

SPOTLIGHT ON MISSION

— Positive stories. Valuable work. —



Pastor tends to inmates' hearts and health

Health Partners International of Canada brings hope and healing to the world

Emily Wierenga
Special to ChristianWeek

Andreas Duarte is on a mission to bring hope and healing to people around the world.

Duarte became a Christian after he came to Canada in 1986 with his wife Bianca. Now an evangelist and pastor of Beautiful Pentecostal Christian Temple in Kitchener, Ontario, Duarte seeks to share the good news through practical and evangelistic means.

Each year he makes two trips to his native Nicaragua to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with those in prison and rehabilitation. He also distributes medical supplies provided by Health Partners International of Canada (HPIC).

"I started doing this because there is a need and we are in a better position to help," he explains. "We cannot change the world, but we can make a difference."

Duarte has been carrying HPIC's Physician Travel Packs (PTPs) to Nicaragua since 2007 when he first learned of the 21-year-old humanitarian non-profit organization.

"The government doesn't have enough money, so we assemble a team of doctors and we visit a jail. We take the medicine and the team of doctors. The doctors prescribe the medicine and we feed [the prisoners] too," says Duarte, a father of four. "We buy a cow and we prepare a meal for them; we give them rice and

beans and meat and tortillas, and we preach to them. We do all of this in one day."

This March, Duarte, who has held crusades in Central America for the past 12 years, plans to return to Nicaragua to minister to 600 criminals imprisoned in the north, as well as to 150 patients at a rehab centre. Alongside a team of six from his church, he will partner with pastors, doctors and nurses in Nicaragua to bring hope and healing to those in need.

"They don't have resources, so we take the medicine and medical supplies along with the doctors and we go there. They have skin problems, low vitamins and parasites; they suffer from diabetes, from infections, colds and sore throats."

"We cannot change the world, but we can make a difference."

Taking with him two to three HPIC Physician Travel packs worth about \$5,000 each, Duarte and his teammates sort through the medicine provided in the PTPs, and the medical professionals see the patients and prescribe treatments. Each pack, comprised of medication donated by an ever-expanding list of pharmaceutical companies can provide up to 600 treatments.

"HPIC is a great organization," says Duarte, who plans to travel both to Cuba and Guatemala later in

2011. "They have a great heart to help people in need. Without them it would be almost impossible to help these people because we'd have to buy the medicine in the market and it would be really hard to afford it."

HPIC has been dedicated to improving access to medicine and enhancing the health of the developing world for the past two decades. It has responded to the globe's medical needs by partnering with ministries of health, non-governmental organizations and healthcare professionals, pharmaceutical and healthcare product companies, as well as with the Canadian government. Dependent on individuals' generous donations, it is committed to multiplying each donated dollar by 10.

This spring, HPIC is partnering with Duarte to host a musical event in the Kitchener-Waterloo area, in hopes of raising awareness and support.

"We're still in the planning stages," says HPIC Executive Director of Philanthropy, Don Belec. "We don't know what it will look like, but various churches will be contacted to submit their ideas. It's a community-based initiative, a joint effort between HPIC and the local churches, and we're hoping to raise awareness about our work."

Duarte and Belec met in January to begin planning the event, scheduled to take place sometime in April. "We're going to come together to help more people," says Duarte. "We know this is a great work for the Kingdom of God."

Spots

- HPIC began as a one-man operation in 1990.
- The organization's first medical response was to an earthquake in northwestern Iran; a shipment of \$1.2 million in donated supplies was sent from five pharmaceutical partners.
- Today HPIC has the capacity to respond to tragedies such as the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, where they offered \$9 million in aid.
- HPIC adheres to World Health Organization (WHO) Guidelines for Drug Donations.
- HPIC works in over 110 countries worldwide, providing Physician Travel Packs, as well as assistance towards Community Health and Development Projects and responding to emergencies in the developing world.

Kitchener Breaking News!

Health Partners International of Canada (HPIC) and Beautiful Pentecostal Christian Temple are partnering in a special upcoming *Musical Extravaganza* in Kitchener, Ontario to:

- help local "kids at risk", and
- provide critical medicine to the most needy in the developing world.

Stay tuned for further info in upcoming issues!



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