



JULY 2005 NDI Newsletter

OUR TEAM



From L-R: Dr. Tabatha Parker - NDI Executive Director and Secretary; Dr. Michael Owen - NDI Vice President & Treasurer, Dr. Jacqui McGrath - NDI Mexico Volunteer; Dr. Laurent Chaix - NDI President; Amy McCandlish - NDI Volunteer

Natural Doctors International (NDI) provides natural medical aid to underserved communities throughout the world, with a focus on establishing permanent clinical sites and/or rotations within existing clinical settings for licensed naturopathic physicians. NDI believes strongly in respect for the local cultures and practices of each community it serves. By building relationships with local medical practitioners and establishing permanent clinical sites, NDI can help provide ongoing care and aid to underserved communities domestically and abroad.

NDI offers international one-year volunteer rotations to licensed naturopathic physicians (ND's) who have completed doctoral programs at accredited postgraduate institutions. NDI also offers short-term postgraduate educational and volunteer opportunities for licensed ND's and advanced practitioners of natural medicine, thru preceptoring, volunteering and travel trips. Considerations may be made for chiropractors, acupuncturists, midwives, herbalists or other natural health care providers on an individual basis. NDI collaborates with all types of medical professionals including MD's, DO's, dentists and nurses.

The President's Report

Laurent Chaix, ND

You can't imagine how much I've looked forward to writing this letter. After nearly 15 months of daunting paperwork form-filling, fact finding and other tedious tasks, we are ready! The beginning of 2005 was kicked off with the phenomenal news that our 501(c)3 status was finally approved. In the meantime, the Nicaraguan Ministry of Health (MINSA) approved a three-year agreement between the two entities. When NDI's first team of 3 arrived in Nicaragua, it was the middle of the "dry" season with lots of wind, dust and the beginning of massive burning of pasture land. The team consists of two naturopathic physicians, Dr. Michael Owen and Dr. Tabatha Parker, and a translator, Ms. Amy

UPCOMING EVENTS

AANP CONFERENCE
NDI MEETING
FRIDAY - AUGUST 26
 BILTMORE HOTEL
 Phoenix, AZ
SLIDESHOW & Q & A

Find out about the Year Rotation for ND's
 Learn about Upcoming Travel Trips
 Meet ND's with International Interests

McCandlish. Now, as late May has come, they have entered the "wet" season and the insect invasion is in full bloom. Boy will they have fun! The beginning of URIs, dengue fever, malaria, and the other vector borne diseases will keep them busy. I am sure we will get continuous updates on what they have encountered and how much of a difference it makes to have people like you, the reader, help support this mission. On behalf of all of us at NDI, I want to thank each and every one of you who have helped this dream become a reality.

ND's APPLY TODAY
Volunteer ND Application for
1-year rotation in Nicaragua

NDI is proud to announce that our **Application for a 1-year INTERNATIONAL Medical position is now available.**

Two doctors will be selected to live and work on the beautiful Island of Ometepe in Nicaragua, CENTRAL AMERICA.

Applicants must be USA licensed ND's who have graduated from CNME accredited institutions and passed all NABNE board exams.

APPLICATIONS DUE
AUGUST 22, 2005

Interviews for applicants will be held in Phoenix, OR during the AANP Conference and in Portland, OR in early September.

DOWNLOAD your APPLICATION
TODAY!

www.ndimed.org

CROSSING CULTURES
Tabatha Parker, ND



When I first arrived in Nicaragua, I thought I had some understanding of this culture and how I would

Get Involved
3-4pm Cameron Room

LABOR DAY WEEKEND
SAVE THIS DATE!

Thursday

September 1, 2005

NDI First Annual Fundraiser

hosted by the world famous

Kells Irish Restaurant & Pub

112 SW 2nd Ave.

Portland, OR 97201

Tickets on Sale NOW!

An event not to be missed!
 Food, music and a night full of latin fun!

For more info email: amy@ndimed.org

OUR SUPPORT

Thanks to the following people and corporations for thier generous donations to this ground breaking organization. Thank you for believing in the mission and vision of NDI.

A very special thanks goes out to Mr. Dennis Becklin and his comopany, Environmental Container Services in Grants Pass, OR. Their generous donation supports the bulk of Program Nicaragua.

