

Brief History of the Amerindian Population of Guyana

Guyana Mission 2007 Meeting the Healthcare needs of the Amerindian People of Guyana



Emily, Michelle, The Captain, Leona, Mary, Pat, Dr. Dey, Dr. Liverpool, & Deslyn

Some members of Mission 2007 at St. Cuthbert's Mission

Amerindians are considered the third largest group in Guyana. They also represent the fastest growing group in the country, accounting for 55, 000 of the Guyana's population. Amerindian in Guyana belongs to nine different tribes: Arawaks, Caribs, Warraus, Macusis, Wapisianas, Akawaios, Patamonas, Arecunas and Wai Wais. Their languages and culture distinguish these tribes. There are currently more than 120 Amerindian communities in Guyana with individual populations ranging from 120 to more than 6,000. The other sobering effect is the fact that we are here with the original inhabitants of this land. It is also a cultural shock to see them all intermingled in marriage. Since this is a small community, the unity pervades even for the dead. They lie in the cool shade of the trees, while we as humans must endure the heat and scorching sun. How do we explain this event? And by the way, the lake (Lake Mainstay, one of Guyana's finest Resorts) is just down the path and across the way through the trees.

Mission is accomplished. We serve 138 residents at St. Cuthbert's Mission. They are in such a grateful mood that they sing praises and thanks to us for being there. Of note, it is the first time a Medical Team of this size has visited their location. Another 54 residents are served in Craig Village, E.B.D, where the Pastor Andy has promised to host another session next year (2008). At the Amerindian Hostel's in Princess Street, we administer care to another 87 residents.

They do not fail to thanks us in the only manner they know – with sincerity.

During this session we are able to show a video on the effects of cervical and prostate cancer in all its forms. The adults, while they wait engage themselves with this lesson and are very pleased to be able to learn of this dreaded disease. Needless to say, this is a welcome change. They do not mind waiting, even though the process seems to be slow. The care is thorough, not fleeting. And at no cost, this is a special treat, as we served another 90 residents in the Buxton Village Community.



Report from the Field

While we conduct the visits though, we encounter requests for other specialists, such as: eye doctors, podiatrists, ear, nose and throat specialists, a dentist, and general practitioners. The need is great and we hope that our next Missions will include at least one or two of these specialists.

It's Wednesday, August 1, 2007, and Emancipation Day. There are celebrations at the Queenstown community Centre, with the children and their parents prepared to give the villagers a treat. There is poetry, dance, drama and side-splitting jokes. One of the highlights of the evening was the rendition of a prose poem by a rather pretty resident that sends the audience wild with laughter. I cannot tell the story as she tells it, but the gist of her message is that while she's as attractive, she of course elicits much attention. In that same vein, she commands that it's not about falling in love, having a relationship and all is well. With the ills that pervade the community, it is not all fun and games. She prefaces her piece with the lines, "you2watchin' me, yuh tink ah laughin?"

as much as to say, you may want to take me to dinner, treat me nice, and all the rest, then go to bed with me. This is not a laughing matter; “yuh watchin’ me, yuh tink a laughin?” her message touched all aspects of the society.

Riske’ behavior to the proverbial “no” to advances from numerous offers cascaded from her lips. Everyone’s laughing, but she was serious. Such is the case in Queenstown, Essequibo. The mini-skits were also entertaining, one in particular which Fr. Harold Lockett, played the counselor for a displaced resident who actually left her baby at home to follow friends to a Saturday night party. Needless to say, there was a fire at her house, but vigilant neighbors saved her baby. The message was clear. With food, fun and gifts, there was much to be thankful for.



Lake Mainstay Amerindian Mission

It’s day three of our mission and we’re headed for the **Lake Mainstay Amerindian Mission** to conduct a health clinic. The road to the Mission is rough. We go through bumps, pot holes, rickety bridges and expansive savannahs, just to serve the people. It is a single lane, with just about enough space for a motor cycle or bicycle to pass. Cows graze, sheep and goats frolic in the green grass of the rice fields as they feast on for hours. There is no other sound but the hum of the engine from our 14 passenger bus, now laden with 16 members. We talk incessantly to dispel any fears of a distant journey, since no one will explain how long it takes to get to the Reservation. As we cross the bridges, over the black water canal onto the reservation, we are much relieved to find our guide; a young woman in her mid-twenty’s awaiting our arrival. With much relief, the 2-hour ride is just about over, but no such luck. The men on the other side of the creek wave in anticipation at our presence. This 30 minute trip brings us to the Village Community Center where we were met by the Captain, Elders of the Village, Families of the village such as The Pearsons, The Williams, The₃ Smiths and The Fredricks families.

They were so thankful and humble, that we visit them.

