

PRIMEROS PASOS

Annual Report 2016



MISSION

To improve the quality of life of the rural communities of the Palajunoj Valley of Quetzaltenango, Guatemala through integrated health education projects and access to medical, dental, and nutritional services.

Contents

Message from the President	3
Program Impacts	4
Medical Program	4
Dental Program	6
Healthy Schools Program	8
Nutrition Program	10
2016 Highlights	12
Financial Summary	15
Leadership	15
Donors and Volunteers	16

Message from the President

Dear Friends of Primeros Pasos,

In the past year, we have been emphasizing a shift towards preventative healthcare, by increasing the reach of our Healthy Schools Program and Nutrition Recuperation Program. Our preventative healthcare strategies focus on promoting healthy living, which we hope will reduce the amount of patients seeking services for health problems.

To accomplish a more robust preventative healthcare strategy, we have also focused on communicating the healthcare needs that exist in the Palajunoy Valley and our work at Primeros Pasos to important players in the greater Quetzaltenango area--we have collaborated with health directors, health commissioners, and the education supervisor of rural Quetzaltenango.

To better reach potential supporters and donors, we have also launched the new Primeros Pasos web page. Having a modern web page is important in order to reach new volunteers, partners, and engaging with current and potential supporters of our organization. Finally, throughout 2016 we have continued to work alongside our partner organizations, so that, together, we can make greater positive impacts in the Palajunoy Valley. On behalf of everyone at Primeros Pasos, I want to sincerely thank all of our supporters and donors; you make this possible.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Castillo", written in a cursive style.



Our Impact

The Medical Program

The medical team, led by Dra. María José Morfín, is made up of *externos medicos* (4th year Guatemalan medical students) and international medical volunteers who work to provide accessible health care for families in the Palajunoj Valley. This includes consultations and, where needed, affordable clinical tests, medications, and referrals to low-cost specialist care. The medical team works in tandem with the Nutritional Recuperation and Preventative Healthcare Education programs.

In 2016, a total of 2,595 consultations were provided free of charge (1,147 adults and 1,451 children). The most common ailments seen at the clinic were the common cold, parasites in school children and bacterial or viral throat infections.

This year we also implemented a new electronic database for medical records using a program called RedCap, replacing our paper records. We imagine this will increase the accuracy of our record keeping and improve our reporting on outcomes in the future. We also introduced another electronic database, Quickbook, in both the pharmacy and reception to allow automated financing. We also acquired more computers for the reception and the pharmacy.

This technology update will increase efficiency of our staff, as well as allow us to provide better service to patients.

Besides the work at the main clinic, we also continued to provide quality health services through mobile clinics, which visited different communities each month in order to visit all of the communities over the course of the year. Our mobile clinics were able to provide children with either immediate treatment or recommend further treatment and medicines not available at the site of the mobile clinic (usually referring back to our main clinic and pharmacy). In 2016, 90% of the necessary medications were provided straightaway on site of the clinics.

During the medical jornadas, Primeros Pasos was able to distribute 660 chewable vitamins, 261 multivitamin syrups for children, as well as provide Prenatal vitamins in-clinic. The medical jornadas not only provide an opportunity to disburse vitamins, but also to disburse nutritional supplements like Incaparina and proteins. In the “2016 Disbursement” table below, you can view this data.

