



Spanish Health Ministry

FALL 2020



He has made everything beautiful in its time.
Ecclesiastes 3:11a

In January, I, Dona, retired from the prenatal clinic in order to have Wednesdays free for the increasing needs of the older SHM handicapped teens. 40 years ago I was asked to work in a new, satellite prenatal clinic that Chester County Hospital and the Chester County Health Department were opening in order to reach the growing Hispanic population. They needed a bilingual nurse. The SHM Board prayed and came to the conclusion that with my bilingual skills and midwifery training in Ecuador it was a good fit. So I began working on Wednesday afternoons translating and guiding pregnant women through this excellent prenatal service. As the Hispanic community grew, so did the clinic to a full 8 hour day. After 20+ years two of Dona's "babies" returned to work in the clinic full time: Jackie Lara (in the photo) as a bilingual LPN and Evelia Gutierrez as a bilingual secretary. Both Jackie and Evelia were born through the clinic. I did postpartum home visits to check them and their mothers. It blesses me to have them continue this vital service.



The board was correct that it was a good fit! If a Hispanic woman delivered a baby with special needs, the hospital would refer her back to the SHM for ongoing assistance. For example, Maria came to the clinic with her 5th pregnancy and she was "advanced maternal age." I explained the risks due to her age and advised her of genetic testing that was available. Maria was not interested and said she would accept the baby "however God sent him." Her baby, Charlie, was born with Down syndrome and mild cardiac issues. The hospital called to ask for our help. Maria was thrilled to know that Bonnie and I could help transport her and Charlie to Al DuPont Hospital for Children and coordinate his medical services. We rejoice that he is doing well and just celebrated his 4th birthday. His siblings love him and he brings joy to everyone who meets him.



As Maria learned of the other services that the SHM offers, she was interested in bringing her children to our VBS summer program. She and the children loved it and our volunteers loved caring for Charlie. For the past 2 years she has taken off work for the Hispanic Bible Conference at America's Keswick. This is significant because, due to immigration issues, she is alone supporting the family by working in the mushroom industry.

22 years ago Maricela came to the prenatal clinic with her first pregnancy. I will never forget the day Fidel came to tell me about their son's birth. He explained that the baby was born without a rectum and was flown into Philadelphia for immediate surgery. The baby, Eric, also had cardiac issues that would require 2 major surgeries. And Eric had Down syndrome! He has received excellent medical care at CHOP. We are blessed to have two fine pediatric facilities in our area. He also received excellent educational training at the Chester County Intermediate Unit in our county. Eric has thrived. He too loves our VBS program and going with his parents to the Hispanic Bible Conference. He is now able to attend the young people's program alone. Our other teenagers, who have watched Eric grow, support him. Then mom and dad are free to be in the adult Bible classes. He is physically strong and has even helped with fall clean up around the Koinonia House where the SHM is located. Maricela has been doing weekly cleaning for us during this pandemic.



Eric turned 21 in June graduating, virtually, from school and aging out of pediatric care. Advanced, pediatric medical care is saving children that 20-30 years ago would not have lived. But, we are learning that the adult system is not always ready for these special needs adults. Right now at the SHM we are helping 5 special needs young adults transition to adult care (there will be more to come). It is very time consuming when you add the language, legal, transportation and insurance issues. This is why after 40 years in the prenatal clinic I sensed God's leading to leave the clinic in order to have that day free to help our young adults with special needs. It became very clear in December when Mitzy Liriano, a very capable bilingual Hispanic nurse was willing to take my place. That was an answer to prayer! The hospital gave me a lovely farewell tea and the clinic had a delicious Mexican dinner. It was a special ending to the very important 40 years of helping Hispanic women receive excellent prenatal care.

Please pray with us as we work to help our young adults with special needs get much needed medical care. The pandemic closing many services for months did not help. Paola who is a nonverbal CP quadriplegic with seizures and a feeding tube had many appointments canceled this spring. She turns 21 in January. Bonnie has made multiple phone calls to schedule 16 appointments between August and December before she ages out of the pediatric system! We praise God that we found a family practice that was willing to take Paola and accepts her insurance. She needs both a neurologist and a GI doctor. We found ones that are taking new patients but they accept different insurances! As we struggle to find medical care for Paola, her faithful father lost his job in mushrooms due to the pandemic. Gustavo is 55 years old and has worked in mushrooms all of his life! Her mother, Rosario, is struggling to help Paola with her online classes from 9-2 while her 10-year-old sister is also trying to connect and do her classes. This means that mom is unable to attend our Friday morning Bible study which she has faithfully attended since its inception 15 years ago! She misses that spiritual support.



Thanks to the help of Pam and Paul Tebo at Grace Fellowship Church we have been able to restart our ladies Bible study using precautions. We cannot offer child care. We are averaging 12-15 women who are SO GRATEFUL to be back. BUT there are 15 women like Paola's mom who cannot attend due to their children all being schooled virtually from home. These moms are exhausted with the computer issues for their children's schooling! Most of them have never worked with computers, let alone in English. Plus we have families who live in areas with very poor or no internet reception. Pray that we can minister to these moms, too.

We thank God for protecting the health of the SHM staff as we minister to our families' physical and spiritual needs during this very unusual time with the pandemic. We thank you, our supporters, for your generous and consistent support during these summer months that have allowed us to be here and to financially help families during this crisis. Your giving and your prayers are sustaining us, and we are extremely humbled and grateful. May the Lord return the blessing to you two-fold.

Serving the Hispanic Community for Christ,

Dona Sensenig, for all of the staff and volunteers

Spanish Health Ministry Inc.
205 E State Street
Kennett Square, PA 19348
610-444-3001 (O) 610-444-8815 (F)
shminc@gmail.com
www.spanishhealthministry.org

