

Pujols News

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Medical Mission



9.29.11

As I sit here at 8:00 PM Tuesday night, I have had a lot of time to reflect on the past ten days. You see, when you are on these trips, you go because you have a purpose that needs to be done.

Which is why I go, because I have a job, and I try to do that as efficiently as possible. But when you are so focused on working, vision can become narrowed. To really be able to feel the impact that you made by going on these

missions, and the impact that going has made on you, often times it take you coming home. This time is no different. When I came back Saturday morning, I was still almost in that Dominican work mode, where



everything was go-go-go, and to come to a halt and realize that I had nowhere to be, and could rest was almost like hitting the breaks at 100 mph. It took me a few days to get back on track. And now that I'm back to my norm, it has hit me just how big of a blessing this trip truly was.

Whether it's the community development in Las Pajas, or the NEST project in Batey Aleman, every time we go I see such impressive growth in the communities we go to. In Las Pajas, the once absolute desolate nature of this village was insurmountable. The first time I went there, you could feel the depression, and read the hopelessness on those people's faces. I guarantee we are the first people to tell them that there is a way out, and that there is hope for them. They are not forgotten. And this time, I can firmly say I think they are getting it. Families have left Las Pajas for the city, as a last-ditch effort to escape the confines of poverty by getting out and staying out. The ones who stayed in the batey have been getting out and trying to find jobs. A once predominately voodoo community is now attending the Christian church and enrolling their children in the Compassion program. The community of Las Pajas is everyday growing more stronger as a whole, working together, and growing in the strength of the Lord.

Everyday they come together to break the handcuffs of poverty, and are slowly on the verge of developing into a community that will be open for opportunities. I may be speaking too soon, but I can honestly see Las Pajas being a wonderful satellite site for our next NEST project or possibly even Batey Baseball due to the progress and the need of the village.

As always, Batey Aleman continues to surprise me. I can't tell you how many people on the medical team that have been with us in the Dominican before, told me how impressed they were with this community. Looking at the before and after picture of Batey Aleman is like looking at



night and day. Aleman is thriving with the NEST project, and instead of just bags, the women are now starting to make jewelry that will soon be available through the Pujols Family Foundation website. As they expand their business through NEST, they continue to expand their sewing skills, which will open up job opportunities in the future, even after NEST. Because of this skill set, these women will have a much better chance of finding work, and will now have a marketable trade that they will possess for a lifetime. Batey Baseball continues to be in full swing [literally and figuratively ha-ha] as these boys continue to learn new baseball skills, and continue to thrive in the word of God. Even talking to the boys, their respect level is unbelievable. They have such poise and honor about them, and I have no doubt that this is what I could've only dreamt for these boys—that is the realization that they are worth more than to go around trashing their reputations. They are worth more than a few drinks at the bar or a few women. They are worth enough to succeed, and to have a real family, and to live life knowing that they are meant for something other than going through the motions. The entire community of Aleman is strong, and has pulled together to give their next generation the best education possible, the best spirituality possible that they can instill in them, and the best chance to succeed that they can

give. I am SO immensely proud of this village and the work they continue to do to create stability, promise, success, and futures for themselves.

The last of the three batey's that we visited was Bienvendio. This more urbanized batey has been almost forgotten by its own city of Santo Domingo. No medical care has gone through Bienvendio for over 7 years. While working with them, this was obvious by their desperation for medical care and wanting any service by Doctors possible. While working with these people however, another thing become clear...these folks were some of the most genuine and nice that I've ever met. Everyone was intensely grateful for what we gave them, and everyone was all smiles all day. It was so refreshing to see such joy when looking at the conditions of how they were living. To have so much joy, and to have so little, it's unreal for me to imagine. It goes to show that happiness isn't having the best of everything, but making the best out of everything you have. That's exactly what these people have done. The beauty of this community was refreshing as well. The way they came together and cared for one another was amazing to witness. Although this was only the team's first time visiting Batey Bienvendio, I can definitely foresee us returning. There is so much that needs to be done, but so much promise for them to succeed.