Corporate Donors

- Environmental Container Systems- Grants Pass, OR
- Whitespeed - Los Angeles, CA
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fit in. How would I adjust to this new life, these new challenges? Questions raced thru my mind about how I would practice – not only as a new doctor, but in a new culture, in a different language. But what Nicaragua has done for me as a human being, was unexpected. It has challenged me to reassess how I want to choose to live my life. I thought living in Nicaragua, as a fellow human would come easy. What I didn't realize is how much I would learn about how many choices we have in this world. After five months, I have been humbled by my island neighbors. I have become a student of observation and have developed new ideas about global medicine and how we can heal our planet. I am so aware now of how my unconscious choices I have as a United States citizen - mostly choices of consumerism - harm others on so many levels. I have also learned how privileged we are in the USA.

There are complexities and subtleties within each realm of society: political, social, religious, and certainly medical, that cannot be understood after two-weeks of travel to a new country. The journey into the heart of another nation requires time, patience, and surrender. Working as a doctor in a developing nation has challenged me on many levels, but has helped me cultivate an appreciation and respect for the ways in which others live (whether by choice or by necessity). It has forced me to look at my own judgments and limitations – of how my world has been shaped by my experience of growing up in the United States of America.

Everyday simple things remind me of how egocentric (and americentric) I have been raised. Sitting in an airport, I speak to a Nicaraguan gentleman and refer to myself as Americana. He politely corrects me, "Norteamericana seniorita, America goes from Alaska to Argentina, you are North American." And I got to thinking - with all the excellent formal education we have had, have we missed the boat on being good neighbors? How many of us can name the Presidents of our neighbors – Canada? Mexico? Certainly not those of the countries of Central America? How is it that we know so much about ourselves and so little about others?

The macrosocsm reflects the microcosm of American life - where most don't know thier neighbors anymore. – how many of you known your next-door neighbors? Here it is different. You know your neighbors on many levels. The man that sells fresh tortillas can be heard walking the streets early in the morning singing "Tor-TEEEE-yas". I pop my head out my front door and great him with a "Buenos dias" and buy my fresh hot breakfast tortillas. Here my neighbors are part of my life – as I pass their porches on my morning walk to the hospital where we work, I respond with the common greeting "adios." I often ride the ferry and the ferry workers know many of the 30,000 islanders by name. At work the local doctor attends a club for chronic patients and can name at lesast 30 of the names of the 40 plus attendees. The newspapers are filled with names of neighboring countries, presidents and

Susan Alfano- Portland, OR
 Jim McCandlish - Portland, OR
 Bunny & Wayne Owen - Grants Pass, OR
 Judy Dody - Rouge River, OR
 Clifford Parker - Old Saybrook, CT

Notes from the Field **Michael Owen, ND**



Dr. Michael Owen with Dr. Pedro Bejarano preparing for a birth at Hospital Ometepe.

Living and working here on the island of Ometepe has been a great experience in both medicine and life. The opportunity to learn about a different culture and see how medicine is practiced in a tropical developing country has been incredible. We are often understaffed and regularly run out of medicine, gloves, and other supplies, however, the facility runs quite smoothly and we see up to 100 patients a day between just a few doctors. Most of the patients consist of women and children, but there are also many patients that come for other specialty areas such as: dentistry, chronic disease, prenatal programs, and family planning. There are two other health clinics that are supported by the Health Center in Moyogalpa; unfortunately, they only have a doctor coming to them one day a week due to the lack of available doctors. NDI will be traveling out to each center once a week. to help in these understaffed health centers.

The doctors at the Moyogalpa health center are very excited to have naturopathic doctors working with them and I am excited to say that we have just recently received our own consulting room. We will be stocking this room with a natural pharmacy, which many patients and staff are eagerly awaiting, and hopefully a manipulation table, as soon as we are able to bring one down from the states or have one made locally. The health providers at the Center are looking forward to referring patients to us who request natural medicine or who may be able to benefit from naturopathic medicine, and we will also continue to share the load by seeing many of the pediatric patients.

Even though the work here is rewarding, it is also very challenging both mentally and physically. Some

the struggles of their peoples. My egocentricity could be found in my judgments as well. When I first arrived on Ometepe, I noticed that as I passed people in the street with the common American greeting of "hola", I was always met with "adios". Even when I did not extend a hello, "adios" always floated off the lips of the locals – AHHH-DEEE-yos. Judgment reared her ugly head, as my mind raced with thoughts of how the islanders did not want me here. Their use of greeting me with "adios" must be a rude inside joke to let me, the gringa, know to go back from where I came (or perhaps this perception was carried over from my days when Oregonians touted the same greeting to Californians!). In reality, it is simply their way of doing things - different from the way I learned, but valid nonetheless.

