through the surgery and Panchito did alright – Praise God!

Most of our work in the Sierra Madre is routine: things like the treatment of children’s respiratory illness, baby deliveries, dental care and education in preventative health care are what occupy the majority of our time. We treat over 10,000 patients a year. But often we must pour huge resources, energy and time into one patient like Panchito. The patient might have a serious burn requiring multiple surgeries for skin grafting, or a spinal cord injury patient that will be hospitalized for months, or a host of other diagnoses; but they share one thing in common – no one else wants them. In the overburdened Mexican healthcare system, there just isn’t room for an Indian with a serious health problem that requires a lot of attention.

And it’s not just us in Samachique that have to deal with this. My good friend Dr. Kenny VanKirk who works in another area of the Sierra Madre cares for a young Tarahumara named Miguel with kidney failure. Kenny and his wife Ruth have taken Miguel into their home since he requires dialysis and constant medical care. He can no longer live independently in his remote village and Kenny has to organize much of his life around this person’s medical needs.

(continued on page 2)
Andrew and Iris Bornman have joined the MMM family!

Andrew and Iris moved to Samachique in February of 2009, after spending almost 4 years in San Juanito, which is several hours north of Samachique. They have been seeking ways to serve the Tarahumara in the areas of agriculture and education. In October of 2009 they joined MMM, as they saw the benefit of being tied to a local organization with a similar vision. They are currently on furlough in the states, but hope to return in the fall of 2010 to work in our community health program.

God is answering the Rivera’s prayers for midwives!

For two years, Shelley has run the birth center on the hospital grounds, which has introduced the idea of midwifery to Tarahumara women and worked to gain their trust. Although the birth center also serves as a training center, the greatest need is to teach in villages. With a limited staff, running both the birth center and an outreach program has been challenging.

We are excited that a strong team seems to be assembling. Mark and Jean Dhority plan to move to Samachique and Jean, who is a licensed Colorado midwife, will join Shelley full time. A young midwife student, Michelle Hopkins, returned in January with a year commitment to also work full time.

A full team will allow training in villages to move forward, while women are still cared for at the birth center in Samachique. This teaching ministry, as part of community health, aims to bring lasting change. It seeks to educate women who typically watch half of their children die before they reach the age of five, and who live in legitimate fear of death in childbirth. Pray for this growing team, and for expanded possibilities to touch these women’s lives with love!

A NEW ARRIVAL!

~ Nathan Sotelo ~

born to Jacob & Raquel

We are thankful to God for Natán Sotelo, born on September 19, 2009. He came 3 weeks early, at the end of a high-risk pregnancy which kept Raquel on bedrest much of the time. Nathan is a joy and blessing to Jacob and Raquel, and will soon be a welcomed addition to the hospital family. Lord-willing, they will move to Samachique in the summer of 2010 to begin leading our community health evangelism program. Please pray for them as they prepare to come.
We have been working in Pamachi and Chikué for some time through our community health teams. We are thrilled that the Kramers have joined us in serving the people of these villages! Andy and Deb just completed the translation, printing and delivery of sixty copies of the very first literacy primer in the distinct Tarahumara dialect of the Pamachi region. Deb is pictured above at the first literacy class in Chikué, and with our pilot Mark Egolf, who flew her into Pamachi. Andy and Deb found this group very eager, and will work to keep up with their appetite for knowledge. The Kramers plan to also translate Bible materials and videos into our region’s dialect. They have already done this in the Tarahumara dialect of the region they work in, which is a 9-hour drive from Samachique.

The addition of literacy to our community health program is monumental, and we are thankful that God brought Andy and Deb to us! Please pray for them as they strive in the difficult work of translating and teaching people who have never before been offered the privilege to read!

Andy & Deb Kramer have a vision for literacy!

~ Mike Berkeley
Hospital Misión Tarahumara celebrates its 10th birthday in 2010!

In October 2010, we will celebrate 10 years since the doors of the hospital opened (pictured here being built in 1999). We are thankful for God’s provision, leading and protection every step of the way, and that He has enabled the hospital to be a place of hope and healing to many. Thank you for showing mercy in the Sierra Tarahumara through your prayers and financial support through the years!

PRAYER NEEDS:

• Continued protection, wisdom and strength for hospital staff and missionaries
• February - language acquisition seminar for the hospital staff and missionaries led by the Kramers. Pray for them to grasp more of the Tarahumara language.
• Provision of a larger bush plane for the aviation ministry. A Cessna 185 is hoped for, as it is well-suited to the needs. Also pray for constant safety and provision for flights to remote villages.
• General surgeries in Feb & Mar. A PRAISE - visiting OB/GYN doctor, Army Colonel Brian Crisp, was here for January surgeries. A woman was brought in from a remote village with an ectopic pregnancy, and her life was saved because he was here!
• Upcoming eye surgery weekend - pray for scheduling and coordination of this weekend sometime this quarter, for safety for the team as they come, and for successful surgeries.
• Needed hospital EXPANSION - of pediatrics (with ability to separate malnourished kids from those with infectious diseases), the ER (to include labor and delivery room), and isolation for TB-patients. Pray for provision for this increase in ministry.

Natetaraba! ~ Thank you!

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