



# HILLSIDE HEALTH CARE INTERNATIONAL UPDATE

September 2005—Volume 1, Issue 2

## Our Mission and Our Vision

### MISSION STATEMENT

Hillside Health Care International (HHCI) is a faith based, non-profit organization dedicated to serving God by providing health care and disease prevention to the people of Southern Belize. HHCI is devoted to improving the Belizean quality of life through medical care, health education, and community outreach. HHCI promotes healthy global attitudes by offering a culturally-rich educational program for medical volunteers that challenges them to better understand their role in international health care.



Providing Healthcare

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Dr. Nick 2
- Ministry of Health 2
- A Nurse's Heart 2
- Medical Volunteer Reflections 3
- The Fitzgeralds 3
- Non-medical Mission Trip 3
- Reception 4
- Meet our Staff 4
- Our Partners 4
- Making a Difference! 4



Building Bridges to Reach Those in Need

### VISION STATEMENT

To ensure HHCI fulfills its mission by striving to be an organization committed to building bridges—to the medically underserved, to the people living in our service areas, to our volunteers (medical and non-medical) who serve others through our program, to our partners, to our staff, and to long term financial sustainability.

*We can do no great things; only small things with great love.*

Mother Teresa, 1910-1997

## Your Support Makes a Difference

The Hillside staff and medical volunteers serve thousands of people annually in the Toledo District, the poorest district in Belize with a poverty rate of over 75%.

All services through Hillside are provided to the sick, poor or elderly...and at no charge to the patient.

This work can't be done without your help. Turn to page #4 to learn how you can make a difference by supporting the work of Hillside Health Care International.





## Dr. Nick Akgulian—Doctor, Teacher, Friend

The HHCI board and staff bid a warm farewell to Dr. Nick Akgulian. Dr. Nick visited Hillside several times as a volunteer before becoming its Medical Director, and he made a remarkable difference in that role. His warm personality, vision, and teaching skills greatly attributed to the growth and development of the project. A nationally-recognized advisor recently evaluated HHCI's progress and praised Dr. Nick: *The challenges are more than met by Dr. Akgulian, who approaches the task of medical director with understanding, aplomb, technical competence and full effectiveness. The attraction and participation of high caliber volunteers depend upon his type of leadership.*

**Doctor, teacher, and friend to the people of Belize and the Hillside volunteers**

HHCI's Board Chair, Dr. Russ Robertson, says: *"Dr. Akgulian has been more than a physician to the people of Punta Gorda and Eldridge. He has exemplified the kind of caring and respect that has not only changed the lives of the people that he has served, but as well the many students who learned from him. We are thankful that he will continue to advise us as we move forward."*

## The Belize Ministry of Health

Hillside operates at the direction of the Belize Ministry of Health. The Deputy Regional Health Manager for Southern Belize is Elizabeth Enriquez. HHCI benefits greatly from her leadership and her years of nursing and administrative experience. When asked about her philosophy, she says, "I believe in excellence and dedication to working for the common good. These are two of the primary principles I apply in my work which includes day-to-day management of health service delivery to the people of Toledo, oversight of administration, and collaborating and networking with medical teams who come to work with us from time to time to provide much needed services to the people of Toledo. I applaud the contribution in health service delivery that Hillside gives through its staff and core of volunteers. It has enhanced our service delivery over the years."

Cherry-Mae Avilez plays a dual role. She is both the part time Community Outreach Liaison for Hillside and full time Toledo District's Primary Health Care Coordinator for the Ministry of Health. She is a visionary who looks at the big picture. When asked about her relationship with Hillside, she said: "My relationship with Hillside began in 2001. Since that time, I have watched Hillside grow and earn the appreciation and respect of the community which it serves." What motivates her? "I believe in compassion for my fellowmen regardless of who they are or where they come from. This I apply to my life and my work at Hillside and Toledo District Health Services."

Hillside applauds the dedication, expertise, and vision of these two remarkable Belizean women!

## Hillside's Nurse Administrator: Francisca Tzalam Choc



Both on the job and in her personal life, Nurse Fran is caring and patient. She is Hillside's Nurse Administrator and contributes a wealth of knowledge and experience to her daily work with our medical staff, volunteers, and the student nursing rotation program. Her responsibilities are carried out in the clinic, the home visit program, and mobile sessions into remote villages. She is respected as a caring, dedicated professional who cares about her community and her family.

Nurse Fran: *"I enjoy my work at Hillside, because it gives me an opportunity to meet others while sharing my knowledge. At the same time, I learn from people of other cultures. This nursing position with Hillside enables me to serve my community, and it provides me a peaceful and orderly work environment. I am a Mayan Mopan nurse at heart, but I am also a sister, wife, and mother of two. My hobbies include reading, sewing, and listening to classical music. While I take nursing very seriously, I consider my role as a mother most important. I make certain I find quality time to spend with my children, especially my son who has special needs."*

## The Volunteers—From The Journals of Hillside Medical Volunteers

*The medical volunteers and students are the backbone of the Hillside project. They bring medical manpower and caring hearts to every person they encounter during their service with us. In turn, they leave Belize with a new perspective on global healthcare and the manner in which they approach their own careers. It is not unusual for them to return time and time again!* Jackie Schmidt, Stateside CEO