This is a lesson in history; a lesson in culture and a lesson in redemption. We must take care of our indigenous peoples. Let the residents of Lake Mainstay live a long and happy life. We will do our best to provide for their needs to every extent possible.

We depart with our hearts filled with joy, but with much hope for the people of this gracious community. As we are escorted out of the island reservation, our guide reminds us not to forget them. She asks that we keep in touch and for us to have a safe trip back to the USA. This is good food for thought. We bid farewell and lumber on our way back to Anna Regina and on to Queenstown. Charles E .Liverpool, 2007.

Why a medical mission trip was needed:

Deskan was invited to a meeting, August of 2006. Discussions were held with two (2) Captains of Amerindian Reservations namely Kwabana and Wyaka which are located in Regions #7 and #2 respectively. From discussions with the two (2) leaders it was highlighted that there has been a general increase in illnesses plaguing their community members and in many cases little expertise was available in the particular areas to address the issues. For e.g, the increase in cases of tuberculosis, cervix cancer and hemorrhaging among women are all conditions that have raised concerns, while malaria and hypertension continues to be a major contributing factor to the demise of many. Most important to note however, is the fact that the absence of education, awareness and sensitization to the issue of HIV/AIDS in those outlying communities continues to cause great concern for its leaders, since the high incidence of promiscuity among young people and incestuous relationships among families are still being flagrantly practiced without penalty.



It is Pharmacy Time with Dyslyn Briggs and Mitchell Butler

Moreover, coming out of discussions with the Hostel's Administrator, it was noted that while the basic services were being offered freely to the dwellers at the Hostel, there still are evident gaps thereby creating the scope for interventions especially in the areas of education and sensitization on medical issues and possible counseling and testing for HIV/AIDS.



“I am no longer the same person that left Atlanta Georgia, this experience has changed my life” Ft Harold Lockett, St Timothy’s Episcopal Church. Lithonia GA. St Cuthberth’s Mission. August 2007. Mother of Baby “Boy” born during our visit

Many of the Amerindian Communities do not have resident medical personnel and so persons have to wait for extended periods until a rotating medical personnel gets to their location. In addition, many of the medical personnel plying these regions are not specialized to deal with some of the medical complaints that are surfacing. The Amerindian communities continue to be largely neglected for many reasons, the main one being inaccessibility to its inhabitants largely due to infrastructural challenges. It is extremely expensive to get to any of the regions where they reside, in an effort to be of some assistance to that target group directly. (Planning meeting Notes August 2006)

DESKAN INSTITUTE has continued to assist organizations to strengthen their capacity to provide quality and effective preventive services and, to provide clinical assessments and investigatory findings with recommendations for implementation and monitoring.

We aim to enhance the work environment with the objective of expanding the delivery of health education, health promotion and harm reduction to at-risk groups. Preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS/STDs/TB and new infections was one of the most important objectives for this fifth mission. This remains our main focus.

Wellness Day at St.Cuthbert's Mission



Deskan's mission 2007 addressed the following and provided prevention educational and wellness clinic for 10days in many of these communities so as to increase awareness and impart knowledge in the area of hypertension, cholesterol, cervix cancer, tuberculosis and diabetes to the residency of the Hostel at its Princess Street Location and two other Amerindian Reservation Communities – those being the Wyaka Reservation located at Mainstay on the Essequibo Coast in Region #2 and the St Cuthbert's Mission approximately 20 miles off of the Linden Soesdyke Highway in Region #4.

The only road to St. Cuthbert's Mission... Off Linden-Soesdyke Highway.!



21 Miles of the Highway to St.Cuthberth's Mission (yes, 14 inches of water awaits us!)



I have thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to serve on these Missions. It is surely a blessing to be able to give something back to our human kind, no matter in what part of this wonderful world. Thanks for the opportunity. **Above** "The River of the Unknown "
Charles E. Liverpool

OUR JOURNEY

So on July 30th, 2007 the Deskan Institute group of various professionals, including doctors, nurses, teachers, and healthcare professionals, arrived in Guyana, South America to give support and provide medical services. While in Guyana, we recruited a few more volunteers to help support our mission's efforts. In an effort to carry out our mission's activities and purpose, we traveled extensively by all means of transportation to both desolate and revolutionized communities; as well as poverty stricken and well-to-do ones. Prior to starting our mission day, all in attendance was greeted with heartfelt melody, praise, worship, hospitality and support from the various youth groups, missionaries, and pastors of respective churches in Guyana. They all came together as one to provide a union of fellowship, and friendship between the mission volunteers and those in attendance.