Since my stay here, I have become less preoccupied about bugs, about food being contaminated and about the level of dirt I live with. People and places are dirty here because the dust is impossible and the heat is oppressive. I thought I did not have sweat glands— before now that is. There is little way to keep from getting dirty at any moment. Sometimes I find myself so dusty and sweaty that I am surprised it has not bothered me. On any given day, I may be drenched several times a day....simply from the heat of the day. I never thought I would appreciate my cold shower so much!

Everyday I find myself asking questions about my new life. I have become a student of observation – both in the clinic and in the culture, as a doctor and as a human. The United States is at war in Iraq and I ask, what does it take to become a good neighbor? A guest in someone's house, someone's country, someone's life? When we enter another culture, begin this journey – to not just be good at what you do, but to be a good human, a good neighbor, and not simply an American. Begin by surrendering that which is familiar to that which is unfamiliar, by letting go of your preconceptions of another people and their choices which you may not understand, and sit back and see what happens – because maybe, just maybe, that is where global healing begins.



Dr. Michael Owen, NDI Volunteer Amy McCandlish, and Dr. Tabatha Parker at Casa NDI.

NDI's Electrical Project Tabatha Parker

of the mental challenges include learning about tropical medicine and about medications in the developing world, and also deciding the best treatment when there may be few resources to draw from or when we have run out of a particular medicine or supply. Working with limited diagnostic tools has also been difficult, especially when a test needs to be ordered and a hospital that can do these tests is on the mainland, a cost that is out of reach for most patients. Another difficult aspect has been the language barrier; learning about medicine in Spanish is both incredibly enriching and incredibly frustrating at times. The physical challenges are mostly due to the heat and the amount of patients that come to the clinic in a morning; there are often surges of patients in the morning, a lull at lunchtime, and then another rush in the afternoon. Throughout all the challenges present, the patience and understanding of the people coming to the clinic make my contribution here worth every minute.

Working in Nicaragua has given me so many rewarding experiences I sometimes find it interesting that the perception of my being here is for the pure benefit of the island and its people, when I am the one who is receiving the life long memory, cultural and professional experience from their warm acceptance. It has been a few months since I began working here in the clinics and everyday is a new learning experience. I look forward to the continual development of our programs, working on the island throughout the year, and seeing this rotation continue while I help NDI grow in Nicaragua.

What we have done NDI 2005 Accomplishments

Some of you may be wondering - what has NDI done this year. You may be new to our organization - so we thought it would be nice to show you we've been busy doing. Hope you enjoy!

- Received 501(c)(3) status
- Placed two ND's in full-time positions in Nicaragua on the Island of Ometepe
- Set up CASA NDI –Housing for ND's and NDI office in Nicaragua
 - Donated over \$6000 in supplies and medicines to Ometepe Center of Health
- Secured a 3-yr contract with the Ministry of Health in Nicaragua
- Became the 1st official ND's in Nicaragua
- Launched our first capital campaign and raised funding for our first year
- Completed the First NDI Community Project -

NDI had the pleasure of having its first guest volunteer, Clifford Parker Jr., a native of Meriden, Connecticut and retired Northeast Utilities lineman come to Nicaragua. Mr. Parker spent 2 weeks on the island where he worked fixing wiring and lighting in the Moyogalpa Hospital. His dedication was truly appreciated. Cliff fixed over 80 lights, switches, transformers, and secured dangerous exposed electrical wires and circuit breaker boxes. Finally, the docs and patients can see again!!!! Wow - what a difference it makes to be able to do a physical exam without squinting! All in all, the work could never have been done without a qualified electrician - many thanks to Clifford Parker for his time, work and heart.



Cliff Parker of Old Saybrook, Connecticut volunteers his time in Nicaragua at Hospital Ometepe.

NDI's New Website Launched Tabatha Parker

We are proud to present the new, updated Natural Doctors International website. Thanks to the generous corporate donation of Whitespeed (www.whitespeed.com) and the phenomenal creativity of designer, Leonard Baskin (www.trenchstudios.com).