### COMMENTS FROM SOME RECENT STUDENT VOLUNTEERS:

**Chelsea Wozniak:** *This rotation allowed me to view medicine from a different point of view. In the U.S., I do don't always feel that I am helping people much. I got a sense of gratitude in Belize. I would love to live in a place like Belize to practice medicine. I felt a sense of accomplishment in my life. I will carry this experience forever.*

**Jasmini Alagartnam:** *I was made to feel welcome and part of the team. I enjoyed learning about the different cultures, like Maya and Garifuna, and how the different ethnic groups work and live together. I learned how to adapt. The patients knew a lot more about their health and medicine than I expected. I learned to be more patient and laid-back when dealing with the patients, not to rush things so much, and to look at the big picture of diseases. I am more aware of the importance of respecting the different cultures. I have also learned to use my clinical judgment based on history and examination and to be confident about them and not to rely so much on investigation.*

**Clair Butler:** *I am a student in the UK. My experience in Belize allowed me to work under a restraint of resources. I take away great memories that have opened up my altitude to a "tropical" way of life. I will miss Belize dearly.*

**Kajal Hirani:** *I had a wonderful experience at Hillside and achieved what I hoped. It was a challenging and learning experience to work with ethnically diverse people. Not only did it help me understand the cultures better, but it taught me to treat each as an individual, taking into account their culture and background. I learned how to communicate despite language barriers and provide good healthcare with the limited resources.*

**Siobhan Wilson:** *The language barrier tested my patience at times. Thank goodness for Sofia...if only we could clone her! [I was surprised that] the standard of health care to the local population was so high. Such a level of accessible health care is made possible by a highly motivated, dedicated, and hard working Hillside staff.*

### Welcome to the Fitzgerald Family!

Elizabeth and David Fitzgerald will be joining the Hillside Medical Center in October for one year. Elizabeth is a pediatrician who finished her pediatric residency at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia last December. David is an internist who trained at the University of Pennsylvania and has worked for the last 2 years making house calls to elderly homebound patients in inner city Philadelphia.

Elizabeth and David met in medical school at the University of North Carolina where they were both interested in international medicine and public health. They anticipated working in the developing world even before medical school and have traveled and volunteered abroad in India, Africa, and Central America. Having witnessed much poverty and disease abroad, they decided to dedicate their medical careers to serving the underserved in the developing world. They hope their time at the Hillside will allow them to gain experience at an established, well-run clinic. They then plan to use that experience helping to establish clinics in other developing countries.

They will come to Punta Gorda with their two children, Eamonn and Aine. Eamonn is a red-headed four-year-old boy and Aine is a very cute nine month old girl. The Fitzgerald family is excited to join the team at the Hillside Clinic and is looking forward to a wonderful year.

Dr. Nick Akgulian will facilitate the orientation for the Fitzgeralds.

### A Mission Trip to Belize for Non-Medical Volunteers

*"We've got two lives; one we're given and the other one we make."*

Mary Chapin Carpenter: 'The Hard Way'

Jackie Schmidt, Hillside's Stateside CEO, lived in Belize managing the Hillside project for nearly three years. She has a broad understanding of the region and its cultures.

She will be leading a mission group to Belize in early 2006. Participants will have an opportunity to serve, to play, and to see much of this diverse and extraordinary country. The eight-day trip will cost \$780 and includes all expenses *except for airfare*. The trip will suit new or seasoned volunteers.

For more information email Jackie Schmidt at: [jericho142@hotmail.com](mailto:jericho142@hotmail.com)

## Hillside Reception in Milwaukee

*Your opportunity to learn more about us!*

**Hosts: Hillside Health Care International and  
Sisters of Mercy Ministries**

**Wednesday, November 9, 2005  
7:00 pm**

**At the Western Racquet Club  
1800 Highland Drive, Elm Grove, WI**

**Program  
Refreshments and Drinks  
Informational Presentation  
Questions and Answer Session**

**RSVP  
[jericho142@hotmail.com](mailto:jericho142@hotmail.com)**

## Meet the Hillside Staff—Dedicated, Caring, and Professional



**Thanks to our Hillside staff: caring, compassionate,  
dedicated, hard-working, and capable:**

Evert Mangar, Maurice Bahadur, Brendalie Gomez, Andy Mangar, Orlon Mangar, Allen Mangar, Amelia Ramclam, Sofia Coc, Kimberly Leonardo, Joyce Lopez, and Nurse Francisca Tzalam Choc.

**The work couldn't go on without your commitment!**

### Thanks to Our Partners:

- Medical College of Wisconsin
- Belize Ministry of Health
- Pan American Health Organization
- Numerous Churches and Civic Groups
- Sisters of Mercy Ministries
- Concordia University Wisconsin
- University of Wisconsin
- Many Supporting Foundations/Organizations
- Many individuals who donate time, money, and talents to bring medical services to the underserved



**Brothers and sisters in a village family**

### Considering A Donation to Hillside?

Hillside Health Care can't accomplish its mission of serving those in need of medical care without the support of people like you. If you want to offer financial support, donations can be sent to:  
**Hillside Health Care International, P.O. Box 151, Brookfield, Wisconsin 53008-0151.**

### Thinking Of Volunteering?

If you are a medical professional with a desire to volunteer, Hillside may be the perfect match for you. Opportunities can be short-term (a week to one month) or long-term (several months to a year).

Imagine an environment off the beaten path—jungles and rainforests dotted with small villages along a remote river or at the ocean's edge.

Visit our website: [www.hillsidebelize.net](http://www.hillsidebelize.net)

**One person really can make a difference...  
and it might be you!**