Overall, the trip was a very rewarding one despite a few challenges that we encounter during the first few days of our stay. However, once that was under control we slept well, ate well, and went on to enjoy the trip wherever there was music, food, and song. Guyana is truly a beautiful and blessed country that is filled with many riches under its soil; but their true riches lie within their hearts and minds. They were times when we were late to our destination, but instead of the clients complaining about the heat and our lateness, they remained seated quietly and peacefully even though, the temperature was causing them to sweat and feel uncomfortable. Among the villagers/clients, various personalities were displayed; some were shy, cool and calm; while others were just in too much amazement at our profiles that they gave us their undivided attention and cooperation whenever we were directing a conversation towards them.



Prevention Education time with Nurse Nelson!

Looking back over the last four years of mission work with Deskan, said nurse Mary Nelson, I have seen great improvement on the overall health status of adults and children in some of communities in Berbice and East Coast, Guyana. But working with the Amerindian people this year has shown me how divided we are and how much more work we have to do.

There is a great need to teaching them: How to monitor their blood sugar.
How to take their Blood Pressure: How to Do Breast Self Exam and yes learning how to
live with their stress. This is the least I could do to help our first people of Guyana.



Prevention Seminar: Volunteer Youth Corps Educators.-Joan, Anita and Quincy

Dr. Quaison Dey (Bermuda)



Notes From the field

Emily Marks, a native Amerindian and a second year volunteer of Deskan Institute and a resident of Kuru Kururu shares her report for all of us to read and understand some of the health concerns of her people. Guyana Medical Mission, August 2007



Tuesday July 31st 2007: Travel to Essequibo Coast, arrived at about 8:45 p.m. We were greeted by our Queenstown contact and transferred to hotel. The medical team was also taken to the Anna Regina Community Center ground to witness the opening of the week long Emancipation celebration and other Cultural presentation on Emancipation.

On Wednesday August 1st, 2007, a day of leisure and preparation for some members of the team. Since most of the medical team had to travel from Georgetown to Queenstown Essequibo on that day. During the evening, some members of the team were invited to the concert depicting sketches to celebrate with the residents of Queenstown an Emancipation Day. (Celebrate Freedom of slaves, by the British.) By that time the other set of the Team arrived in Essequibo. It was a time of celebration and a time to remember, the people of Queenstown.

On Thursday August 2nd 2007. Work day. We were transferred to the Queenstown Health Centre. People were already there waiting the arrival of Medical Team. Sad to say young people were not there and most of the elderly folks who attended were all satisfied. Since the purpose of their visit was to receive free healthcare services, many grasped at the opportunity to come out to meet healthcare demands. About sixty persons came out to see the medical team. Perhaps it may have been because of the Emancipation Day celebrations that the attendance was low, or maybe the word of free healthcare services may not have been circulated in time. Nevertheless Doctor and Team prepared to work the next day, **Friday August 3rd 2007.** Again, it was poorly attended. We registered about 5 people to see the team while some claimed that they came to see what was going on at the Health centre. **So far, so good!**

On Saturday, August 4th, 2007

The team traveled to Mainstay, Whyaka Mission we arrived at about 9:30 a.m. where we were greeted by the Amerindian Captain and other villagers of the Community. About one hundred and seventy six persons both adults and children attended clinic also young people. They were all educated and counseled by the Doctors, nurses and volunteer workers on the prevention of HIV/AIDS, Cancer, Domestic Violence and other ailments which they may have encountered.

The visiting Priest, Fr. Harold Lockett, from St' Timothy's Episcopal Church, Atlanta Georgia, also played his role by teaching on the Lord's Prayer and how important praying is. He also shared some information on moral living. Many of the attendees if not all, did receive some kind of counseling. It was well attended, and persons willingly opened up themselves to the health workers, and clinic went on very smoothly. All who attended were treated and sent home. Many welcomed the opportunity knowing that the medical care, educational information, booklets, materials and talks were free of charge and they were all happy about it.

On Sunday August 5th, 2007, all volunteers and health workers and the priest attended church services in Queenstown's Anglican Church. The rest of the evening was spent visiting various villages on the Essequibo Coast, such as Supenaam and Riverstown.

On Monday August 6th 2007, the team left Essequibo, early that morning 4am by a ferry for Georgetown via Parika route. It took us five and a half hours to cross the Essequibo River. The journey was strenuous. We arrived in Georgetown at about ten thirty in the morning. We were transferred to our hotels, and then had to leave immediately for our next mission stop "the Princess Street Hostel". It was well attended by the Amerindians. Many of whom worked cooperatively with Doctors and all healthcare workers. Everything went well. We also learnt about the hardships most of them faced, during their illnesses they have to travel by domestic aircraft, small boat, bus, and yes sometimes on foot to get to a point where they can be picked up. This journey is very costly for them. Life, some of them say, is very hard. Snacks were served.

