

COMMUNITY NEWS

La Aventura

BY SHEENA TWITCHELL, RN

Catching the red eye from Phoenix to Guatemala, I met two other registered nurses from our humanitarian medical team called Hands of Love. It was as though I was stepping into a time capsule and flying into another world. There were medical doctors, a surgeon, dentists, dental assistants, a pharmacy team, two other nurses, optometry, as well as my father that made up our Hands of Love Medical Mission Team.

We loaded up a bus and journeyed to a Guatemalan village called El Palmarcito. Along the way we stopped to buy stoves for some of the volunteers from the village. One of the problems in the village is cooking food over an open fire in the home. Many people also burn garbage in the streets, including the burning of plastics, in which inhaling can cause breathing problems.

Finally we arrived to the village. We were brought to our bungalows and shown around the village. Uh oh. . . Dinner time came and I started feeling nauseous! This was the

beginning of my 24 hour illness either conspired from food poisoning or contaminated water. Luckily I was nursed back to health and ready to start clinic the next day.

Monday morning came and we walked to the Nazarene Church where we set up our clinic. People from the village welcomed us warmly and lines began wrapping around the entrance. My job during the week was to hold a nutrition class where I discussed (in Spanish) how to prepare a well-balanced meal using the My Native Plate, tips to prevent diabetes as well as causes of diabetes, oral care with a demonstration of brushing a giant monkey's teeth, a flip chart on viruses, exercise, and nutrition, as well as a PowerPoint presentation on hand hygiene and water quality.

In between my nutrition clinic I would rush to the nurse's station to assist the nurses and physicians. A few of the nursing tasks ranged from ear flushes and cleaning, to breathing treatments, pregnancy tests, and urinalysis. Every person also got a de-wormer and parasite pill! What a surprise to



Making new friends in far off places as R.N. Twitchell is shadowed by 2 indigenous boys.

find out the commonality in the number of people that have parasites in the world! Eeek! So we all took some parasite pills ourselves.

Each day brought many blessings peppered with occasional struggles. Peering into the village my heart felt heavy with sadness regarding the disparity in lack of health care access. Many people did not have access to water to regularly wash their hands or let alone drink purified water.

This made me mindful in not taking anything for granted and what a blessing each day is if you wake up and there is food and clean water.

Seeing the smiling, happy faces of the kids and playing soccer with them was a highlight. After each class the people expressed gratitude and appreciation for our services. Some people in my nutrition class discussed how they could not afford to see a doctor, so they would push through pain and illness

for the year leading up to our arrival since we provided free healthcare. I witnessed volunteers even take the shoes off their feet to give to people walking barefoot.

Over 700 people came through my nutrition and wellness class. When Friday came, our last day of clinic, the youth from the church sang us songs and the people bid us farewell. What an amazing opportunity to help others while making memories to cherish for a lifetime.

The next day we headed to Antigua for a few days of rest and relaxation. Zip-lining over Antigua forest was breathtaking and freeing. Seeing the history and architecture in the

city was beautiful as well. Exploring with my father and new friends was the perfect end to my foreign AVENTURA (adventure)!

**R.N. Sheena Twitchell is an enrolled member of the Koyukon Athabascan Nation in Galena, Alaska and is employed by the Phoenix Indian Health Service in Phoenix, Arizona. Twitchell's duties takes her to the Native American communities of Prescott-Yavapai, Tonto Apache in Payson and Yavapai-Apache Nation in north-central Arizona on a monthly basis.*

Her parents are Jerry and Christine Twitchell of Arlington, Washington.



R.N. Twitchell giving a power point lesson on water quality and hygiene with local residents.

YAN teens make another commitment to raise awareness of water shortage in Cibecue, Arizona on the White Mountain Apache Reservation in eastern Arizona

BY MARGIE CAMPOS,
YAN News

Saturday, July 15, 2017, Riley Ortega, the son of Lori Ortega, wanted to do a run from Show Low, Arizona to Cibecue for the current water shortage there. Riley is a young teen who has a big heart and has wanted to bring awareness about how water is life. Last year in November he and his family organized a run to Standing Rock, North Dakota from Flagstaff, Arizona a distance of over 1100 miles which they completed in 1 week.

In the early morning of that Saturday, we began the run from the Show Low campus of Northland Pioneer College. It was 42 miles to Cibecue from there. There were 2 vehicles with runners and the first car was driven by Lori Ortega son of Riley Ortega who began the run. Lori's other passengers were Nicol, a young Navajo lady, Lenny Guzman the grandson of Gertrude



YAN runners and crew members gather in the community emergency center in Cibecue where emergency water is kept for the community.

Smith who just returned from a 500 Sacred Hoop Run in South Dakota, Shushie Lewis, daughter of Peggy Lewis and Shyani Thompson, granddaughter of Margaret Campos and Abel Campos, son of Margaret and Victor Campos of Middle Verde.

Each runner ran far as they could for the first

10 miles and some of them ran 1/2 to 3 miles. The second vehicle was driven by Apphia Shirley with runners Logan Ortega (son of Lori Ortega), Joaquin, son of Victor Vallegas, Mikayla Mix daughter of Mickey Mix and Elias Thompson grandson of Margaret Campos. Each vehicle ran 20 miles with each runner taking turns putting the miles in. Mikayla Mix did the run in her traditional Apache camp dress and moccasins and even took them off and ran in her socks for about 2 miles. During this run, there were the four-legged and the winged animals that were running and flying along with the runners.

We arrived around 12:30 in Cibecue at the fire station. Upon arrival, Karina Urias from the Nation's proba-

tion department and her husband brought cases of water that was donated from different departments at Yavapai-

Apache Nation as well as water that was purchased with donations. Erin Ortega director of social service for YAN

stated that there were 83 cases of water that was donated to the Cibecue reservation during the run. They were thankful to the group for the water and for their support to our sister tribe.

Riley Ortega is a 15 year old young man who was raised with a good kind heart and respects and appreciates others. When he feels the need he will want to run to bring awareness for a cause. Others whom have joined him did so upon their desire to help bring awareness that "Water is sacred and water is Life". Each run that has happened was done with prayers and blessing for all that is around us as well as for all people of all walks of life.

Photos by Margie Campos, YAN News



Jauquin Villegas makes good headway toward Cibecue while listening to some tunes



Riley Ortega who helped organized the run from Show Low to Cibecue, makes great head way south out of Show Low toward Cibecue. Cibecue is about 60 miles southwest of Show Low.