



Award winning healthcare

2012 was yet another busy year for SIFT's medical team providing good primary healthcare for the people of Ometepe. It saw them treat more children than in any previous year and culminated in Dr Sandra Villagra, who heads up the team, accepting an award on behalf of the whole team in recognition of the high quality service which they provide.

The most common diseases which the team treat amongst children are of a respiratory nature, such as asthma or bronchitis, due to the dusty nature of the Island and the fact that most families cook on open wood fires. The children are also at risk of malnutrition and so are sometimes prescribed a high-vitamin milk which helps to guard against this.

The team also run programmes which aim to prevent disease and promote healthy lifestyles. Their community education provides lectures on various topics such as women's health, sexually transmitted disease and the menopause .

As in previous years a group of students and lecturers from Carthage College, Wisconsin made two visits to Ometepe to volunteer in SIFT's clinics. Their presence meant that many hundreds more consultations were able to take place. They left behind vital medicines which SIFT prescribes free of charge to those who need them.

Thank you to everyone who has supported the medical work over the last year. Your generosity makes a real difference. There is still an urgent financial need in the medical work. If you you would like to help please get in touch with Ali (ali.wilson@seed-trust.com).



Life on Ometepe

Alec Peters, a neo-natal nurse from Bristol, has been travelling around Nicaragua. He sent us his thoughts on what life is like for the people of Ometepe.

During my trip I have had the amazing opportunity to spend time on Ometepe exploring the island and seeing some of the SIFT projects up close. Living on the island for a few weeks has been a chance to experience this beautiful volcanic land and meet many wonderful and very welcoming locals. It has also revealed a small taste of the challenges of living here, and how essential the local health clinics and their brilliant teams are to so many communities.



For me, one of the biggest challenges about the island was getting around. It's bigger than you first realise and the up to 3 hour long, packed 'chicken' bus rides were definitely an experience. But if I was sick it wouldn't be much fun to take this journey to get to the nearest town where the main government health centre is situated (or the main hospital, an extra hour's

ferry journey away). However, the locals have great ways of coping with everything (including carrying elderly relatives on and off the bus on a plastic garden chair), and you quickly realise how without the SIFT clinics nearby many would miss out on their basic healthcare needs. There are also many people with long term health conditions (especially diabetes and blood pressure problems) in Nicaragua. Because Dr Sandra and her team know their patients so well, they can provide early recognition of problems, good management of conditions and a quick response to any deterioration. Since emergency provision on the island is very limited and government resources stretched, this high quality local healthcare becomes even more important.

One of the highlights of my trip was the chance to see the children's day at the El Corazal clinic - complete with piñatas and dancing. The whole village turned out with lots of very excited children. You can really see how the whole team is part of the village and works hard to improve the health of so many people. Not just through treating conditions but through wider education and public health provisions that aim to keep improving the future for everyone, especially the children of this magical and inspiring island.



Horticultural Project changes



Changes are being made to benefit both the Horticultural Project and SIFT. In January 2010, having stepped down from being Executive Director the previous September, Dick Bell initiated the Horticultural Project on Ometepe Island and, over time, this has been the major focus of his work. Initiating this Project is typical of Dick's strength as a pioneer and a man of great faith and energy. As such he has been well suited to drive it forward and the Trustees have been fully supportive of the need for, and potential benefits of, this project. It is now clear that Dick needs more freedom and greater autonomy

to develop the project in a manner and at a pace than available under current arrangements. Consequently from the 1st April he will instead work with a partner organisation, Palm Tree Associates, which focuses purely on the Horticultural Project. Dick and SIFT will continue to work very closely together and SIFT will maintain a keen interest in the progress of the project.

Departing Trustees

At the Trustee meeting on 2nd February we said farewell to John and Ruth Ward. After serving as Trustees faithfully for five years, John and Ruth had decided the time had come to move on following some other significant changes in their lives, notably John's longed-for retirement. We will miss their wise counsel and God inspired input. They will continue to be keen supporters of SIFT, and Ruth will continue in her role helping to administer the Education Sponsorship scheme for sponsored children in Bluefields.



Can you help?

We are looking for people with a passion for SIFT's work in lifting people out of poverty in Nicaragua to serve as Trustees. If you would like to know more about what this would involve, please contact Colin Weaver, our Chair of Trustees (colin.weaver@seed-trust.com or 01487 822766).



Love from Ali

Having been the fundraising manager at SIFT since September I have realised that there are many easy ways in which you can help SIFT. Here are just a few:

We are now registered with PayPal Giving, eBay's charity section. This means that if you are selling an item on eBay you can choose to donate between 10-100% of the final selling price to SIFT. eBay will highlight your listing as being for charity and will give you a fee credit which reduces the cost of selling your item.



Did you know that SIFT Gifts are not just for Christmas? They make great birthday presents for the person who has everything and can even be used for wedding presents. You can browse our current gifts and download an order form on our website or get more information by contacting the SIFT office.

You can even earn money for SIFT by searching the Internet, something which many of us do every day. Each completed search at sift.easyssearch.org.uk earns 0.5p for SIFT so by making ten searches a day you could raise around £20 over a year. All money raised through easyssearch goes to support SIFT's medical work.

You can now recycle mobile phones, inkjet cartridges and laser or toner cartridges with recycle4charity. Inkjet cartridges earn £1, laser or toner cartridges up to £5 and mobile phones up to £70. Simply register at www.recycle4charity.co.uk and choose SIFT as your beneficiary. You will then receive freepost recycling bags which you can use to send your items for recycling.



Did you know that if you are a UK taxpayer the Gift Aid scheme enables us to get an extra £2.50 for each £10 you donate to SIFT at no extra cost to you? If you are a UK tax payer please consider contacting our office for a Gift Aid form which will enable us to claim the tax back on any donations you make to SIFT's work.

Contact us



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