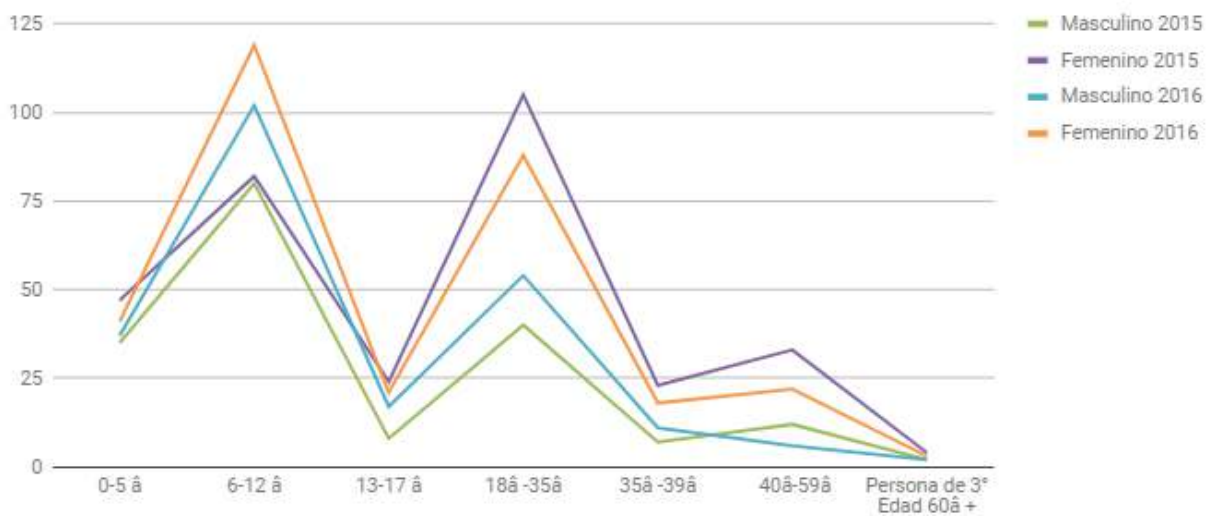
2016 Disbursements	
Type	Total (at the end of the project):
Disbursements:	1644
Proteins	1644
Incaparina Supplement	1277
Prenatal Vitamins	Administered in the clinic
Multivitamin Syrup	261
Chewable Vitamins	660

The amount of patients who consulted the clinic for healthcare was 1,147 adults and 1,451 children. This means 20% of all possible patients in the Palajunoj Valley were covered.

Furthermore, the permanent clinic continued to offer screening for cervical cancers. We are pleased to announce that the number of PAP smear tests carried out doubled from 2015 to a total of 26. Additionally, we were able to offer cryotherapy treatment to 221 patients.

Dental Program

Our dentist, Dra. Francia Angel, and her team carried out education initiatives, fluoride applications and where necessary, extractions, both within the clinic and also during mobile clinics. During the mobile clinics, we reached out to 384 children the first quarter, 389 children the second quarter, and 1013 children the quarter. After the first quarter, we were pleased to count on the participation and collaboration between the parents and teachers to makes sure those who needed extractions received them, especially in the schools located in Xepache and Chuicaravoj. At the clinic throughout 2016, we served 376 adults, 141 children, 299 children that were referred from the schools, and 48 children that were referred from daycare centers.



Of the 864 total treatments, many of the procedures performed were extractions. In total, 218 extractions were performed, 151 amalgams, and 77 cavity fillings. The table below displays all treatments performed in 2016. 50% of the dental team’s patients were from the ages of 6 to 12. Xepache was the most populous community to acquire dental care at 156 patients.

Total treatments	
Exam	277
Topical Application of Fluoride	3
Prophylaxis Treatment	10
Composite Resins	77
Amalgamas	151
Extractions	218
Scaling & Root Planing	15
Finishing Amalgamas	17
Crowning	4
Sealing Pits and Fissures	85
Paste (Oxide Zinc and Eugeno)	7
TOTAL	864

The main achievement of the Dental Program in 2016 was the introduction of fluoride applications into preventive dental treatments in order to save teeth instead of resorting to extraction. In the excursions, they provided 225 fluoride treatments in comparison to 115 extractions. In the mobile clinics, 1,746 people received fluoride treatments and 406 extractions were performed. We were also able to provide fluoride treatment to 49 children under 2 year old at the clinic .

Education has been, and continues to play, a pivotal role in this success. After the first trimester, there were a total of 510 participants in the workshops, 472 participants in the second trimester, 1013 in the third trimester, and 129 in the 4th trimester. These numbers highlight our ability to reach large numbers of those living in the Palajunoy Valley and we hope to see these numbers grow through the years.



Healthy Schools Program

Our Healthy Schools Program aims to improve the health of children in the Palajunoj Valley through health education and by collaborating with mobile clinics.

The Healthy Schools Program visits all ten elementary schools present in each community of the Palajunoj Valley to teach local children about age-appropriate topics, such as hygiene, sexual health, puberty, self-esteem and nutrition. These educational workshops aim to boost physical and mental health in the region in support of our vision of preventive healthcare. To ensure active and sustained involvement, the program emphasizes participation of both students and facilitators, and encourages teachers to incorporate ideas into their ongoing education practices. Our main goal this year was to encourage the practice of basic hygiene in children's daily routines, primarily in order to minimize the presence of parasites and their associated illnesses.