On Tuesday August 7th 2007, the team once again traveled to St. Cuthberth's Mission. On our arrival we were greeted by the Captain and other villagers. The Press and the Media also traveled together with us on that visit. By the time we arrived the residents were already lined up. We arrived at about ten thirty and had to start right away to work. During the process they were also educated on HIV/AIDS, How to monitor Blood Sugar, Blood Pressure, How to do Breast Self Exam, Learn how to live with Aids, and Learn how to cope with stress, etc. etc. A Medex who is stationed there also attended, we learnt that there were no such drugs within her hand reach whereby she can handle cases such as High Blood Pressure and Blood Sugar. Nevertheless, the residents welcomed the opportunity afforded to them. Over one hundred and thirty persons attended the clinic. Food was served.

On Wednesday August 8th, 2007, the team's next stop was Craig Church of God. There we also provided Education and Wellness Clinic at Craig Village on the East Bank Demerara. It was well attended about fifty four persons were treated. Like other residents they too welcomed the opportunity. Snacks were served.

Next it was **Thursday August 9th, 2007** and the Team was ready for Buxton. Once there the team also conducted Educational Seminar and provided Prevention Education in a small group setting and Wellness Clinic for the residents at Buxton on the East Coast of Demerara. Over eighty eight people showed up. Some came because they wanted to be tested.

Last stop. **Friday August 10th, 2007**. It was about ten thirty hours when the team arrived at Kuru Kururu. Patients were already there awaiting the arrival of the Team. Some of them came as early as 0600 hours to see the Doctor. Some indicated that it was wise to come out and have a check up because it was free. People came as far as Soesdyke and Timheri neighboring villages.

As usual, every worker was busy conducting seminars at the clinic. It was well attended. About seventy five plus persons were treated for various ailments. There were some people who came very late and requested that they see Doctor, and were determined to wait despite the late hours. Others complained they know nothing about the Doctor visit. Lunch and snacks were prepared for the visiting team. We departed Kuru Kururu at about seventeen hours Friday. We were all very tired, but happy that it was over and sad at the same time. I can not wait until next year. So far, so good!



I am happy that my people were not forgotten this time. Ms Emily Marks



Mission Essequibo Health Centre



Mission Essequibo: Nurse Dillion at work

DESKAN COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROJECT 2007

Ms. Leona Kyte. An employee of Volunteer Youth Corps.

DAY 1

On August 1, 2007, I boarded a car with Mr. and Dr. Liverpool and other volunteers for the island of Essequibo. After many hours on the boat from Parika, we arrived at the Adventure Stelling early evening. I attended an emancipation concert, which the Queenstown community hosted at the community centre.



Nurse Briggs and Educator Kyte

DAY 2

August 2, 2007, our first official workday dawned bright and clear with a meeting being held with the volunteers present as to our duty and responsibilities for the health clinic which was held at the Health Centre. Many of the persons that were waiting for medical attention were senior citizens of that and surrounding communities. I was tasked with the responsibility of education and counseling. One of the most startling facts that I noticed was many of those that were present especially the elderly suffers from high blood pressure and sugar, even though they were members of the local clinic. Many complained that the clinic is never open or have medicine.

DAY 3

Another clinic was held on Friday 3 August 2007 at the same venue with some persons returning for follow up with the doctor from the previous day. This day many persons didn't access the clinic. I recognized that many of the senior persons that came to the clinic came for medication for the heart, high blood pressure and High blood sugar. When told that they will not be receiving medications for these conditions and that we were treating first aid situations many of them were angry and disappointed. However after explaining the reason- our role was to provide mainly health education and for them to become a member of the local clinic. If we give them the medications that we have, when they are finished and we are gone they will not want to use the medication that their health care provider will give them. So, many were encouraged to join the clinic for their regular monitoring of their blood pressure and blood sugar.

Lake Capoey

After the clinic the group was invited to another community (Capoey below) that hosted a fun day. I was amazed of the way those in that community lived and the beauty of the community. **Come sit with us Come taste our local drink!! Our People!**



DAY 4

I did not participate in this day visit to the Amerindian community (Lake Mainstay) as I had an examination.

DAY 6

I participated in the outreach to the Amerindian Hostel in Princess Street where I was able to meet new persons from different regions in Guyana. This clinic was a good one as we were able to help many of the persons there. Some of those present mentioned that may not have gotten all the medications that they wanted but were happy at the fact that they were able to talk with someone about their medical condition and was educated on same. The most touching was I was able along with Father Lockett to help (counsel) a staff who was having difficulties and wanted to talk- she was thinking of killing herself.

