

1980 *Spanish Health Ministry Inc.* 2020

Celebrating 40 years of God's Faithfulness!

The King will reply, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these my brothers of mine, you did for me." Matthew 25:40 NIV

June 1980 about 20 people met in the Koinonia House to commission nurse Dona Sensenig to serve the Hispanic community with the newly established Spanish Health Ministry. Pastor Wilbur Engle, Kennett Square Mennonite Church, preached on the above passage. Rod and Ruthann Brooks, owners of the Koinonia Christian Bookstore welcomed the ministry to a room on the 2nd floor. Tom Martin, Esq. who did the legal work for the non-profit ministry and his wife Bonnie were part of that inaugural service. Neither Dona nor Bonnie could have imagined that 40 years later they would be busier than ever translating and coordinating complicated, medical services for Hispanic families! But even then we were trusting God to open doors to share the gospel of salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ. After years of foundation laying, God opened those doors and continues to do so during this pandemic. God has granted favor to Bonnie and Dona among the Hispanics and the medical community. We had to cancel our 40th anniversary banquet due to the pandemic but we praise God for the opportunities He is giving us now to minister in His name to our Hispanic neighbors in southern Chester County.



Feb. 28-March 1 we went to our 35th annual Hispanic Bible Conference at America's Keswick in NJ. We praise God that 27 families/107 people (our largest group ever) attended through the sponsorships of many SHM supporters. The messages from 2 Timothy on "how to be faithful servants of the Lord under persecution and affliction" could not have been more timely! Everyone in our group, from the youngest at 9 months to her great grandmother at 80 and even the handicapped children, was hearing the Word of God being clearly presented.

Thanks be to God!

Two weeks later the reality of the pandemic hit. Although we had to close the SHM office the work of the ministry has not stopped nor even slowed. Initially we realized that many of our families did not have a computer or internet to get the school messages about schooling and free food. Later they needed to know about the services of each food bank. We assessed 75 families from our caseload to be high risk. Ethel began what would become weeks of sending out critical cell phone messages to these families all over the southern part of the county. Learning that there are rural areas with no internet at all created a challenge to keep families informed of resources available. We also intervened with the schools to help connect the kids. It was important they knew correct information about how to care for themselves and their special needs children during this pandemic. Tabitha updated our Website and Facebook page with information in Spanish. The children's hospitals/specialists canceled all but essential medical appointments but still the families had medical needs. Bonnie and Dona were actively contacting and being contacted by families needing medical direction. We are doing translation and medical conferencing over the phones. It appears that these telehealth visits will be continuing indefinitely in the future.





The ladies from Bible study have been connected daily via a prayer chain on the phone sharing prayer requests, answers to prayer, praises to God and encouraging scriptures and Biblical messages. It has been a blessing to see their growth during this difficult time and their concern for one another. Actually there has been more consistent contact than ever before. Jack, our men's Bible study leader, set up a zoom prayer meeting with the men on Friday nights. So even though Bible studies had to be canceled, God is still at work. We are connecting our families with young children to a program that **Child Evangelism** is offering on-line this summer. Computers and "hotspots" that were set up for school are now being used for spiritual education!

Pray that the families will literally be able to "connect" to this wonderful opportunity through Child Evangelism so that their children can learn more Biblical truth.

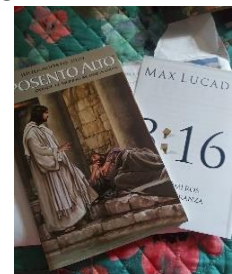
Not long into the pandemic Isela from Bible study asked for prayer for her 54 year old sister-in-law who fell and was having emergency surgery. No one was allowed in the hospital with her. She did well and was sent home in 3 days. A month later Dona learned about the financial needs of the family and stopped by with a Walmart gift card. The 18 yr. old daughter, who along with her sister, was caring for her mother, asked would Dona please come in. She found the lady on a mattress on the floor with a huge incision over her hip and no follow-up since surgery! Besides giving her a Walmart gift card with the book, "An Anchor for the Soul" and praying for the three of them, Dona made an appointment with the surgeon. The family was grateful for the intervention as was the surgeon who hadn't seen her in 5 weeks! Dona went to translate and only then did the family learn that she had a total hip replacement. Praise God she is healing well but has not received PT. We are still working on that issue. **Please pray for this lady and her 2 daughters who are supporting her physically and financially and for all 3 of them to grow spiritually.**