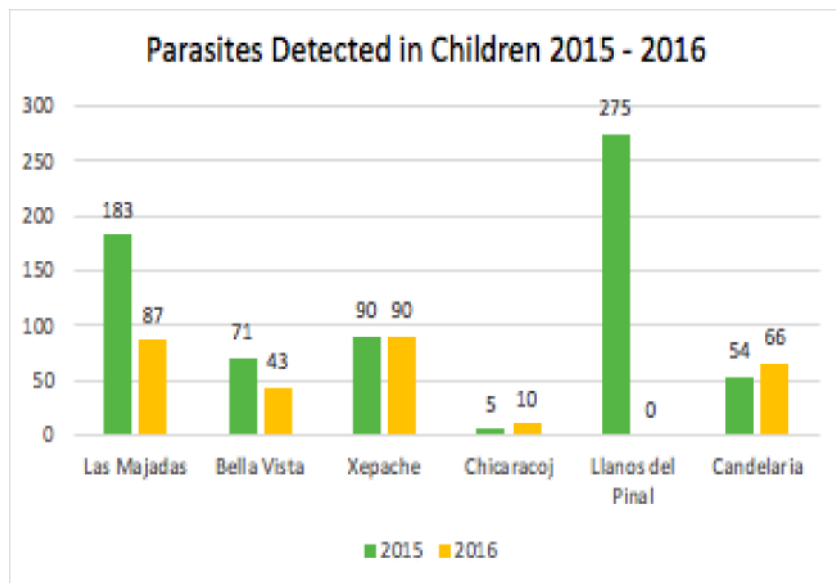
In collaboration with the Healthy Schools Program, our mobile clinics visit the schools to provide free general check-ups to children, once a year. At these clinics, they are seen by a doctor and a dentist, and receive necessary prescriptions through a pop-up pharmacy we transport to the site. These mobile clinics also give us an opportunity to interact with the parents of the children, allowing us to give practical advice on preventive health and build

relationships and trust in the community. In 2016, 1,290 children were visited through these clinics.

These mobile clinics are especially helpful in tackling the problems of malnutrition and parasite infection in children. Before every appointment, we weigh and measure the children- if there is any concern of malnutrition, the medical team can discuss with the parents about simple, yet impactful diet substitutions to ensure healthy growth and development. We also run a laboratory that can check for parasites in provided stool samples. We always have antiparasitics on hand in case of a positive result. For those families that cannot make the trek to the main clinic, these mobile clinics through the Healthy Schools Program can often make a significant difference!

Between 2012 and 2016, Primeros Pasos has seen 9,342 children through the Healthy Schools Program. In 2016, 1,936 children were seen throughout the course of the year.

In 2015, we detected 678 children with parasites, but in 2016, only 296 children were found to have parasites. This decrease indicates that there is a decrease in cases of parasitism in school age children. You can view this data below in the graph “Parasites Detected in Children 2015 - 2016”





Nutrition Recuperation Program

The Nutrition Recuperation Program (NRP) aims to educate and empower mothers in the Palajunoj Valley to treat and prevent malnutrition as well as improve their families' health through better nutrition practice and healthier cooking. Since its beginnings in 2012, The NRP has been very successful, and participation has grown an impressive 280%.

The Nutrition Recuperation Program runs a series of weekly classes, directed at mothers with young children in the valley, covering topics such as *la olla de comida* (literally, food pot, Guatemalan equivalent of the food pyramid), and providing demonstrations on healthy cooking. We also keep track of both the women and their children's measurements and weights, to determine whether further intervention is needed.

In 2015, the NRP claimed a 84% retention rate of mothers from the beginning of the project to the end of the project. However, in 2016, Primeros Pasos had a 100% retention rate. All of the mothers completed the project; this signals the success of the NRP in 2016.



The Valley has a very large malnutrition problem, which is largely due to poverty and lack of access to healthy foods, especially vegetables. Our nutritionist, Scarlet, took note of this access problem and started a family garden project, so that, given a little effort, families could have broader access to vegetables. This year, students from the United States helped to build some of these gardens for families living in the communities- in just one week, volunteers and members of the community constructed 71 vegetable gardens! We can't wait to see the future harvests from these gardens, and to continue expanding this aspect of the Nutrition Recuperation Program.

