

mercy

Rivera Ministries

Serving God through mercy and evangelism

Spring 2009

www.riveraministries.org



RIVERA
MINISTRIES

High in the Sierra Mountains of interior Mexico, Edwin and Shelley Rivera are bringing hope and life to women and children whose mortality rate is one of the highest in the world.

It is in this lush but unforgiving land that Tarahumara Indian women endure pregnancy without any health care or prenatal education, then give birth alone, and frequently die in the process.

Their children fare just as poorly: 50 percent of all Tarahumara children perish by age 5.

God has called Edwin and Shelley to minister to the people of the beautiful but seemingly prehistoric Copper Canyon. He has made clear their goal: to bring health and hope – both in this life and eternally – to His children, the Tarahumara.



**Thank you for your prayers;
Please keep 'em coming!**



Dear Family and Friends:

As I started preparing this newsletter I realized that we “missed” sending one for Winter/Spring...so this is a late Spring/early Summer newsletter...

We had a reasonably mild winter this year. Everyone around here was warning us of the potential for this winter to be a real cold one...so we prepared with lots of firewood, but the real cold weather stayed way far north of us. Even the El Paso, TX/Juarez, Mexico area got their share of snow, but not us...oh well!

We had a pretty good and quiet Christmas around here. Most of the hospital staff takes time off at this time of the year (in shifts), however, we prefer to stay home and reflect on all that God has done for us and to really be able to focus on and celebrate HIM who has given us so much...He has given us...everything!

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Doug Caudill, Joseph LaFave & Jonathan Mast, stained the birth center siding...thanks for working hard & for a great job!

Visiting friends

Brother Joe LaFave and his wife Patty, along with others from NC, and another group from Houston, came in late January and early February. We thank God for these friends and for their interest in reaching the Tarahumaras for Christ!

We welcome new team members

We are very excited to announce that we have new neighbors - Luke and Deborah Selby, along with their children Abigail, Esther and Asa. They joined us in March. Luke is a "jack-of-all-trades", and has already started a garden, while Deb is a fulltime, homeschool mom; she wants to be trained as a midwife by Shelley.



Luke and Deborah Selby, with Asa on left, Esther in the middle & (another) Abigail on right.

And we go off to Corpus Christi, TX

Every year (since 1997) Edwin has hosted a group of 8th grade students from Fort Myers Christian School for their annual mission trip to Juarez, Mexico. This year, due to all the violence that affects that city, it was decided that we'd go to a predominantly Hispanic area in the US. We joined the work of a pastor we know that ministers in the Corpus Christi, TX area.

We had 31 people this year, and had a great time. Shelley did all the cooking for them and even our girls got to participate during ministry times. This was the first time that we have led a missions project in the US and the entire family really enjoyed it.



JOY! ELIZABETH with baby deer



Our very own clown: ABBY!

Camp Jubilee provided the lodging for the mission trip at their beautiful campground in Corpus Christi. We were able to have our very first camping experience as a family. Our girls had always wanted to camp, but (for reasons that Edwin knows very well—him not being too much of an "outdoor or camping type" of a person!) we had not experienced camping yet.



ABBY by our tent: our housing for a week in Corpus

It was quite an experience sleeping in a tent; we heard the sounds of coyotes, owls, donkeys and other of God's creatures. This camp had all kinds of animals and the deer came right up to us and ate right out of our hands. It was a great experience.

We covet your prayers

As we all can see in the news, Mexico has been and is facing some very difficult times with all the drug-related violence, and now with this swine-flu scare.

We have received some emails from some of you with some concerns for our well-being and safety. We value and thank you for your concern, and ask you to please keep us in your prayers!

Even though we don't believe we would ever be a deliberate target for these drug wars, accidents can happen at any time (anywhere) and we're not exempt from the evil of this world. We can say cliché stuff like "the safest place to be is in the center of God's will" (in which we believe we are), but we truly do need your prayers for our safety and well-being!

Not too long ago, Edwin had a situation in which the result could have been fatal, had it not been for God's protection. In a very short summary: Edwin had gone to pick up some patients down in the canyon at night when twice he was almost run off the road by what he feels were drug people maybe thinking that Edwin was police, military, some drug lord or somebody else. It sure was a pretty scary moment, and we are glad all is well!

Since then, we have taken measures to see that all our hospital vehicles are clearly marked as part of our hospital property, and thus try to minimize the risks. We also are making it a priority not to be on the roads after dark.

Shelley is keeping busy...good!

As we mentioned in our previous newsletter, we were looking to hire Miriam, a Mexican nurse, to work as Shelley's assistant. We decided to take a step of faith and hire her by paying her out



Miriam weighs a newborn as Joy & others watch. Joy watches Miriam's baby & gives a hand at the birth center, when needed.

of our own pocket. She has proven to be, not only a quick learner, but also a major blessing! Right before we left for the mission trip in April, they had 8 births in the previous 8 weeks, so having Miriam is great! In May, Shelley and Miriam will be flying to Boise for a two day midwife conference pertaining to some 3rd world midwifery issues. This is an awesome

opportunity for Miriam.

Also in May we will be receiving a young midwife student from Alabama. Michelle has had some experience and already speaks some Spanish...so we're really looking forward to having her here and helping Shelley with the midwife program.

About our financial situation

We understand how difficult things are not only in the US but all over the world. We have lost some supporters, added Miriam's salary, and had a lot of car repair expenses. We are also enrolling Joy in a distance learning academy, as she starts high school in June. We continue to trust in God and know that He will provide for all our needs.

When someone sends a contribution of any amount, they receive a monthly receipt, with a little update, directly from us. If by any reason you do not get one, within 2 months (we don't always have a way to get our mail to the US), please let us know. Contributions are 100% tax deductible according to I.R.S. rules; they are to be made payable to: Mexico Medical Missions & sent to our home office in Colorado. **Thanks you for your prayers and your support.**



Abby's (belated) birthday celebration with Grandpa, Uncle Bob & "silly" cousins (Parker on left & McCrady on right) from GA.

*Exciting ministry news from
the Riveras in Samachique, Mexico*

A Special Prayer Request

For the last couple of years our girls have been praying on a daily basis for the daughter of some friends of ours. **Kennedy Grace** is the daughter of Kenn & Heather Kington, and was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia on April 27, 2007. Kenn is a pretty popular Christian comedian (www.kennkington.com) and also a great supporter of ours.

While we were in the US, Shelley, Abby & Evelyn (the ones with longer hair that could be donated) decided to get their hair cut to donate it to victims of cancer such as Kennedy; and sent it to Locks of Love. Although Kenny, who is just 5, is recuperating, she is still at a crucial time, as she still has about 2 more months of treatments.

More details on her status by visiting the Caring Bridge website:

<http://www.caringbridge.org/visit/kgk>.

Please join us in praying during these last couple of months for her full recovery!



Abby & Evelyn (both with shorter hair) love to pray for Kenny

Tax deductible donations can be sent to Mexico Medical Missions. Mail to: Mexico Medical Missions, 4001 C.R. 114 Glenwood Springs, CO 81601