

mercy

Rivera Ministries

Serving God through mercy and evangelism

Summer 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.



The Rivera family, June 2009. Abby, front left, Edwin, Joy in middle, Shelley & Evelyn, front right

Dear Family and Friends:

Much has happened since our last newsletter, so we'll try our best to give you a brief summary of all our good news.

We can't believe that we've completed our 3rd year here. So much has taken place, so much has been accomplished, yet there is so much more to do.

We want to thank those of you who with your prayers, emotional and financial support enable us to be here. We also want to thank Chris & Teri Hansen, Phil & Kim Barrera, and all our friends at Priority Marketing (www.prioritymarketing.com) for their friendship, all their support with our website and newsletters, and their prayers! They truly are the best!

Aviation Ministry Additions

As most of you know, Mexico Medical Missions has an aviation ministry to help in reaching and transporting patients from areas and villages far away from us. On April 24th Mark Egolf, our pilot, married our hospital's Dr. Carmen Reyes. They had their religious ceremony in Baja California (where she is from). We wish them God's very best as they are married and

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Mark & Carmen, April 2009. Congratulations!

continue to seek God's direction for their ministry to the Tarahumaras.

In the meantime, David Hardin (our aviation mechanic) and his Tarahumara wife Delia, celebrated their first wedding anniversary on May 3rd, and welcomed their first child (a boy) Salem Esteban, born on June 6th at the birth center.

Please continue to keep these two families and this vital part of our ministry in your prayers, as we all face challenges, look to make changes and improvements to further enhance and advance the work here.

Our water reservoir at the airstrip hangar



Dave, Delia and Esteban. Congratulations as well!

is almost full. It had been cemented in 2007, then painted (sealed) in 2008 by groups from San Jose Baptist in Jacksonville: we missed them this year!

It's now sealed with a "plastic liner" to preserve as much water as possible. Provided by rain, this is the hangar's main source of water for their yearly supply.

More Babies

Shelley and the ladies at the birth center have stayed pretty busy, doing exactly what they are here for: ensuring safe and healthy deliveries. In May, Shelley & Miriam were able to attend a midwife training conference in Boise ID with Mercy In Action. Thank you to those of you that contributed financially to help with conference and traveling costs.

In mid-May, Michelle Hopkins, an advanced midwifery student from Alabama came down to Samachique. She has completed her time here and although she's still a student, is greatly missed. Please keep her in your prayers as she (together with her family) seeks God's direction and next steps for her life.

Please, not only pray for her, but also pray for more helpers for the birthing center. Having Miriam on board has proven to be a major blessing! As Michelle was on her way back to El Paso to return home, we had 2 births...which reminded

us that we need help! Then 1 week later, we had 2 more births within a couple of hours from each other- one of them being a local missionary couple. We congratulate Ruben & Emmy on the birth of their 2nd child, Manuel Jacinto Hiebert.

We have had about 20 births so far this year, as well as quite a few transports to the hospital. The birth center continues to become busier and busier.

Recently MMM had an organizational meeting where we all looked at ways the different ministries within MMM can take a more proactive role in being self sufficient and independent (though still under the MMM umbrella). We're looking at the possibility of getting all three of us (Miriam, Shelley AND Edwin) trained and certified as lay midwives here in Mexico (yes, even Edwin) within the next couple of months. We hope that we can get approved by the Mexican health department to pursue this. Please keep this in prayer.

First Missionary Retreat

During the weekend of July 17th to the 19th, we had a retreat for area missionaries. It was a blessing for all of us to get together, encourage one another and share what we are doing in our respective work among the Tarahumaras. Among were: hospital/ health care, community development, Bible translators, evangelism and church planters,



Hangar pond



Missionaries Ruben & Emmy Hiebert, with baby Manuel (born 8/14/09).

some that train more people for missionary work, etc. We look forward to the next time we can all get together again!

Visiting Teams

Due to the violence that affects Mexico, many teams decided not to come to Mexico this year. These teams have been greatly missed. Among teams that came here were the Cottle families from OK/AR in June to help a missionary Bible translating couple here in Samachique. They also were a big blessing to us here at the hospital and birth center doing all kinds of tedious jobs. Joel, a veterinarian from this group, neutered dogs for several of the missionaries here as well, which is a real big blessing!

While we were returning back home, from taking this team to Chihuahua, a borrowed van that Shelley was driving had a tire blow out. When Edwin backed up in the Suburban to see what happened we saw that there was nothing but rim left and the sidewall of the tire... Out of nowhere a road assistance vehicle arrived within 5 minutes (free service on Mexico toll roads) and helped Edwin with changing the spare tire. We had to purchase a new tire for the van, yet we thank God for His protection!



Michelle and Shelley with Michelle's first delivery here.

We were also presented the opportunity to host a group for just one day from Coronado Baptist Church in El Paso and Cloudcroft, NM. Though mostly youth, they did a great job at sharing the gospel here in Samachique. They also donated 200 lbs of beans for Shelley to give out to patients that come to the birth center, which we are constantly purchasing ourselves.

Great Late Addition

For a while, Edwin had been working pretty hard at trying to mark our vehicles and current ambulance to avoid "problems"



Edwin: assessing the situation and getting ready to change "tire"

especially when driving at night. Just a couple of weeks ago, MMM received a 1995 Ford ambulance through some old friends of ours, Timothy and Susie Alm. Although it has about 235,000 miles and some minor issues, it is a clearly marked ambulance, with all bells, whistles, sirens and lights. This really puts Edwin and our other ambulance drivers a bit more at ease and feeling less at risk when driving, especially late at night. It had already been in Mexico, so there weren't any long processes to import it, as there usually is. Thank you for all your efforts and help, Timothy!



Our new 1995 ambulance...thank you Timothy!

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

Keeping in Touch with the Riveras

We're constantly getting requests to join in social networks. Quite honestly, Edwin tried once, but we just do not have the time that is required to be involved in that. Not that we don't want to, we just do not have the time to do it. So please do not be offended if we don't answer your requests. We just keep to ol' traditional email.

Speaking of emails: some of you are receiving some emails from Mexico Medical that Vicky (our MMM ministry coordinator) sends on a regular basis. If you would like to be added to the MMM email list, or regular snail mailing list or if you would like to be removed from them, would you please be so kind at let us know?

Now that we've reached our 3rd year here, please let us know if you NO LONGER are interested in receiving either the mailed or email version of our newsletters. We know that interests change from time to time so just send

us a quick note or email letting us know if you would like to be removed from our mailing list.

In closing:

We can not believe that we've reached our original goal of a minimal 3 year commitment to Mexico Medical Missions. It still feels like we're just getting started. There is so much work to be done. Thank you for your love, and faithful prayers and financial support. We truly couldn't be here without you! Together and with Mexico Medical, we're reaching and caring for the people of the Sierra Madres for Christ!

All our love and appreciation,

Edwin & Shelley Rivera
Joy Elizabeth, Abby & Evelyn
www.riveraministries.org
www.mexicomedical.org

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