

Sharing Gratitude on a Different Latitude New International Mission Trip, "Givingthanks in the DR"

Meet Sandy "Wilkin" Yan. While most of you have never heard this name before, Wilkin has had ties to the Village Church for many years and from distant lands. VPC members met Wilkin nearly 20 years ago while in the Dominican Republic (DR) for a surgical mission trip through the Dominican Republic Medical Partnership of Village Church (DRMP).

Wilkin was very poor and just a young teenager at the time, but he worked as the team's translator at the Good Samaritan Hospital in La Romana. Throughout the years, members of DRMP developed close friendships with Wilkin and encouraged him to further his education. With help and support, Wilkin received scholarship assistance to attend a Dominican university. Wilkin is now the director of the DRMP's local partner organization, Enciende Una Luz, which provides health education and health promotion in poor underserved communities in southeastern DR.

Wilkin's story is one of overcoming intense poverty and hardship with love and support from others to becoming the director of a foundation that is making a real difference in the lives of people from poor communities in the DR. It is truly a sharing of gratitude.

We invite you to join us in sharing gratitude for VPC's first "Givingthanks in the DR" from Nov. 22-27, 2019 (Thanksgiving is on Nov. 28). The trip is open to VPC members of all ages and skill sets. Cost is \$1,400 and includes air, food, room and board, ground transportation and a lifetime of memories.

Deborah White, Village Church director of mission, will be among the Village team members, along with Rev. Tom Are, Jenna Soltys and Lora Garrison. "The DRMP has been a big part of Village's history for the past 25 years," said Deborah. "We want to give our members more opportunities to join in missional activities whether local or abroad. This trip provides an opportunity to do meaningful work, form new relationships and learn to see the world in a new way."

The trip's service activities will include assisting Enciende during their health and education fairs and related medical work. The team will also be doing light construction work at their new community health center.

Pam Logan, a Village Church elder, has been involved with the DRMP for many years. "In our 25 years of work in the DR, hundreds of VPC folks have been changed by their experience there," Pam shared. "I wish I could count how many times a former participant has talked to me about how their lives were



Wilkin (middle) with Enciende's nursing school scholarship students.



Village Church member Kennedy Krumm receives a plaque from Enciende Una Luz for spending all four high school spring break trips assisting their efforts in the DR.

transformed, their world perspectives changed, lifelong friendships made with their fellow participants and the Dominicans and Haitians who they met there,” Logan continued. “This relational aspect is embodied by DRMP of Village Church.”

One special aspect of this trip will be the programming for spiritual reflection and enrichment during the evenings. It offers personal and spiritual growth through service to God and others in a different place and culture.

Visit www.villagepres.org/drmp_trips for more information or contact Lora Garrison at lora.garrison@villagepres.org or 913-671-2390.

Save the Date! DRMP’s annual benefit, Celebration Dominicana, will be at 7 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 6, 2019 at the Madrid Theatre. This event makes it possible for the DRMP to continue its vital work of providing medical care and health education to improve the health and well-being of children and families living in impoverished communities in the DR. Visit www.villagepres.org/cd for more information.

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