DAY 7

On this day we were scheduled to be in another Amerindian village of St. Cuthbert's Mission. This was the best day of the mission for me as I was able to help the residents of the community and educate them about their illness. Even though the journey to get there was long it was worth it.

Day 8

This August day found us in the village of Craig on the East Bank Demerara. They were not many patients at first but then it got very busy with persons visiting.

I met one woman who is my pastor's grandmother-in-law as a result of our education session.

Day 9

The team visited the village of Kuru Kururu off the Linden Soesdyke High way. Words can not express what I witness and learn on this day. **VYC was in the house.**

DAY 10

Our last visit was to the village of Buxton, on the East Coast Demerara of Buxton. As with our visit to Essequibo, many of the senior persons suffered from the heart, high blood pressure and High blood sugar. In the afternoon, they were many young persons who came to be tested for HIV. There were no testing kits in the country and very little condoms to share!!!.

In the evening, a meeting was again held for us to reflect on the day and feedback was given by everyone. I would like to thank Dr. Joan Liverpool and her team for inviting me to be a part of their missions and for the experience that I was able to gain from this.

Dr. Liverpool I am very grateful for the experience that I gained and for your confidence in allowing me to talk to those that visited the clinics and for allowing me the opportunity to share with others and for allowing me to realize my potential.

I now have an extended family as a result of this mission. I know now that I have work to do, as we plan for next year, 2008. Safe travels. Leona Kyte.



Let me see! Which arm is it? (Children at Hostel, Princess St.)



Dr. Q. Dey



FT Harold Lockett, Teaching the Lord Prayer, St. Cuthberth's Mission 2007

NOTES FROM THE FIELD: MEDICAL MISSION TO GUYANA JULY 30TH –
AUGUST 9TH 2007: NURSE MARY NELSON: ST. Timothy's Church

The Medical Mission to Guyana started out by traveling on Caribbean Airlines Flight 483 from Miami, USA via Port-of-Spain to Guyana. The flight left Miami International Airport at 17:00 hrs. It was a comfortable flight except for a few bumpy patches on and off. We arrived in Port-of-Spain at 20:35 hrs and after the usual departure and arrival of passengers and change of crew, the flight departed again at 21:45 hrs for Temihri, Guyana. We arrived at the Cheddi Jagan International Airport 55 mins later, to beautiful weather with a light breeze, the temperature comfortable which added to my welcome home. Immigration and Customs was uneventful. As soon as we exited the Airport, we were met and warmly welcomed by one of Deskan Institute & Training, local volunteers Ms Michelle Butler.

We traveled for another 50 mins by road to Georgetown. Our temporary home in Georgetown was the TP Hotel in Pike Street Kitty. We were greeted by another local volunteer Ms. Arlene Dinally at the hotel and after safely putting away our baggages and a quick wash, she invited us out for a midnight snack. It was really a beautiful night in the city – it was quiet, less traffic, the moon and the stars were out and we were easily encouraged to fall asleep on the benches outdoors. Anyway, we had a tight schedule and could not deviate even though we were two days ahead of the rest of the team, who were delayed in Miami due to Airline problems. 18

The first night in Georgetown was pleasant, the hotel accommodation was comfortable and BUG free, but if you felt like sleeping late the next morning the sounds outdoors did not allow it. It was amazing, the cock was crowing, the birds were chirping, the dogs were barking, voices were heard amidst the horns of cars and other noises. So it was time to get up, shower, and prepare to leave for Queenstown, Essequibo.

The trip to Essequibo started at 15:30 hrs traveling by car to Parika, which took about 1 ½ hrs. The M.V.Malali was docked next to the stelling and as soon as we crossed into the boat the planks were removed. The scheduled departure was 17:00 hrs. This was a smooth and uneventful sailing on the Essequibo river. The first stop was Wakenaam, the boat arrived at 18:30 hrs, some passengers disembarked, while others joined for the final destination at Adventure. We arrived in Adventure at 20:30 hrs. We were greeted by another volunteer, Ms Sharon Jones. We traveled by car for about 20 mins, to Ms Sharon home in Queenstown. After eating a sumptuous meal prepared by Sharon's Mom, and freshening up, we left again by car for Anna Regina for the commencement of the Emancipation Day celebrations. It was a Cultural extravaganza sponsored by the Queenstown Community, local and overseas. It was spectacular programme, consisting of singers, dancers and drummers of all ages. The guest speaker was a law student who took us on a journey in slavery from Africa to the present day. It was a fulfilling evening. The next day was also more relaxing and by evening the rest of the team arrived. That evening the Emancipation programme continued and was enjoyed by everyone.

