

## *New Vision in Honduras: Establishing an Eye Clinic for cataract surgery in Trinidad-Copan, Honduras*

*"...his sight was restored and he saw everything clearly" -- Mark 8:25*

### **A Special Opportunity sponsored by the Central America Taskforce of Providence Presbytery**

In 1992 Providence Presbytery sent its first medical team to Honduras. Dr. William C. Oliver, an optometrist in Rock Hill, was part of that team. Then and on other trips, Dr. Oliver realized the great need for cataract surgery for individuals who live in the remote communities and who can't afford surgery.

In 2001 he arranged for an ophthalmologist to go and do cataract surgery. We took all of the equipment for the clinic with us, but unfortunately it did NOT arrive when we did. Due to the three day delay in getting our equipment, we were unable to help as many patients as we had anticipated.

The day after surgery, the patients were examined again and received glasses. The joy on the faces of the 28 individuals who had received the gift of restored sight was powerful to those of us who witnessed their smiles and the hugs that they gave the doctors in appreciation for their help.

Since that one clinic, it has been Dr. Oliver's dream to find a way to set up clinic where cataract surgery can be done several times a year by visiting ophthalmologists. In February, 2014, Dr. Oliver and Barbara Kurz, Interim Mission Consultant for Providence Presbytery, visited Honduras to gather information about the need for and feasibility of setting up an eye clinic. They met with Tim Wheeler, a PC(USA) missionary in Honduras, and with Jesus Orlando Jiminez, the mayor of the municipality of Trinidad in the department of Copan in northwestern Honduras.

The mayor has a great passion for the people and seeks ways to improve their lives in education, health, housing, and job creation programs. He said that the potential for patients in that part of Honduras is quite large as there are many older people who live in rural communities, who have very limited incomes, and who also have cataracts. There are private clinics and a public hospital in Santa Rosa, about a 45 minute ride from Trinidad. However, it takes a long time to get an appointment with an ophthalmologist and surgery is expensive.

**The mayor is very positive in his support of an eye clinic.** He said that he will communicate with the Regional Ministry of Health and get permission for an eye clinic. He will also communicate with mayors of nearby municipalities and enlist their support. He has agreed to provide transportation to bring people to the eye clinic and to provide for food and overnight care for patients after surgery.

Since our visit in 2014, the mayor has worked with visiting mission teams to add two rooms to the municipal clinic. When we visited in

February, 2016, we saw the almost completed rooms.



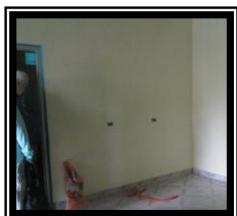
*The entrance to the clinic is at the end of the fence.*



*The men are standing in the entrance from the street; left -- at the end of the entry hallway; turn left for the eye clinic*



*The eye clinic is through the open door on the left. Beyond on the right is the municipal senior center.*



*The room at left is the first room you enter -- eye examinations will take place here as well as prepping a patient for surgery. The floor is tile; the walls are plaster. The door goes into the room for surgery. Cabinets with a sink will be added on two sides of the room. This room is approximately 15 x 15 ft.*

*The room at right is where cataract surgery will take place. It measures approximately 15 x 20 ft. The floor is tile. The walls are ceramic tile around the entire room. There are adequate electrical outlets. There will be an air conditioning unit in each room.*



**There a provision for post-care after the eye team leaves.** There is a full-time doctor at the government clinic that is adjacent to the eye clinic. In an extreme emergency there is an ophthalmologist in Santa Rosa who can help.

The doctor at the government clinic said that it is a blessing to have Presbyterian groups in Trinidad. The eye clinic will help not just the municipality, but the whole region. The proposal to work with the poorest patients is an excellent example of being in solidarity with the people.

**The Presbyterian Eye Clinic** will be part of the Municipal Senior Center that will provide care and activities for older adults.

**We hope that you can help us help these -- and others -- who need cataract surgery.**



**100% of all gifts will go to the Presbyterian Eye Clinic**

**Gifts are tax-deductible.**

**You may write your check to Providence Presbytery (mail to address below).**

**In the "for" line, write "eye clinic."**

*With **YOUR** help we will be able to acquire the needed equipment, transport it to Honduras, and set up two rooms dedicated to eye surgery.*

*With **YOUR** help we will have a facility where visiting ophthalmologists can go 3-4 times each year to perform cataract surgery on the neediest residents of northwestern Honduras.*

*With **YOUR** help we can provide new, improved vision for those that are unable to obtain this on their own.*

*Together **WE** can make a difference in the lives of our sisters and brothers in Honduras.*

***Thank you for YOUR gift!***

**For more information contact:**

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