

Mobile Medical Clinic Adventure

July 20-29, 2002

(Written by Ed as he reflects on this week with the clinic)

The last week of July, we had the opportunity to work with the mobile medical clinic. Our trip was good – we really enjoyed working with the clinic. But it was a bit of a challenge. The medical team usually works at a small unmanned government clinic in this area, and it has electricity and water, or at least it was supposed to have. When they turned on the power, the electric lines caught fire and fell to the ground – yikes. The local electrician said something about “getting a professional”, but one never showed. So – this precluded using the well, which has an electric pump.

We did have a tank of water on the clinic trailer, but since it was not planned that we use it, it was only half full - and the water was quite green with algae. So – it was my (Ed) job to go to the house across the dirt road with two buckets several times a day for our water supply. We had taken our water treatment system – so we were able to drink clean water. We did have a little outhouse with a flushing toilet (don't ask where it flushes to, it just goes “away”). But of course without a well, it only flushes once. So we used our leftover water, from dishes, etc. to flush the toilet. A new type of recycling. We only showered once – with the green algae water. But luckily the weather was not hot, so all was OK.

We also had a generator on the clinic trailer, but it too was not planned for use. Since we had not planned to use the generator, we did not have enough fuel.

We went to get more, but the local fuel quality was poor. It contained water, which shut down the generator, so it was not usable after the first day. We ended up trying to test vision and do eye glass fittings by flashlight. We finally gave up at 5:00 PM when it just got too dark. We eventually patched all of our extension cords together, ran them down the road to

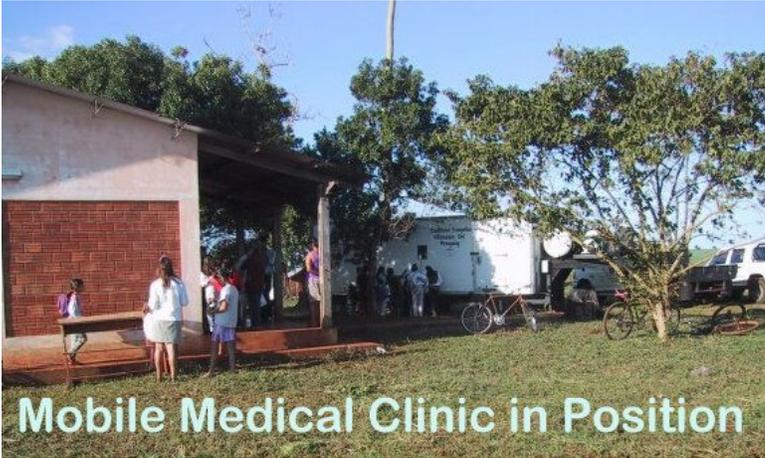
a neighbor, and got power (on Thursday). This gave us electricity for lights, and power for the pump, but not at the same time. But – thank goodness, there was a water tank on top of the building, which we could fill, and then switch the power back over to the lights. Luckily the clinic optometrist was a PhD. electrical engineer before becoming a missionary. I guess my background as a water engineer only qualified me for bucket duty. I thought the women had to do this – with buckets on their heads & such. However, I had enough sense not to recommend this to Linda or either of the two nurses that were with us!

The people we attended to were precious, as they always are. We saw a total of 450 patients in 4 days. These people came by foot, tractor, horse cart, bicycle and car from miles around. We charge the princely sum of 1,000 guaranies (17¢) to get medical attention. And this also gets your prescriptions filled and a pair of used eyeglasses if you need them.

We did have a couple of medical issues that were more serious than usual. A little girl had a huge abscess on her head, bigger than a golf ball. The doctor lanced it and put in a drain. She came back two days later and it was doing fine. Also, a lady who was 8 months pregnant was bitten by a poisonous snake twice on the leg. The doctor also lanced it (he really does know how to do other procedures) to draw out some of the poison, but we did not have anti-venom in our drug supply. A friend with a car then rushed her to nearest hospital, 30 kilometers by dirt road, and we all prayed that she would make it on time. However, we were all quite worried about the baby. We have not heard how it all came out yet.

We ended our 4 days with the medical clinic by staying in Ciudad del Este for the week-end to enjoy fellowship with fellow missionaries Ben & Jenny Reyes. We enjoyed our time with the clinic and look forward to working with them again.

Mobile Medical Clinic Photos



Mobile Medical Clinic in Position



God blessed us with perfect sunsets!



Ed helping with glasses



Ed helping by transporting patients



The Pharmacy is always a popular place

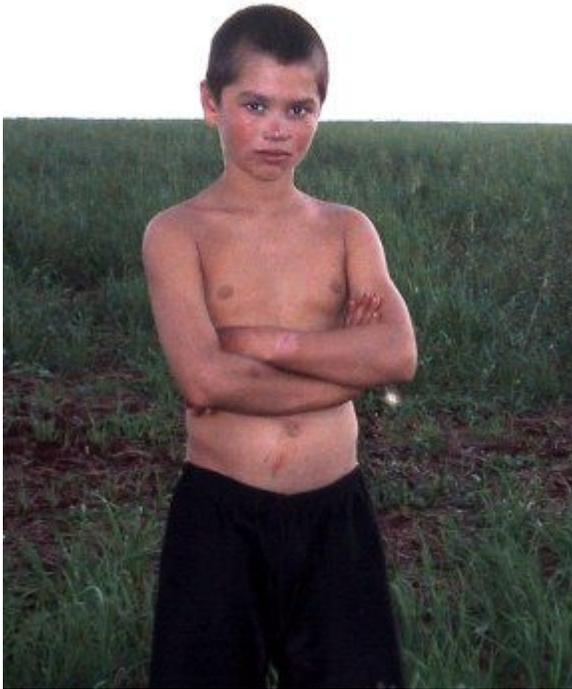


Cooking for 7 folks with 2 Coleman stoves!

Mobile Medical Clinic Photos

The kids are always the most enjoyable part of the trip!





Mobile Medical Clínic Photos

Photos of the Pastors and Families



Irma and Pastor Blas, Ben Reyes
Blas is the pastor at Colonia Guarani



Philip and Jenny Reyes, Jenny's Mother
Taken at Jenny's home church in Brazil



Irma and Blas with their children and extended family