In the past month the virus has really taken a toll among our agriculture workers. Things were fairly quiet in the beginning but not now. Maria asked for prayer for her friend at work whose husband was critically ill with the virus. Faith Baptist Church has been helping 25-30 of our families with food so Ethel started delivering food to her. The husband was sent home finally on O2. By then the wife was also sick and concerned about their 8 yr. old daughter. A week ago the man began to have chest discomfort. She called 911 but he died before the ambulance arrived. A 36 year old healthy man with no underlying conditions. Then we received urgent calls asking for help and direction. The lady was distraught emotionally and had no money for the funeral.

God has supplied through the generosity of our supporters special monies for a COVID fund that to date totals \$21,000. For the first time in 40 years we are helping families with rent and utilities. Bonnie and Dona have made calls to landlords to learn where to send a check but it was sobering to call the funeral home to ask about the cost of cremation. Along with the generosity of the mushroom farm where he worked we were able to help. But cremation is not common in the Hispanic culture and only added insult to injury for this dear lady. Later that week she worsened and had to go to the hospital. Much prayer went up from the ladies Bible study. We thank God she improved. We gave her Christian literature but found she is illiterate. When her quarantine is over we want to visit and encourage her spiritually.

Please remember her and her young daughter in prayer as they grieve.



Most of the families we've know long term have faithful husbands who care and provide for their families and special needs children. These men do not take vacations let alone stop working because they feel a "little sick". So it is significant when one of them stops for a week or suddenly is completely bedfast. Most do not have health insurance nor do they get sick time. As the wives watch their husbands decline they call "nurse Dona"! Sometimes they have already called their doctor and gotten no response. It is a huge responsibility to decide over the phone how to advise them. Dona has been asked to talk to the husbands directly to help them understand what to do next. More important is the opportunity to pray with them.

One couple after excellent care at the local hospital ER cannot stop giving God the glory for how He touched the husband's life and restored him. This family has been involved with the ministry for 18 years and attend the Bible studies and Bible Conference. They have an 18 year old son with autism who lives in residential care. The inability to visit their son in residential care has been very hard. Just this week they



were able to see him for one hour. They are rejoicing that Dad lived and that both of their sons are safe, one in care and one at home. We rejoice with the spiritual growth we have seen in them through this crisis. Now they are ministering to other families going through the same thing. Their 16 year old son helped his parents write thank you notes in English and included how they learned that **Romans 8:28** is true.

This gives you a glimpse at what God has been doing through the Spanish Health Ministry during this pandemic. We are EXTREMELY grateful for your faithful financial support that has kept the SHM open but also made it possible for us to financially help our families in this crisis. **As we look at how to safely reopen the office, we ask for your prayers.** We work with a very high risk population. We also pray that you and your families are staying safe and well **"and that the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."** **Philippians 4:7 NIV**

Serving Christ among the Hispanic Community,

Dona Sensenig

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This prayer letter is in memory of two men who greatly influenced the Spanish Health Ministry. Both have gone home with the Lord due to natural causes during this pandemic. Elvin Ressler, local Mennonite pastor, was a charter member of the board of directors for 30 years. He helped the board make wise, Biblical decisions. On the right is Dr. Al Platt, past president of CAM Int. now known as Avant, who started the Hispanic Bible Conference 36 years ago at America's Keswick. Both of these godly men preached at our 20th anniversary. Elvin in



English and Al in Spanish. They will be missed at our 40th anniversary! We thank God for the Biblical foundation they helped to establish at the Spanish Health Ministry. To God be the glory for Elvin and Al.