



SPRING 2004

PORTLAND CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

Ex- President's Message

Saludos, AMIGOS! Embracing the concept of peaceful regime change, I recently passed the scepter to Brent Chalmers, the new President of the Portland Chapter. Brent, gave vaccinations as an AMIGOS volunteer in the '70's, and still serves in Latin America today, putting his physician's skills to work for Northwest Medical Teams (see May, 2003 Newsletter). Brent will be overseeing a dedicated Board that was enhanced in September when 2003 parent group chair Sharon Fausel signed on officially and when veteran parent Carol Arland joined us just last month. We can expect a strong, progressive Chapter in 2004 – and beyond!

--D. Pribnow

Mission Statement: Amigos de las Américas builds partnerships to empower young leaders, advance community development and strengthen multi-cultural understanding in the Américas.

WINNING 2003 SUMMER ESSAY: ...Jennelle Milam

(Essay continued on page 4)

Our woman's soccer team was in desperate condition. The men's team had uniforms, shoes, and organized practices. They played games every week and the whole town turned out to watch. The women's team was an unorganized mix of eager young adults who brought more enthusiasm than actual talent to the randomly scheduled practices.

We started the summer with a soccer ball, but it popped two weeks into my time with the team. We began sharing a rubber ball with the little boy's team when they let us. We also shared the small sandy field

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| In this Issue. . . | |
| Winning Amigos Essay | 1, 4-5 |
| Winning Photo | 3 |
| Volunteers Assignments | 6 |
| Brent Chalmers the Amigo | 2 |
| 2004 programs | 7 |
| PDX Board Members | 8 |
| Notable Events | 8 |

New President- Brent Chalmers reflects on his Amigos Experience

In thinking about this year's Amigos training program, I wondered about my own training 31 years ago. I was 17 and signed on as a volunteer after a friend at school told me of the program. I had never been out of the United States before and hardly been out of the state of California. Although the training appeared extensive, I was excited to participate. My summer experience was one that I will never forget.

In searching through some old boxes in the attic, I was happy to discover that I still have my old family notebook from 1972. There were 22 training sessions scheduled that Winter and Spring, occurring virtually every Monday for three hours each. Each session was divided into one hour of cultural training, one hour of Spanish practice and a final hour of technical training. At that time, all projects involved the vaccination program. We also had two Saturday sessions where we practiced giving injections to each other and one overnight retreat. We raised money through a garage sale, a walk-a-thon and a letter writing campaign.

Our chapter President was Dr. Robert Abernathy, an ophthalmologist. He also was the training director, recruiting his wife and daughter to help him. Several other local physicians in San Mateo, California as well as a couple of Spanish teachers from local schools, participated in the training.

Most of the training was about setting up and operating a vaccination clinic. We were told very specifically about how this was to be done. We were told to expect large numbers of

"patients". The following passage from the training notebook explains how we were expected to handle the load. "If large numbers are being inoculated, the Amigos practice is to give multiple injections with one filling of the syringe." I do not think this technique could be used today! It turns out that my partner and I gave approximately 2,000 injections during our 4 weeks stay in Gualcinse, Honduras.

We were also told to expect the local villagers to think of us as medically trained even though we were not. The training handbook was to be used as a reference in case of emergency. I shudder to think of what I would have done if we had an actual emergency. The following are actual passages out of our training handbook. "Practice no more emergency obstetrics than is absolutely necessary." "Don't pull on the emerging baby." "Hold the baby's head downward for a few minutes if you can do so without dropping him." In another section, as a sign of the times, the following quotation is found, "the most important health rule concerning radioactive fallout involves a type of preventative medicine; protect yourself from the radiation."

Thankfully, my partner and I did not need any of this advice. We did find that the villagers treated us a medical professionals which was a feeling that both of us enjoyed. I am sure it is not a coincidence that both of us eventually became physicians.

