

PERSPECTIVES

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Financial and Estate Planning

Health for Humanity

By Sylvia Ellis - Senior Estate Planning Advisor

We feel fortunate to have several clients who devote their time and energy – their lives really! – to philanthropic endeavours.

Today I'd like to talk about Health for Humanity, or simply H4H. Long-time clients Dr. Joe Del Vicario and his wife Esther have been driving forces behind this organization for many years, volunteering countless hours. And fellow anaesthesiologist Dr. Fred Clark (yes, Stan's brother) has been a multi-year volunteer, joined this year by his wife Dr. Eleanor Clark volunteering on the ground in Guatemala. H4H is a registered, charitable organization based in BC, supported entirely by volunteers and with minimal administrative overhead.

H4H believes in the basic human right to live in a healthy environment and have access to health care and education. Their vision is to work with communities to provide the best possible health care in places where there is significant need, and also promote better health and prevent disease through education and infrastructure projects.

H4H's focus has been on Guatemala, one of the most impoverished countries in Latin America.

One of H4H's main activities is to provide surgical care to Guatemalans of all ages. Many live in remote regions of the country with very limited or no access to health services. Since its inaugural surgical mission to Guatemala in 2002, H4H has performed over 3,000 surgeries. H4H has also conducted two surgical missions to the Philippines. Further, H4H supports the development of local health infrastructure.

In recent years, H4H has embarked on providing primary health care in rural communities, working in collaboration with local health workers to share knowledge and promote disease prevention. To date, H4H has provided care to over 1,000 patients, while also strengthening the skills of local health workers.

H4H teams are made up of health care professionals who are also supporters, volunteering for health missions on their own time and expense. Donated funds, equipment, supplies, and medications support the local hospitals and communities.

Through H4H social media, you can see the living conditions of people in rural communities where access to clean water, sanitation, safe cooking facilities and education is extremely limited. Simple innovations can make a tremendous difference to ensuring safe drinking water and home environments for vulnerable families, particularly children. Early nutrition and education opportunities for children, especially girls, are two big determinants in the development of healthy populations.

Through partnerships with local NGOs, H4H has also provided financial assistance and expertise to support these innovations, like wood-saving stoves, safe drinking water systems, primary school scholarships, outreach nutrition programs and theatre-based health education for non-literate populations.

Currently, H4H is working with Rotary and Ecofiltre to provide low-cost but effective water filters in school communities across Guatemala. Besides the positive health impacts, these water filters also help reduce the carbon footprint by lessening the burning of trees to boil water – an important issue in areas of significant deforestation.

Through these health initiatives, H4H aims to promote awareness among Canadians to address the significant health inequities, particularly to indigenous people, in the developing world.

For more information on Health for Humanity, please visit their website or Facebook page.



For more information on Health for Humanity, please visit their website or Facebook page. Sylvia Ellis is the Senior Estate Planning Advisor for the Stan Clark Financial Team at CIBC Wood Gundy. Sylvia provides support to the team in projecting and planning client financial affairs.



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