Thursday August 2nd was the 1st day of the Mission, when the real work started. Everyone was up early and ready to go. We ate breakfast and took a short walk to the local Health Center, the Mission site for the next two days. Because of the cultural activities in the village the attendance at the clinic was not overwhelming. Residents of all ages and race, male and female attended clinic. They were all treated, some were given referrals, over-the-counter meds, educational materials, while others were seeking spiritual upliftment. Our daily clinics began with a pre and post conference, which really helped with the success of the mission.

Friday August 3rd should have been another clinic day, but the attendance was low, because a picnic was planned for the residents by the Emancipation organizers. The picnic was held at the Capoey Amerindian Reservation, about 40 minutes by car from the main road, then by speedboat for about 10 minutes over to the embankment of the Capoey Lake. We were greeted by the Captain of the community, and then given a tour of the reservation. Everyone was friendly and eager to meet us. Gifts of fruits, vegetables and homemade beverages were presented to us. We were introduced to a Health worker who traveled to remote places of the Reservation to assist and help the sick and needy. The only mode of transportation in this community is by foot or boat. We shared health information, prayers and a monetary donation to assist the community with urgent needs.

The next day **Saturday August 4th** everyone was up early. After breakfast at Sharon's home, we regrouped for our morning conference; three more volunteers joined the team, including Ms Arlene Dinally, the Co-coordinator for the Amerindian Community for this mission. We all traveled in the same Minibus, about 12 of us, by road to the Whyaka Settlement in Mainstay. Mainstay is an Amerindian Reservation occupied by several tribes of the Amerindian Race.



It is Introduction time for all team members of the mission: Arlene, Joan, Mary, Pat, Ft. Lockett, Dyslyn. Sharon, Eze, Mitchell, Emily, and Dillion,

It was the first time an overseas Medical Mission was given permission by the Minister of Health and the Amerindian Captain to visit with and serve this community. We were greeted at the entrance of the Reservation and then traveled to a school building where the chief of the Reservation and a school full of residents, old and young, male and female, awaited our arrival. After the official welcome and introductions, Rev. Harold Lockett held a prayer service and blessed everyone including the Medical team.

After the team received its assignments, clinic started. High blood pressure and Diabetic testing were done, Educational Seminar was done and literature on different diseases were shared and over-the-counter medicines were dispensed, as well as referrals to the local hospital recommended.



Prevention Seminar Time: Eze (Sitting) and Arlene in Action: What is Cancer?

Lunch was provided by the Captain and residents, it was a sumptuous meal of chicken curry and rice served with coconut water and fruit punch. Fresh fruits were also served. After clinic ended, we walked to the lake which was a short distance from the school.



The ground is covered with white sand and after walking through it, you were tempted to remove your shoes and dip your feet into the cool dark brown water of this beautiful lake.

One also automatically received a foot massage in the sandy water as it felt good and relaxing. While we soothed our aching feet in the water, the local children were swimming in the lake. It was very difficult to get out of that water, but time was limited and we had other plans later that day. We bid farewell to the captain and residents of Mainstay and promised to return. On our return to Queenstown, a Fun Day was in progress for the children of the community, as part of the week's Emancipation Celebrations.

We therefore took the opportunity as our continuing support for the orphaned and needy children we embraced on our first visit to Queenstown; Deskan Institute Inc., Gladdor Inc, a sister organization of which I am a co-founder and St Timothy's Episcopal Church represented by Rev. Harold Lockett, provided and treated these children to ice-cream and gift bags filled with treats. The girls were garlanded by Joan Liverpool and the boys by Rev. Lockett. I served the ice-cream and the rest of the team assisted in handing out the gift bags. There were a total of 125 children of which 72 of them ranging from 5 years–7 years old (the orphaned and needy group) were served first, then the rest after. The Essequibo Organizer of this group, Ms Sharon Jones was presented with an award (plaque) for her dedicated service to these children and Deskan Institute Inc. After freshening up and dinner, we spend a quiet evening on the roof garden of Queenstown's most modern hotel, the (OASIS) listening to some Oldies and sampling some local beverages. Very soon tiredness crept in and everyone decided to call it a night.

We were up bright and early **Sunday morning August 5th** to attend service at the St Bartholomew's Anglican Church. Service was conducted by a female pastor, then, we were briefly introduced to the church members. The rest of the day was spent sightseeing and touring some of the other villages on the Coast.