At the end of the year, the program concluded with a graduation event for mothers in the program. Held in the main clinic, all the mothers and children had an opportunity to share what they had learned over the year. Along with their diploma, all the mothers received a basket of fruit and vegetables to prepare over the Christmas period.

Highlights this year

Medical Fairs

Two medical fairs were hosted in the Primeros Pasos clinic this year. The first, which took place February 26, provided over 100 women and children with free-of-charge consultations from a specialist ultrasound doctor. Of those 100 consults, 25 were deemed to need ultrasounds, which we provided for a low cost. During the course of these ultrasounds, the medical team identified three fetal abnormalities. Given the normal high cost of this procedure and limited access in the valley, the fair offered the Palajunoj Valley's mothers-to-be a rare opportunity to verify the health of their unborn babies and resolve any problems detected.

The second fair that took place on June 29th included specialist care from an eye doctor and an obstetrician/gynecologist. 120 people from the region received low-cost consultations with these specialists, and in some cases, were referred for extra care.

Fundraisers

In February, we held our Valentine's Day-themed salsa fundraiser, Love Fiesta, in a local bar. The event was supported by Salsa Studio Sangre Latino who provided a salsa lesson and Mandarina Café baked delicious treats. The place was packed and everyone had a great time!

Later in the year, we held our annual fútbol fundraiser and raised Q1,030 thanks to the hard work of volunteer Emma. The 8 different teams who played had a blast! This fundraiser is especially helpful in raising local awareness of Primeros Pasos.

In June, Pure Magazine in Guatemala City hosted a fundraising event to raise money for nutrition programs including the Nutrition Recuperation Program at Primeros Pasos. The event, "Gamble for Zero", was a great success, raising much more money than targeted!

To celebrate the Guatemalan "Día del Niño" (Children's Day), which is celebrated on October 1st, Primeros Pasos threw a party that combined the holiday with healthy eating promotion. For the children of the Valley, parties are few and far between due to a lack of economic resources, so this celebration was especially exciting for them. These types of parties are especially helpful for building interpersonal relationships within communities. The event involved games and gifts for both mothers and children. Each mother was given a stack of vegetables and herbs to make into a vegetable garden and children were given a little toy. Our volunteers dressed as clowns and provided face painting. The event was a great success!

Education Highlights

The Healthy Schools Program at Primeros Pasos and the Ministry of Education in the rural area of Quetzaltenango helped manage a diploma course called Teaching Health Promotion. Certain teachers in each of the communities in the valley took part in the course in order to better their understanding of health promotion.

Later in the year, teachers from throughout the Palajunoj Valley came together for a meeting on Food and Nutritional Safety. The meeting was organized by the Primeros Pasos' Healthy Schools Program and supported by the Ministry of Rural Education, Peace Corps, and the SESAN commissioner. The Primeros Pasos' nutritionist participated and helped guide some of the discussion.

Breastfeeding March

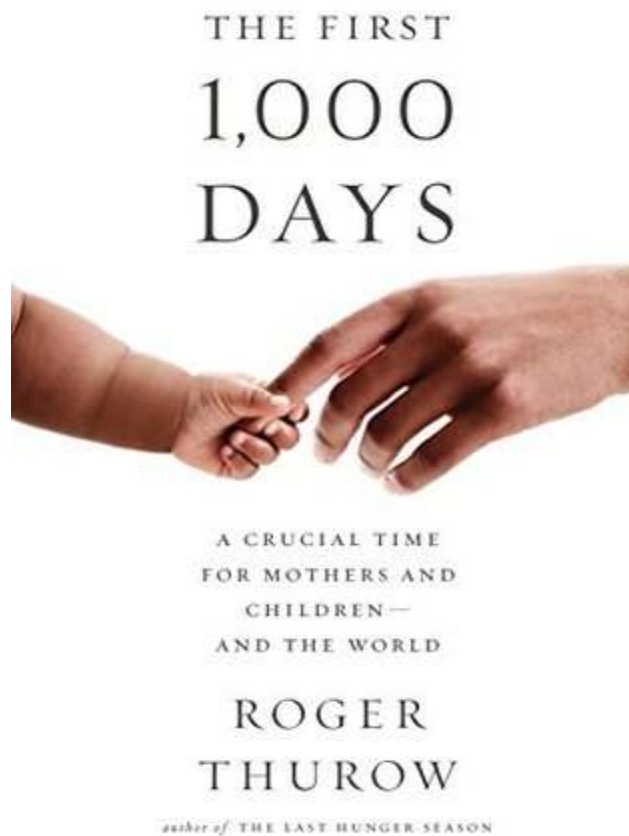


The breastfeeding march is now an annual event held in conjunction with world breastfeeding week, in which current and expectant mothers of the Nutrition Recuperation Program march through the Palajunoj Valley alongside volunteers from the clinic. The aims are