Our overall work this past week was so blessed. I can't tell you how many moments touched my heart, or begin to tell you how many times I laughed until I cried, and smiled so much that it hurt to smile anymore. But I also can't tell you how many moments broke my heart. In Las Pajas, they have a water treatment center for purified water to prevent the hundreds of water related illnesses the village faces every year, but the villagers don't like the taste of the water after it runs through the purification system. They choose not to drink it and continue drinking their contaminated water, and continue to let the illness occur. In Aleman the health of the children and adults is an underlying concern, due to the lack of medical care. In Aleman, Dr Brian Bennett treated a man with leprosy, (which he had no problem expressing that he had never seen anything like it in his practice before). We also fitted a woman for a prosthetic leg, after years of being confined to her house due to her inefficiency to

walk. In Bienvendios, because of again another lack of medical access and care, there is an extreme number of people that we couldn't reach while we were there due to the demand.

Although we do so much while we are there, there is still always so much that needs to be done. Please keep these people in your prayers. I always say this to people, but I will say it again. You don't know just how blessed we are here in the States to have the medical access and the opportunities that we do. The crazy thing is how much we take for granted everyday, when there are people who do without. I am so blessed, and sometimes it takes me a few days in the bateys to realize that. I hope in every way possible I can turn around and bless them. There truly is something special about falling in love with a complete stranger. There's something special about looking into someone's eyes and feeling the pain they are going through, yet realizing how you've been there too. There's something



special about giving a child a chance to see, or giving someone the medicine they need but can't afford. There's something special about helping and giving to someone that you know can never pay you back.

I can't thank the medical team enough for taking their time and coming to serve these people alongside us. I want to personally thank each and every one of you for the amazing work you have done this week. I could not have imagined working with a more professional, kind, and compassionate team. You all were so incredible, and the chemistry between everyone was so strong. The joy I had watching

you all do what you do and the power of selflessly giving of your skills, money, time, and equipment was incredibly humbling. I can't possibly put into words how honored I was to be a part of your team, and how incredibly excited I am at the thought of going on another medical trip with each and every one of you next year.

Special Thank you to the following for being a part of our medical trip:

Dental Team: Dr Mark Fernandez, Dr Homer Sedighi, Dr Mike Nobel, Asst. Ibana Hasenfratz

Eye Team: Dr Kathy Doan, Dr Mike Rohde

General Medical Team: Dr Rob Hanson, Dr Jan Mueller, and Dr Brian Bennett

*Dominican Dental Team:
Muchas gracias a Dra Niove Franciso and her entire staff and time that accompanied us.
Les aprepeo mucho.*

Pharmacist: Milly Gomez

Director: Todd Perry

Translators: Carlos Zorrilla, Kristen Perry, Edd Anderson, Milka Ruiz

Thank you again to EVERYONE involved with this trip. And to all of our supporters in St. Louis. I thank you for all of your support, because without you all none of what we do would be possible. Thank you for everything you do for this organization and in turn for these people. From donations, to support, to prayers, everything you do for us is what drives the heart of this



organization, and I cannot show my appreciation enough. While there is so much that we have accomplished, there is still so much to do. Each time when I look back I realize just how much we leave untouched every time. There is so much to do all at once, that we often times have to choose what we feel is most important. But there is still so much that has potential to grow. Some moments down there still get to me. Some moment have me on my knees in front of God, asking “Why? How can you let your people live like this?” And it is at my weakest moments, broken in front of Him, that I realize just how strong I am. These people aren’t trapped by this. They have hope to get out. And I believe God has planted, in me, a desire for me to do something about it. He challenges me everyday to pay my blessing forward, and everyday I am challenged to do so. I can’t wait to see what the next step for these villages will be, and how the Foundation can be a part of their journey. Thanks again for all of your support, and continue to keep these communities and their needs in your prayers. Thank you so much. As I’ve said, without your support, we couldn’t do what we are doing.

Benediciones,
Kristen Perry

For a detailed day-by-day report of the medical mission trip please visit: <http://pujolsfamilyfoundationblog.org/>



"This Party's Goin' Down!"



Contributors: Cillah Hall and Leneia Weston

The Pujols Family Foundation rolled out the red carpet for a magical evening for teens and young adults at the 5th Annual Autumn Prom. What began as a special event in 2007 has become one of the biggest parties of the year for the Down syndrome community. As guests made their way down the red carpet at the Kemp Auto Museum, they were greeted with cheers by adoring friends and family members, sending

the celebratory air into frenzy! With a record-breaking attendance of over 500 guests, the dance floor stayed packed all night as the Smash Band rocked and party-goers boogied down to their favorite hits.