The return trip to Georgetown began early **Monday morning**, when we boarded the pontoon driven ferry at 04:00 hrs from Adventure. It was a long and tiring journey, we tried to sleep on the wooden benches, but they were uncomfortable. As the morning got clearer, the sunrise was breathtaking. The boat sailed along gingerly at times it appeared as if the boat had stopped, but the tide was low, therefore the pontoon was pulling it through the river. The only thing to do was enjoy the scenery, the tranquility of the moment and relax. Ms. Sharon packed us some chicken curry and roti neatly wrapped in aluminum foil and there was soda and water to wash it down, so that was breakfast. We eventually arrived at Parika at 09:30 hrs, 5 ½ hrs on the river, we were already going to be late for our next mission stop. We quickly collected our bags, hustled into an already crowded mini bus and off we went to Georgetown. The minibus trip to Georgetown was an adventure, to say the least your attention is taken up concentrating on the traffic around you, but with constantly praying to God we arrived in Georgetown in one piece.

We arrived safely at the hotel and after a quick shower and change of clothes we were rushed to the Amerindian Hostel in Princes Street, Georgetown to conduct another clinic.

There was a full room of people waiting again, adults and children of all ages. Another volunteer arrived that day, Dr Dey a Pediatrician, also Guyanese but presently working in Bermuda. After introductions and a quick conference, prayers and bible study were conducted by Rev Lockett, and then clinic began. We were all exhausted and tired, and the heat and humidity was overwhelming. This was a day we wished was a slow one, but the reception area was filling up faster and faster. As the word was spread that Doctors and Nurses from the USA were there, people were coming from everywhere. We had to plead for some time off to eat a snack. The complaints from these people were so pitiful and heartbreaking, that the tiredness and hunger disappeared from you. At times the comforts of home flashed across your memory. You realize how blessed you are and thankful to God that the few discomforts you encounter once in a while are pale in comparison to those experienced by this Amerindian population. The day ended quietly, and the only welcomed guests that evening were a warm shower and a comfortable bed.

On Tuesday morning August 7th, we were up early, refreshed and ready to go again. After, the post conference of the previous day's activities we were prepared for this next clinic. The team was much larger now, the local media was included on this trip and everyone was looking forward to the new challenge.

The trip to St Cuthbert's Mission was lengthy and rugged. We were again welcomed by the Captain of this Amerindian Reservation. After introductions, prayers and bible study, assignments were issued and clinic started. This community was even larger than the previous ones. We met at the Health Center with a Resident Medex on duty. The rooms were clean and comfortable which helped with the easy flow of residents. Refreshments were served throughout the day and there was even a break for lunch. Our day was going too good to be true and by the close of clinic we had our biggest challenge. A pregnant resident came to the clinic for care. Her condition was serious; she seemed very anxious, nervous and scared. Her, B/P 160/110; BS over 300, with edematous feet, her due date for delivery was any day now, we referred her to the Medex on duty who took one look at her and started writing up a referral report. A meeting was immediately called with the Captain of the Reservation in order to seek help and arrangements for her to be transported to the Georgetown Hospital.

Traveling by road was the only mode of transport and at that time of day after 6: 00 pm and darkness setting in we were her only hope of getting her out of the Reservation. The rain started to fall heavily which delayed our departure. The evening light disappeared quickly as we started our return journey. Because of the rain, the driving conditions on the sandy trail was worse, fortunately the drivers were experienced and knew several short cuts. We tried to boost each other's spirits by singing folk songs and joking. The patient was in the front seat of our vehicle, so every time the vehicle came out of a deep hole (Pothole-water filled), we checked on her. Because the surroundings were dark, it was difficult to judge where we were and the trip seemed unending. The patient's 8 year old daughter traveled in the back of the truck with us and in a soft voice exclaimed, **"we're almost there."** What a relief that was to everyone.

Because of the size of the team, we traveled in two open backed pickup trucks. Our truck was ahead because our driver knew more short cuts than the other, so we had to wait a little longer when we arrived at the main road. After about 15 mins the 2nd truck arrived, we switched vehicles and the patient was sent off to the hospital. Of course God and the presence of Rev. Lockett were with us throughout this mission. The patient arrived safely at the Georgetown Hospital and delivered a healthy baby boy without further complications. Our evening post conference was very fulfilling and the last one for me on this mission.

I took the day off on **Wednesday August 8th** to visit a few friends and purchase souvenirs for my return trip early Thursday a.m. The team met for dinner later that evening at the Pegasus Hotel and to say farewell to me and Rev. Lockett. We hardly slept that night because we were busy packing and readjusting our minds to return home, and reminding ourselves that the mission was not finished but had only just begun, because of the commitments and promises made.

The return trip was just as pleasant and uneventful for me. Thank God and the organizers of Deskan Institute Inc. the volunteers and Rev. Harold Lockett for making this 5th Medical Mission to Guyana such a success.



Mary C. Nelson: 3617 Cherry Ridge Blvd, Decatur, Georgia, 30034. U.S.A



Kuru-Kururu: One Nation: One Love !!! See You Soon! Sister Gloria

“Many of the Amerindian Communities do not have resident medical personnel and so persons have to wait for extended periods until a rotating medical personnel gets to their location. In addition, many of the medical personnel plying these regions are not specialized to deal with some of the medical complaints that are surfacing”. Words from the Captains of the Amerindian Reservations of Kwabana and Wyaka. August 2006.



