COVID-19 UPDATE FROM THE DRMP

The DRMP is incredibly proud of and humbled by the extraordinary efforts of our Dominican-based partner organization, Light A Candle (LAC), throughout the COVID-19 crisis. The current situation in the DR is grim with very little access to health care, mandatory curfews, lack of PPE supplies, food shortages, the shutdown of public transportation and more. In spite of these enormous hurdles, LAC is going above and beyond in their efforts to continue caring for their patients and the residents of their 13 supported bateys by providing hypertension medication to all of their patients and delivering food, children’s vitamins and masks on a regular basis to every household in each of their bateys.

Please take a moment to watch this beautiful video of LAC distributing hypertension medication, food and masks to the residents of Batey Lima.
DRMP Sends Love in the Form of PPE, Supplies

As mentioned above, LAC has been regularly distributing masks to the residents of their 13 bateys, but unfortunately PPE shortages make this effort difficult to maintain. In response, the DRMP is assembling no-sew mask-making kits to volunteers who want to help. The kits contain all the supplies needed - shop towels, twisty ties, elastic, a stapler if needed and directions. So far, volunteers have made approx. 700 masks that are already being put to use as you can see in the picture below. In addition to the masks, we have sent the following supplies, but this is a long-term issue and more will be needed:

DRMP Supplies Sent to LAC

- 700 volunteer-made masks
- 1,100 store-purchased masks
- 250 face shields for LAC staff
- 1,300 gloves
- 62 lbs. of portion-sized peanut butter cups for continuation of Child Health Promotion Program
- 12,000 children’s vitamins for continuation of Child Health Promotion Program
- 4,000 food/medicine distribution bags

Want to Help Make Masks?

Please click here if you are interested in picking up a DRMP mask-making kit. When you are finished, simply return the kit with completed masks. No sewing or special skills are required but children 12 should have an adult to help with the fine motor aspect.
Children living in the bateys have always been acutely vulnerable to malnutrition due to limited food supply, lack of clean water and poor health care access. To make matters worse, the government shut down all public transportation because of COVID, which batey residents depended on for the long journey to their nearest store. The food supply chain is broken, and the need is greater than ever.

In response, the DRMP and LAC are amplifying its Child Health Program efforts for the 413 enrolled children in 11 bateys. As such, LAC doctors will visit every house of their enrolled participant (practicing social distancing and wearing PPE). LAC will talk to each parent or adult about their child’s general health, observe the child’s appearance for health concerns, discuss COVID prevention, good hygiene, etc. The best part is that LAC will also leave a package of healthy food for the child of each of their families. Each package will contain children’s vitamins, rice, beans, oatmeal, bananas, milk, eggs, carrots, soap, a face mask and art supplies.

2019-2020 Trips in Review

February 2020 tubal ligation trip led by Sarah Weekly had 18 team members who performed 60 surgeries. Sarah summarized the trip by saying, "We love connecting with our new Dominican friends & reconnecting with those that we miss dearly throughout the year. The Dominicans are so thankful for the impact that we make in their lives and honestly they make just as big of an impact on ours. We come home with the fullest hearts."
January 2020 orthopedic surgery, medical and health education trip led by Rita Luallin had 32 team members who saw close to 800 patients in the bateys and did 44 orthopedic surgeries.

In November of 2019, the DRMP and Village Church launched a brand new trip, Givingthanks in the DR for people of all ages and skill sets. A total of 20 VPC members were part of our inaugural trip, including Rev. Are. Participants worked on health education in the bateys and construction at LAC’s new Community Health Center. Click here for the Givingthanks photo gallery.

2020 Celebration Dominicana Zoom Concert Event

This year’s in-person Celebration Dominicana has been canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the need for medical care and food continues, so the Board for the Dominican Republic Medical Partnership (in conjunction with the Light A Candle’s US Advisory Board) are working on other ways we can continue to fundraise and address the needs of the batey residents.

Stay tuned for details about a Zoom concert with our favorite musicians/mission partners, Wilkin and Ricky, from the Dominican Republic and information about making on-line donations. Just be sure to clear some space for a fun night of merengue dancing!
Future DRMP Trips in the Time of COVID

The DRMP has put an indefinite hold on any DRMP-related program trips. If you are a regular trip participant or interested in becoming one, please reach out to your trip leader or any of the below leaders for more information:

- **Rita Luallin** – orthopedic surgery, medical and health education for medical and non-medical volunteers; weeklong every January or February
- **Sarah Weekly** – pregnancy prevention for medical and non-medical volunteers; weeklong every February
- **Dr. Maithe Enriquez** – hypertension treatment and education for nursing students; weeklong every May
- **Amy Christensen** – hypertension, diabetes, education for medical and non-medical volunteers; weeklong every November
- **Lora Garrison** – Givingthanks in the DR, an all ages / all skills Village Church trip that focuses on health education, medical and construction; five-days every November (depart Friday before Thanksgiving – return Wednesday before Thanksgiving)

Click to Support COVID Efforts

Dominican Republic Medical Partnership

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