NDI's First Guests

Over the past 4 months, Casa NDI has had its share of visitors - each of whom brought their own unique spirits, made us laugh, and above all proved to be great friends. Thanks to each of you for making our time in Nicaragua a little more exciting!

NDI's First Visitor Jim McCandlish turns 60 in Moyogalpa,

repairing and replacing all necessary electrical wiring and lights in the Moyogalpa Hospital

- Released 2006 VOLUNTEER APPLICATION for Naturopathic Physicians for a 1yr medical rotation in Nicaragua.

Volunteer Corner Amy McCandlish

If I had projected that I'd be translating medical Spanish last year while I was in school, I would have made just a bit more effort to study up on that particular vocabulary. I've had to adjust to a new set of verbs and nouns, the most challenging of which, are Nicaragua's own (seemingly undocumented) rendition of those words that I would normally be able to find in any average Spanish/English dictionary. I had thought of myself as a pretty good conversationalist before moving down here in February, but I had yet to use those skills to form sentences pertaining to another person's bowel movements or nutritional needs. I tried explaining what it meant to be lactose intolerant to a patient's mother yesterday, stuttering through what I can remember of high school biology terms in my head, and making the quick transfer to Spanish, hoping that the words would sound similar if I pronounced them with a Spanish accent. It has been coming along, one day at a time, as I've had to focus on not only my medical Spanish vocabulary, but on new terms in English as well.



I have been working in the hospital for the past month and a half with Michael and Tabatha, writing the daily registry that tracks certain illnesses for national statistics and helping explain things to patients and doctors when they need me to. I pretty much feel like a doctor, getting in and asking questions like I know what's going on, when actually, I skipped out on the science portion of higher education, and studied Spanish and international community development, fulfilling my science credits with anthropology and astronomy classes. We see many of the same illnesses and test results coming through each day: kids with the flu, cough, fever, pneumonia, pharyngitis, urinary

Nicaragua with the NDI gang!

Just when we thought we were going to get to relax, guest Jim McCandlish showed up at Casa NDI with one simple request - to climb Maderas Volcano for his birthday. After some convincing, we headed out to climb a volcano. Eight hours later, we relaxed over a cervaza - many thanks to Jim McCandlish for getting us up that mountain!



Nestor Guzman Dinarte, Jim McCandlish, Amy McCandlish, Dr. Michael Owen climbing Maderas Volcano on Ometepe Island.

NDI's Visitor Dinner Party

Cliff Parker and Andrew Soebroto visit the island!

What an exciting few weeks we had with visitors Cliff Parker and Andrew Soebroto. Andrew, a New Zealand Indonesian, brought with him great stories and great laughs. Cliff was entertained by the amount of bugs the house actually housed! Here freinds enjoy dinner over a typical Nicaraguan meal.



Dr. Tabatha Parker, Cliff Parker, Favita Diaz, Andrew Soebroto, & Dr. Michael Owen enjoy a Nicaraguan meal of tostones, gallopinto, & pollo asado.

tract infections, anemia, parasites, etc., which makes catching on to diagnoses and treatments generally straightforward, much like picking up new Spanish words after listening to them spoken for awhile. There are of course those illnesses that fall just outside of my new breadth of knowledge, but how exciting to learn about tropical pathologies I have never even heard of, it's an opportunity of a lifetime for me, and I feel really lucky to be able to be here and add this experience to my life.

NDI SCHOOL GROUPS

Are you a naturopathic medical student that wants to get involved in the international naturopathic community. Please contact your NDI student body president to find out more!

JOIN YOUR NDI STUDENT CHAPTER TODAY!

NDI STUDENT CHAPTER PRESIDENTS

- Baystr-Shanon Sidell
- NCNM - Tania Neubauer
- SCNM - Tyler Mongan
- CCNM - Need a Rep
- UBCNM - Funda Gulman
- Boucher - Need a Rep

Special Thanks

There are so many that have helped NDI along the way and we truly thank all of you from the bottom of our hearts. There are two people, however, we owe a special thanks to: Yves and Mercedes Chaix, without whom we would not have been able to secure the Nicaragua contracts as speedily as we did. Thanks for your support and love. You are both inspirational.



Yves and Mercedes Chaix



Andrew Soebroto and neighbor, Darien Flores Diaz.

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