"This party's going down!" said Ethan Schroeder.

Smash kept the audience on top of the scoreboard for Game 5 of the World Series, the Cardinals - Brewers game. "Cardinals 1: Brewers



Zeroooo!” He boomed into the mic. The crowd went bananas! Albert hit a home run in the hearts of every guest at the Kemp, though he couldn’t physically be there to celebrate the game victory with his most adoring fans.

“We are big Albert fans,” said John Voda. He attends the PFF Autumn Prom each year with his lovely daughter, Megan Voda. Megan, a Webster High School Graduate, now works at Bethesda and is attending Meramec College. Megan’s mom chose a gorgeous bouquet for her to carry, and she was wearing her fabulous new dress like a rock star! “She just loves coming to the prom with her dad.” The beaming smile Megan wore all night said it all.

“The food is my favorite part,” said Megan. Fazoli’s, Fitz’s, Papa John’s Pizza, McAllister’s Deli, Maui Wowi, Cold Stone Creamery, Andrea’s Gluten Free, and Russo’s Gourmet brought their “A” game that night, and the food was a huge hit!

This year, many guests traveled quite a distance to take part in the festivities. From the north and south, from Chicago to Spring Hill, prom-goers gathered dressed to impress and danced the night away. Leslie Ritz made the trek with her mom, Rochelle Ritz from Siloam Springs, Arkansas. “It’s a five-hour drive,” said Rochelle. “It’s Leslie’s senior year.” Leslie’s





dress was a show-stopper, and she had fun on and off the dance floor.

Stephanie Toedte, 17, wore a beautiful blue dress that gave Cinderella a run for her money. It's the dress she wore last year when she was crowned Queen at her middle school coronation in Nashville, IL. "She was excited to put on the dress again, get her hair ready... It's exciting," said her sister Melissa Toedte.

Fellowship with other families and friends is a huge part of what makes the event memorable. Moms and dads get to watch their kids have a wonderful time without a care in the world among family and friends that support them. John Voda lovingly reminisced, "My two other daughters, Megan's sisters, can be too busy for dad now that they're growing older. Megan is always happy to see me when I come home from work."

The Lace Images photo booth was glitzy and 'blinging' as the



memories of the special night were captured, and Balloons by Mike topped off the night with keepsakes of fun. But the biggest surprise of the night was a special guest appearance by Rally Squirrel! Prommers shrieked with delight and waited in line to have their pic snapped with the 2011 mascot.

Brittany Hite and Colleen Nesbit, both of St. Louis, were attending their first prom night. Brittany rocked an adorable pink and black dress, and Colleen kept us laughing in red with her precious halo of curls. "This is a great night," said Brittany.

"This is amazing, it's amazing. It's more than I could have ever expected it to be. It's really neat," said Cheryl Crumrine who traveled from Bloomington, Illinois to bring her daughter Kristin.

And it truly was a magical night filled with many memorable moments.



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We would like to thank all of our sponsors for their contributions and for making our Fall quarter of 2011 a wonderful success!

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Mission Statement:

To live and share our commitment to faith, family and others.

To promote awareness, provide hope and meet tangible needs for families and children who live with Down syndrome. To provide extraordinary experiences for children with disabilities and life threatening illnesses. To improve the standard of living and quality of life for impoverished children and orphans in the Dominican Republic through education and tangible goods.

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Event Calendar: For future events please visit our web site at:

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The Pujols Family Foundation is a 501(c)(3) - Public Charity.



From the Director's Desk

Dear Friends,

I would like to take a moment to salute and thank all of the doctors who took time off from their practice to volunteer the past mission trip to the Dominican Republic. Historically we have taken either Dentists or Optometrists or Pediatricians for a concentrated focus for these missions. However, this time we decided to create a cross-functional team of all the above disciplines.

It was an honor to be a part of

such a wonderful and professional team. It is amazing to see so many important and successful people come together with one heart and one vision, leaving all ego and self-importance at the door and simply serve their fellow man. Words cannot express my respect and admiration for each of these humble servants and fantastic professionals.

Blessings,

Todd