Ice Cream break: Rohan, Vol. Coord., The Medex, The Captain & Peace Corp. Vol., Brian at St. Cuthberth's Mission, August 25 2007.

Thanks so.....much. It would be better next Year!

Deskan Institute & Training, Inc recently concluded its Fifth Medical Mission in Guyana, July 30 to August 17.



Medex of St. Cuthbert's Mission.

Many Thanks to all of whom that made this years mission a success!!!

Thanks to our sponsorship and shared collaboration of members in partnerships with Guyana Medical Relief, Inc, Los Angeles, CA; St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, Global Christian Network Ministries, NY, Essequibo/Queenstown Association of NY, Guyanese American Cultural Association of Central Florida and supporters from Atlanta, New York, New Jersey, Washington, and Guyana, 2007. Special Thanks to Volunteer Youth Corps for it collaborative efforts in this mission. With out the many volunteers, such as Arlene, Leona, Rohan, Patricia, Quincy, St Cuthbert's Mission Captain, Drivers, Sister Gloria of Kuru Kururu Community Centre, Pastor Andy of Craig Village, Dr. Cort, Dr Sam and nurses that did follow-up clinic in Berbice and all others, this Mission would not have been accomplished with out your hard work and commitment to serve others. Much Thanks You to Deskan's Guyana volunteers: Michelle, Dyslyn, Emily, Dillion, Sharon (Queens Heath Centre Clinic) and Sharon (Teacher of Queenstown, School and 2007 Honoree). As in its previous four missions, and despite the heat, humidity, and some

challenges, much was accomplished. Hundred of dollars of over-the-counter (OTC) medications were dispensed at the various clinic sites and the health care needs of over 700 adults and children were attended to by the visiting doctors, nurses, counselors, and health educators.



Remember us!



No Remember Me!



It is award time “Sharon Jones!”



Watch us at the 2007 party! Woo!



It is Church time in Essequibo!



St. Cuthbert's Mission!

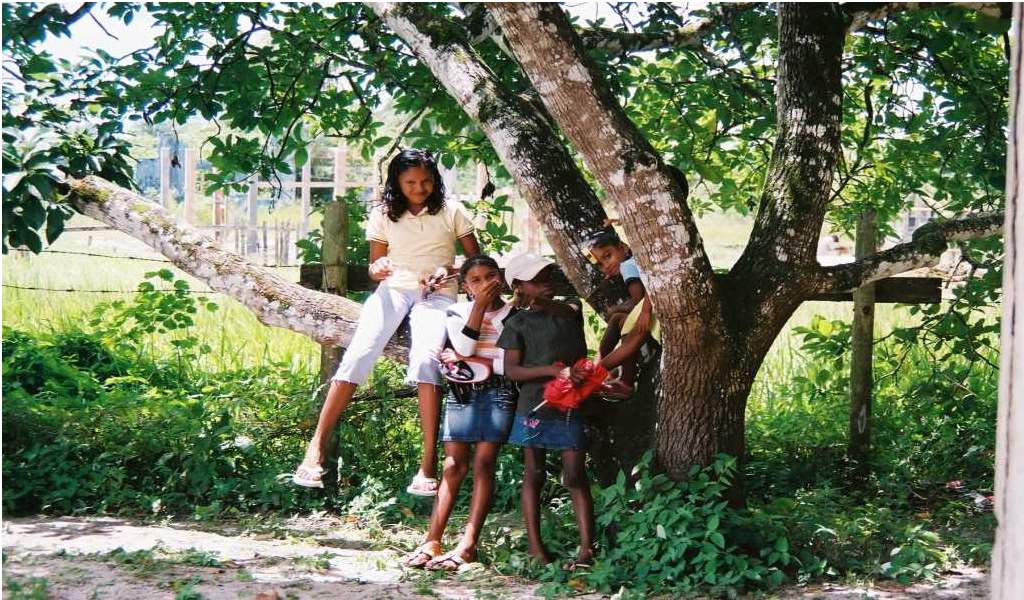
It is Education time! Kuru Kururu!



Prevention is the Key!

Our scheduled planning meeting in May/June, 2007 with the Minister of Health, Dr. Leslie Ramsammy proved to be very beneficial for this 2007 Mission. He outlined our options and we were able to follow his recommendations.

Mission Accomplished - Our goals and objectives for 2007 proved beneficial.



Watch Us! You all must come back and bring candy!



God's Grace, God's People! Until July 30 to August 14, 2008.