RESPONDING TO COVID-19

Along with the rest of the world, SRI is closely monitoring COVID-19. The total impact it will have on SRI and those we serve is currently unknown, but it has greatly affected the organization already. Upcoming administrative fundraising trips have been cancelled as well as the spring in-person board meeting.

Several months of upcoming volunteer teams have been cancelled or rescheduled for a later date. This is particularly challenging as guesthouse traffic from volunteer teams is crucial for SRI in ways beyond the services volunteers offer during their week in San Juan. Trip fees provide a great amount of support to the General Fund which is in turn used to maintain SRI operations and programs. Due to this decrease in teams serving with us, additional contributions to the General Fund are greatly appreciated at this time as we strive to keep all areas of SRI’s ministry going.

During this difficult situation for our world, we ask that you join us in prayer for the people of the Dominican Republic who will be directly affected by COVID-19. Please also pray for SRI leadership and staff as we navigate this situation and work to do everything we can in the best interest of the organization and those we serve.

“The LORD is my solid rock, my fortress, my rescuer. My God is my rock – I take refuge in him! – he’s my shield, my salvation’s strength, my place of safety.” -Psalm 18:2 (CEB).
A GOD-PROVIDED SOLUTION

The REVOLUTION Project continues to be built by the prayers, connections, and generosity of SRI supporters. It has been incredible to see so many come together to make the vision of this new facility finally become a reality. God has used people in some very unique ways to cover the many details of this project and it’s both fascinating and encouraging to hear the stories. Recently, SRI volunteer Zachary Erb was able to connect his employer, Moore’s Electrical and Mechanical, to the REVOLUTION Project to help meet a major project need that previously had no solid solution.

Through conversation with Project Manager Ken Potter, Zachary learned the medical gases system was one of the most daunting tasks left to figure out. The work is very specialized in nature and the qualifications needed to complete the work in a fashion safe for future patients supported by the system are very high. Since Moore’s is a qualified contractor, and they often install medical gas systems in the US, Zachary was able to present the request for support to Moore’s and they agreed to get involved.

Moore’s has taken on the facility’s medical gases system and is helping from system design through full installation and testing. Moore’s called in favors to many of their suppliers and asked for reduced costs on materials and equipment. This allows SRI to purchase items at or below cost, saving the project a significant amount of money. Along with a true system design, Moore’s will be providing (at the company’s expense) the labor to install the system. It is estimated that they will be sending 12 employees to San Juan for two weeks to do the initial installation. A smaller follow-up team will then return a few weeks later to complete the fine details of the installation, get the system up and running, and then get it tested to current US standards.

In October and November, Moore’s fabricated many sub-assemblies in their Altavista, Virginia shop. These were loaded into a shipping container along with tools and ladders, a vacuum pump, copper pipe, and other materials that will be used for the installation of the system. The container has since been shipped, was cleared tax free (saving SRI approximately $30,000), and arrived in San Juan just hours before the COVID-19 non-essential business ban was initiated by the Dominican government. We are grateful for this partnership with Moore’s and will have more updates to come later.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

as of March 31, 2020

Total Budget: $5,900,000
Cash & Pledges
Received: $4,327,995 || Needed: $1,572,005
WILLY'S UPDATES

In 2012, a woman named Eulalia led a boy named Willy and his mother to Christ (top middle). Willy was eight years old, weighed only 25lbs, and was so weak he could not walk (top left). He and his family lived in one of the mountain villages near El Cercado. His family was poor and his parents could not read, but they worked hard in agriculture to make a living for the family. They loved their son and were very worried about him. They went to the children’s hospital in Santo Domingo several times but were told he only had parasites. Desperately, they made an appointment to see a sorcerer to see if some potion or spell could cure Willy. However, God showed up that day, and Willy was instead taken to the clinic in San Juan. Willy was emaciated despite eating veraciously, especially loving pica pollo, the Dominican version of fried chicken. How could he continue to lose weight when he was eating so much food? A simple blood test revealed a blood sugar of 500, confirming that Willy was a diabetic.

Willy’s story is such a great example of teamwork in the family of God. The Spartanburg team paid for a CT scan and left money for his treatment. Laura Desmastus, SRI’s on-site social worker at the time, became his advocate. A children’s wheelchair was found for him in storage, a team left money for a small refrigerator to store his insulin, and individuals brought insulin from the US. He was also enrolled in the Child Nutrition Program (CNP) where he received milk and medical supervision. Willy’s living conditions improved due to the help of a small NGO and youth group from Canada. His parents were soon enrolled in our Bible-based literacy program. Through the help of the CNP, Willy was able to secure government insurance so he doesn’t have to pay for his insulin.

(continued on page 4)
(continued from page 3) It is now 2020 and Willy is still in the program like so many special cases. His parents still cannot afford to provide him with milk, rice, and general meal supplies. The CNP is such a blessing for him and other children with specific needs, providing them with nutritious foods and medical supervision. It has not been the easiest road for Willy as changes to his insulin and scares have happened, but we have seen God continue to provide for him in miraculous ways. What a wonderful gift of God’s love to demonstrate how an illness can also become a blessing!

GOD’S PERFECT PLAN

This quarter, a patient was presented to our orthopedic surgeon for hardware removal from her arm. The surgeon thought it was a legitimate case he wanted to take so the patient was scheduled for Wednesday of surgery week. Later on, another patient presented with a fresh arm fracture. The surgeon thought it was another case he wanted to take on so he scheduled him for surgery Thursday. Wednesday’s surgery went ahead as scheduled, and as the orthopedic surgeon pulled out the hardware from the patient's arm, he realized it would be the exact hardware he would need to fix the patient scheduled for surgery the next day. The surgeon had his team sterilize all the equipment/hardware and have it ready to go for Thursday’s case. What a perfect plan designed by God! Although we have many trained medical professionals who come to serve the San Juan community and beyond, God is ultimately the one deserving of the praise and glory. We are thankful to be part of God’s plan and grander vision!

STAFF APPRECIATION MONTH

For the month of May, join us as we show appreciation to our Dominican staff! SRI strives to effectively minister to the San Juan community and we couldn’t do it without the dedication and leadership of this group. Our Dominican staff members serve in and over many of our ministries and we are grateful to learn from and work alongside them. During the month of May, you can support our staff with letters of encouragement, financial giving, and prayer.

In years past, SRI has provided staff outings such as beach trips, paintball, and pizza parties to celebrate our team. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these activities will be postponed for a later date. An additional result of the pandemic is that our Dominican staff have a significant increased need for financial assistance. Fewer teams at the guesthouse means fewer opportunities for many of our staff members to work. Any extra contributions would be especially helpful during this challenging time for all. More information to get involved can be found on our website and social media.