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Praise God for

- A successful and fun 2010 health leaders workshop.
- The completion of a latrines and cement floors project with the communities of Laure, El Naranjo, and El Burillo in January with the help of two groups from Canada.

Please Pray for

- The new coordinator for the HIV prevention project who will be starting in April. I will be working with her to help get things started, choosing curriculum, planning the workshops and most importantly guiding the communities in selecting promoters. Pray for wisdom for us both in this challenging new project.
- March and April, which are the hottest, driest months here, with temperatures reaching 40°C (105°F) and higher. It can be tiring and trying for everyone; pray for patience and ability to deal with the heat.

Promoting Positive Change

A recent day-and-a-half long workshop we held recently targeted “reducing the consumption of coffee and Coca-Cola in children under five years old.” Eighteen community health leaders from nearly all of the communities we work with in Southern Honduras came together to learn about promoting behavior change in their communities and also to meet each other and renew old friendships.

Holding an annual workshop for the health leaders is something we haven’t been able to do for many years now, so it was very special both for Diaconia and for the leaders to have it this year. It was also very productive. We all have behaviors or habits that are not

beneficial to our health and are often difficult to change. In a community and situation where many factors—lack of water, poor nutrition, little steady income—also affect the health of the people, negative behaviors can be a lot more or detrimental. For this reason we decided to focus on tools and methods for empowering the community leaders in promoting behavior change.

The leaders grouped together by community and talked about ideas and plans that they could

implement over the next six months to work on reducing the coffee and Coke intake in children. At the end of the workshop, all of the leaders proudly accepted their certificate and left excited to put their planning into practice.



All of the community leaders with Diaconia staff

Operation Smile

Onin Antonio Mejia was born, healthy and strong, last June to happy parents and a big brother in the community of El Burillo. I met him when he was about a month old, and immediately noticed the gap separating his upper lip from the nose down, exposing his toothless little mouth when he smiled. His

mom told me that he was eating with no problem. After I examined his mouth it was clear that Onin had a common condition called cleft lip. Thankfully, in Onin’s case it didn’t involve his palate (roof of the mouth) or both sides of his lip. In such cases, babies who don’t have access to help or medical care can quickly become dehydrated or malnourished because it can be physically difficult or impossible for them to breastfeed or suck from a bottle.

and asked if she would like us to find out about surgery for Onin. We were able to contact an organization that accepts Honduran children for cleft lip repair. Ironing out logistics and arrangements had lengthened the process. Onin’s grandfather, a very proactive community health leader in el Burillo, was a great help, traveling with the pair to all appointments and for the surgery. In March, Onin’s cleft lip was repaired successfully, and when he came to be weighed a week later it was healing well. I am very thankful for the collaboration and support on both the community and professional levels that made possible this great blessing in Onin’s life.



Onin, Lidia, and Grandfather

I explained to Lydia, Onin’s mother, that Onin’s lip could be repaired surgically,