to promote the right to breastfeed at work as well as to spread knowledge of the health benefits of breastfeeding. The march ended with a lunch for all of the mothers and some of the clinic's staff members. The event was embraced by the communities, and certainly sparked conversation about breastfeeding.

The First 1000 Days

On May 3rd of this year, journalist and author Roger Thurow published his book, *The First 1000 Days*, which follows mothers and their children from the Nutrition Recuperation Program beginning in pregnancy to the children's second birthday. This book examines the profound importance of the first 1000 days of life on a child's development by following mothers and children from various countries. Malnutrition in the first 1000 days can cause irreversible stunting, which can lead to a lower quality of life and sometimes permanent disability.



1. "Why 1,000 Days." *1,000 Days*, thousanddays.org/the-issue/why-1000-days/.

2016 Needs Assessment

A needs assessment, led by volunteer Chris Feng, was carried out in all 10 communities of the Palajunoj Valley in order to increase Primeros Pasos' efficiency as an organization and identify the problems not currently addressed. Over 400 surveys of 20-35 minutes were carried out in 2 weeks of November. The surveys were conducted by teams of one *externo* and one volunteer.

Among the main findings was the identification of health disparities between central and peripheral communities. Central communities, usually closer to Quetzaltenango, tend to have greater infrastructure, development and better healthcare than communities located more peripherally within the valley. Transport is a main problem for the peripheral communities because options are limited and transit times to clinics and hospitals are much longer. Another important finding was that alcoholism was found to be the leading cause of death, followed by trauma, complications resulting from diabetes and finally, heart attacks. There are no resources for alcoholism recovery in the Palajunoj Valley. We also learned that a significant proportion of respondents didn't know where to access healthcare for women. We hope to specifically address these issues in the future at the Primeros Pasos clinic and in mobile clinics.

Financial Summary

Primeros Pasos relies almost solely on small individual donations and grassroots fundraising initiatives, and works diligently to make these donations go as far as possible. Fundraising for Primeros Pasos is coordinated by the Inter-American Health Alliance (IAHA), a U.S.-based 501(c)3 non-profit founded in 2007 to support Primeros Pasos' operations. Primeros Pasos is a program of Asociación PASOS, a Guatemalan-registered non-profit organization founded in 2004. Its NIT (tax ID) is 8147040-1.

Staff

- General Director** – Jamie Pet to Arleth Mazariegos
- Development Director** – Chris Elliott
- Volunteer Coordinator** – James Tuttle to Sarah Harrison
- Finance Director** – Kristi Knudson to Luis Cahuex
- Medical Program Director** – Dr. María José Morfín
- Laboratory Director** – Lisandra Orozco
- Dental Program Director** – Dr. Francia Angel
- Nutrition Program Director** – Scarlet Samayoa
- Healthy Schools Program Director** – Dulce Mazariegos
- Healthy Schools Program Assistant** – Marisol Menchú

Primeros Pasos would like to thank our generous supporters and partners

- New Lifeline
- Vitamin Angels
- Global Fund for Children
- InterConnection.org
- StethoHope
- GoPhilanthropic
- YumButter
- Vanderbilt University
- University of Virginia
- Georgetown University
- InterAmerican Health Alliance
- University of San Carlos
- EntreMundos
- Doctors for Global Health
- Y'abal Handicrafts
- Quetzaltrekkers
- 5x500 Campaign
- Celas Maya Spanish School
- Sol Latino Spanish School
- Individual Donors



We would also like to express our sincere gratitude to all the volunteers that donated their time, energy, ideas, resources, supplies and hearts to Primeros Pasos during 2016. Through their efforts, we were able to continue to providing our vital health services to the people of the Palajunoj Valley. Thank you all!