-Brent Chalmers

WINNING 2003 SUMMER PHOTO:



Photo by: Rose Hungerford

Our volunteers' telling photos

Picture this: Last summer twenty-four capable Portland Chapter volunteers donned classy blue AMIGOS 'flight shirts' and traveled to Latin America where they immersed themselves in the local cultures of eleven different areas within seven different countries. Our 'vols' returned with abundant tales – exciting, humorous, sad...*all* interesting stories – and although debriefing interviews evoked many further details about their incredible experiences, nothing captured the *essence* of their summers like the photos that they took, photos of kids and partners and “moms” and other “family” and friends in the communities where they lived and worked – *played*, too. The albums of photos that the vols each assembled – surely many of you have seen at least one or two of these – are *treasures*. A vol can come home and try to describe to someone a ‘pila’ that they helped build, they can attempt to capture the humorous aspects of a makeshift shower or a somewhat ill-situated latrine, they can try to portray the elemental cuteness of those kids...or their *exuberance*.

They can try. But those photographs – they *show* you the beaming faces, the worn out plastic soccer ball on the dirt field, the pesky chickens in the kitchen (not too hygienic!), the women making piles of hand-made tortillas or tending to fields or livestock. They also show you the vols' influences at work: murals being painted, garbage being picked up, stoves and chicken coops under construction and flourishing community gardens, complete with proud gardeners! They show the satisfaction that comes of good effort; and they neatly capture the look of genuine friendship between the vols and their ‘families’ and neighbors.

The Chapter, wanting to share some of the vols' wonderful photos with as many of our friends as possible, sponsored a modest photo ‘contest.’ We asked the vols to send us their favorites, limiting them to five photos each – and we got *lots* of entries, most of them remarkably good. Kids – from tiny babes to peers – dominated the ‘people shots.’ One such photo, taken by Rose Hungerford and featured here and also on our website, was deemed the winner by our Board member judges, with images taken by other vols in close pursuit of the \$50 prize. The photos that we received from the 2003 vols have been installed in our website gallery (along with some earlier photos), so please go to the site and take a look!
- Dave Pribnow

FOR MORE INFORMATION—

If you are interested in learning more about Amigos de las Américas please contact the chapter president by phone or email.
Portland Chapter President, Brent Chalmers:
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503-636-8810
www.amigoslink.org
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And their words

It's true – photographs usually don't tell the whole story. Every year we are impressed by the heartfelt thank-you letters that many of our volunteers compose and send out to the people who generously supported AMIGOS from our chapter. (Indeed, we have featured such letters in past newsletters.) Wanting to encourage more recording and sharing of our vols' personal experiences and perspectives, we held an "essay" contest in parallel with our photo contest. Several enjoyable entries were submitted, most of them thoughtful thank-you letters describing memorable summer experiences. According to the judges, one piece of writing – not a letter in this case – stood out as the champ: volunteer Jennelle Milam's recounting of the adventures of the enthusiastic young women's soccer team from Geral, the small town where she lived in Brazil last summer. Jenelle's tale is reproduced here for you to enjoy!

- *Dave Pribnow*

WINNING 2003 SUMMER ESSAY Con't (from pg 1):

with them, which was only half the size of the men's better kept field. Despite these conditions, the women loved playing soccer and played it whenever they could. When the ball popped, one of the girls took a plastic bag, filled it with sand, and tied a knot at the top to use as a ball.

Our team had two goalies, and the other positions were pretty much a free for all. Teamwork was an unused word as each person seemed to work for herself without passing or using her other teammates to help score goals. There were three or four really talented young women who managed to hold the team together.

When my partners and I realized that a soccer tournament we had talked about

having with the other communities on our route was actually going to occur, we started to worry. When the date was set and the young women were getting really excited, we worried even more.

We decided our team needed some real practice and needed it quick. Our supervisor brought us our very own real soccer ball to practice with as long as we promised to bring it to use for the tournament. The day before the tournament, I set up a passing drill instead of a scrimmage. There were two lines of girls, and a defender. The girls had to pass the ball to each other and score before the defender got it. After about 10 minutes, the girls were bored and we all got into one line in front of the goal and started practicing penalty kicks.

I remember being slightly frustrated and wondering what use PK's would be if we couldn't even pass the ball, let alone score goals. I didn't say anything and let them do what they wanted since it was, of course, their team and their tournament.

Not only were we worried about the team's lack of any sort of organization, my partners and I had still been unable to find a source of transportation to the town hosting the tournament. We had the smallest town on the route and nobody had cars. We were so desperate we began asking about the possibility of fitting 15 girls on a tractor. Our last hope was renting an entire bus for twice as much as we were supposed to pay. Our project director gave us permission and the bus was going to come around and pick us all up at 6:30AM.

We had a late night meeting to tell everyone to meet out front of my partner's and my house at 6AM. The guys also agreed to let us use their uniforms even though they might be wearing dirty uniforms for their tournament the following day. When the meeting broke up, everyone started running and screaming "VICTORIA." We ran
(Continued on page 5)

WINNING 2003 SUMMER ESSAY

(continued from page 4)

through the streets of my town with our pre-victory celebrations and with each shout I was cringing inside. These girls were so sure they were going to win, and they were going to be so devastated when we went up against the other larger, and more organized towns and lost.

At 6:30 the next morning there were about 5 girls out front, and a couple of little boys who wanted to come see us. My partners and I were again worried, where on earth was our team?

We heard the music before we even saw the bus. It was to be etched in our memories as “the party bus.” Someone was playing the drums, and there were other instruments. The entire bus was chanting, clapping, and singing with amazing rhythm. Not only was I shocked to see this amount of energy and enthusiasm, but I was shocked at the support of the town. The huge bus was full of men, women, boys and girls. People from all different age groups were going to spend their Saturday watching the women’s team play.

When we turned into the town hosting the tournament, the intensity and noise coming from our bus increased dramatically. People were chanting my town’s name “Geral! Geral! Geral!” and everyone in the host town turned curiously to look.

We got to the field and unloaded the team and our whole cheering section. The boys were keeping the music going as we warmed up and took the field. The first thing I noticed was how big the girls on the other team were. Our women were all 15-18 and they were small. The other team had real women who towered over my team in height and were obviously in their early to mid 20’s. I was done worrying and ready to play, and play we did. We won the first game 1-0.

I was so happy for my team and really amazed at how well we had played.

We had a couple of games to rest up and, as we waited, we watched the team we were going to have to face. When my team was ready to take the field again, they had just as much determination and confidence they brought with them from last night. We played hard and scored a goal. Everyone was jumping up and down. Then the other team scored, it was 1-1. The game ended with a tie of 2-2 and we had to do PK’s. The day before the tournament practicing PK’s had seemed so ridiculous and now our first place victory depended on how well our girls could do them.

Our goalie, my host sister, did an amazing job of blocking shots. Our girls also did an awesome job of shooting and scoring. We ended up winning the tournament, but we didn’t win with a lot of skill or organization. We won because the girls wanted to win. They brought confidence, motivation, energy, and a sense of teamwork I hadn’t seem from them before. Most importantly, these girls gained empowerment and respect of the community for our woman’s team. On the party bus home I was filled with so much pride and love for my team and my town. The girls are ready to schedule a new tournament and this time they want to host. Bring it on.

Jennelle Milam- Amigos vet 2003 Brazil, 2002 Paraguay



2004 Amigos

We are excited to have twenty-two Amigos this year. Below are the names of the 2004 summer volunteers, the country they will be going to and the high school they attend.

- Allie Mickiewicz- Costa Rica- Jesuit
- DeeDee Lorentzen- Costa Rica- Jesuit
- Rose Hungerford- DR- Lincoln
- Sarah Fausel- DR- Jesuit
- Sam Willoughby- Honduras- Sunset
- Molly Zeliff- Honduras- Lake Oswego
- Hannah Kamsky- Mex- Grant
- Shauna Doherty- Mex- Jesuit
- Jessica Nguyen- Mex - OES
- Katherine Philipson- Mex- Tigard
- Julie Faulk- Mex - Jesuit
- Phoebe Neidhardt- Nica- Cleveland
- Riley Porter- Nica- Jesuit
- Lee Chapman- Nica- LakeOswego
- Vickie Kutasz- Nica- Grant
- Torrey Crim- Nica- Lake Oswego
- Caitlyn Peake- Panama- Cleveland
- Luke Harris- Panama- Cleveland
- Andrew Foreman- Panama- Cleveland
- Irene Malarkey- Paraguay- Wilson
- Jamie Dulley- Paraguay- St. Mary's
- Brianna Bowman- Paraguay- OES



CONGRATULATIONS- PORTLAND AMIGOS

We are celebrating 20 years as a chapter of Amigos de las Americas this year. Portland Amigos was founded in 1984. Look for upcoming announcements on plans to celebrate!

Pictured bottom left most 2004 vols (not all vols are pictured)

Summer photo 2003



2004 Summer Programs

HEALTHY HOUSEHOLDS/ HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Promoting family and community health through household and community-wide improvement projects. Volunteers will collaborate directly with rural families to implement home improvements that may include the construction of latrines, fuel-efficient stoves, grain storage sheds, and water storage tanks, among other projects that contribute to family well-being. Volunteers working with Healthy Communities projects will collaborate directly with community groups such as civic associations, youth groups, and/or mothers clubs on community-specific improvement projects. Projects may include the construction of libraries, parks, playgrounds, and sports fields to the formation and strengthening of community groups such as youth associations, arts & crafts groups, and sports teams.

(Brazil, Honduras, Nicaragua & Paraguay)

CHILD HEALTH PROMOTION

Promoting child health through education and household improvements. In supporting the Red Cross's efforts with the Integrated Management of Childhood Illness strategy (IMCI), AMIGOS volunteers will carry out school-based health education workshops with children as well as collaborate with families on the construction of technologies that promote the health of the household environment such as safe water basins. In addition to these main program activities, volunteers will have the opportunity to learn about the Honduran health system through weekend visits to local health facilities

(Honduras)

YOUTH-TO-YOUTH COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Building life skills and leadership of young people through educational workshops and group-led community improvement projects. Volunteers will co-facilitate workshops for children and young people that focus on *team-building, creative expression* (arts & crafts, drama, etc.), *environmental health* (environmental awareness, gardens, tree planting) and/or *healthy habits* (physical activity, health education, nutrition). Volunteers will plan and coordinate experiential learning activities with children in a school, community center or other community venue. A key component of the *Liderazgo y Comunidad* program will be the implementation of community improvement projects with youth and adult community members that may range from the construction of parks and sports fields to the formation of service clubs and arts groups. *(Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama & Paraguay)*

COMMUNITY MUSEUM INITIATIVE: WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE TO LEARN ABOUT INDIGENOUS CULTURE IN OAXACA

-PILOT PROGRAM-

Promoting healthy social development and appreciation of culture with young people through community museum-centered workshops and activities. Volunteers will work directly with La Union de Museos Comunitarios de Oaxaca (UMCO)-an indigenous organization that focuses on promoting and preserving Oaxacan culture in indigenous communities--to support local museum efforts as well as carry out educational life skills workshops with children. (Mexico)

Would you like to work with the volunteer Board of the Portland Chapter?

We are always looking for interested and experienced individuals. For more information, contact Portland Chapter President, Brent Chalmers:
503-636-8810
bchalmers@portlandamigos.org
or visit our website:
www.portlandamigos.org.

PDX Board Members

Carol Arland
Max Campos- co-Training Director
Brent Chalmers- President
Mark Cooksey- Treasurer
Sharon Fausel
Ann Griego- co-Training Director
Shawn Miller
Gail Parker
Dave Pribnow- Secretary
Lesly Sanocki

NOTABLE EVENTS

PGE rewards Mark Cooksey's work with Portland AMIGOS

Everyone who has worked with Portland AMIGOS anytime during the last several years knows that Mark Cooksey, currently our Treasurer, is a hard-working, sensible, helpful, generous...just plain *terrific* board member who gives and gives for the benefit of the chapter. And not only does he give his time and effort, but Mark makes personal donations to the chapter every year, and every year his employer, PGE, kindly gives us a 50% matching donation. We are most grateful! But there's *more*. PGE also gives

special recognition to its deserving employees who do volunteer work in the community by awarding grants to support their organizations. In a recent gathering at PGE the Portland chapter was presented with a \$500 award in recognition of Mark's dedicated AMIGOS involvement. Muchas gracias por todo a Mark Cooksey y PGE!

INTERNATIONAL OFFICE CELEBRATES 40 YEARS

Amigos de las Américas turns 40 this year. Celebrations were held at the International Office in Houston in April 2004.

"FRIEND-RAISER"

Friend-raiser is coming soon! It is a community event planned by the Portland chapter to raise awareness of the Amigos program. The event will celebrate the past successes of our veteran volunteers and embark on future challenges facing volunteers to come. It will be a fun event. More information to follow.

THANK YOU:

- To Don Geddes for his help in coordinating board meetings at Walsh Construction
- To our 2004 parents for their support of the vols and our program- without you it would not be possible

**To send articles for the newsletter contact:
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