From the desk of Patty Webster

One of the many inspiring things about being a part of Amazon Promise is getting to meet and work with such diverse, giving, and adventurous people. Each and every person, including our Peruvian staff (some of whom I've worked with for over 21 years!), our board members and program directors, and our friends and volunteers, has had an important role in keeping this organization running for 17 years. Each year we've expanded our medical and health education services to the people of the Peruvian Amazon. Thanks to all of you we're accomplishing our goals, and reaching more people in need.

This year has been an exciting one for Amazon Promise, not only in terms of our ongoing work and our increased presence in the region, described below, but also because of the widespread media coverage from my award as a CNN Hero of the Week in March 2010. Each year, CNN accepts nominations for people going above and beyond the call of duty to help others around the world, and I was humbled and pleased to accept this honor on behalf of my work with Amazon Promise and the many communities who will have a healthier future.

This media coverage included two videos and an article on the CNN website, which resulted in spin-off articles and other media in the U.S., Peru and Korea -- from the Huffington Post and the San Diego News Tribune to individual blog sites and Twitter accounts.

We even had a South Korean documentary team from MBC follow us around in July during the first week of jungle clinics. I was heartened by the outpouring of support and encouragement we received, and I want to especially thank Celine Cousteau, whose own documentary about Amazon Promise, and additional video footage from alumni Claudio Colangelo was of invaluable help to making this possible.
Amazon Promise also hit another milestone within the last year—the construction of a Preclinic Building in Belen.

We call it the Preclinic because it's a very small version of what we envision for the much larger future policlinic in Belen. Working with a team from the University of Michigan, we held our first clinic in the new building in February.

Additional medical clinics were held in May and June, and the local Ministry of Health held a clinic there working along with the Patch Adams group, Gesundheit, in August.

This summer, thanks to Gondolier Amazone, a group of French medical students that came to Iquitos for a month of hard work, we now have a large elevated registration/waiting area that connects to the pre-clinic building. No longer will people have to stand in the muddy sewage and hot sun while waiting to be called into clinic.

You can view a tour of the new facilities here:  
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3w6L6-khxvM

This is a major advancement. I'd like to thank both of our donor groups, Girls On Top from Australia and Gondolier Amazone, for making the Belen Preclinic facility possible. In addition, with funds from a recent grant awarded to AP Medical Director Dr. Bob Hyzy from the CHEST Foundation, we'll be able to implement clinic enhancements like composting toilets and a rainwater catchment system. Engineers Without Borders NY will be coming down again in November to put these systems in place.
In September an Amazon Promise team traveled to the upper Pastaza River where we provided medical and dental care in remote Achuar and Quechua Indian villages.

With the collaboration of village leaders, and transport/logistical assistance provided by Talisman Energy, Plus Petrol, and the Peruvian Air Force (FAP) we were able to reach more villages during this trip than ever before, and saw a record 1361 patients.

This is a very isolated indigenous area where villages are spread far apart, so holding 8 full-day clinics in 10 days is almost unheard of. On this medical trip we were fortunate to have 3 speedboats at our disposal to help spread out the weight and get us up and down the river.

Since the Pastaza was almost completely dried up in many areas, without these large, lighter weight boats we would never have been able to get to any of the villages this year. No one has ever seen the river this low.

We also distributed our own brand of 2000 long-lasting treated mosquito nets that will prevent deadly malaria and help protect against bat and snake bites.
Working in these remote regions is an incredible experience, but not easy in any way. Imagine moving 3 tons of medical equipment, food and water, plus the 22 members of our medical team (and that’s a small team for us!) in small boats on a fast moving river that is constantly changing. Sandbars bottom out the boats so you have to get out and push a lot. These native communities of the Pastaza and many of the hardest to reach isolated areas receive medical care only when an Amazon Promise team arrives.

We’ve just wrapped up our last medical trip of the year working in villages of the Pacaya Samiria National Reserve. Please read Dr. Rick Roher's article for full details. Lastly, I am very excited to report that we now have full dental capabilities regardless of how remote the area we are working in. AP Dental Director Dr. Robert Fulton arrived in July bringing a portable dental office he created that now allows us to provide fillings and restorations. Please read his report as well.

Thank you all so much for your continued support,

Patty
Les Gondoliers de l’Amazone
Preclinic hut - Belen

In July 2010, nine students from the Faculty of Medicine Paris Sud XI spent a month in Iquitos volunteering with Amazon Promise. Here are their impressions.

It has been a year since we first thought of bringing our help to the impoverished populations of the Loreto region. We discovered the reality of Belen—invaded by water six months a year, piles of decomposing garbage during dry season—and were touched by Amazon Promise’s actions there. After reading about their work in the region, we got the idea of building an emergency boat to transport medical teams into the areas of need more efficiently.

While further developing this project, Amazon Promise made a new proposal that added a greater dimension to our original plans: we were to build a registration area and waiting room that could also be utilized as an auditorium for Amazon Promise’s educational lectures and prevention classes on topics such as general hygiene and sexual transmitted diseases. Up until that time, patients frequently waited for hours outside the clinic waiting to be seen, often knee-deep in waste and garbage, in pouring rain or burning sun.

All year long we worked very hard to raise funds. We gratefully received several grants: Bourse de l’initiative Jeunes solidaires (€6,000/$7,200), Crous de Versailles (€600/$720), Envie d’Agir (€700/$900) as well as generous donations from our various hometowns (€1,650/$2,143). Furthermore, we raised about €2,000/$2,600 ourselves through activities such as packing groceries, gift wrapping or selling baked goods. EVADEH, the humanitarian association of our faculty gave us invaluable logistical advice.

In Belen today, the people benefiting from Amazon Promise’s work (approximately 40% of the population) now have a new wooden motorboat as well as an 80 SF facility next to the Preclinic. We inaugurated the building on July, 15th 2010 with the president of Amazon Promise, Patty Webster and the Peruvian office manager, Javier Villanes Arias, as well as several other members of the NGO. The building and the boat cost a total of approximately €6,000/$7,200.

None of us had ever been involved in a humanitarian project like this before. Although we didn’t know what to expect in Iquitos, nor how our actions would be perceived by the people of Belen, in the end we were far from disappointed. This month spent working alongside Amazon Promise was truly a unique and unforgettable experience for all of us.

Les Gondoliers de l’Amazone

Perrine Allard Lucie Granger
Stéphanie Bleicher Kevin Picard
Marion Creuzé Julien Riancho
Pierre-Paul Faugeron Sophie Zaragoza
Salimata Gassama

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Expect the Unexpected

Richard J. Rohrer, MD, FACS

Professor and Vice Chairman, Department of Surgery - Tufts University School of Medicine
Chief, Division of Transplant Surgery - Tufts Medical Center

On the 9th day of the trip, the dead skin from my “boat butt” began to peel off. I think this affliction (if I may glorify it as such) must have dated back to our very first day on the Rio Maranon, which is now, as I write, all of 2 weeks ago. A group of six volunteers and 14 Amazon Promise staff, we set out from Nauta to work in the villages of the Pacaya Samiria National Reserve. The RNPS (as it’s abbreviated in Spanish) occupies the wedge of land between the Ucayali and Maranon rivers, which in joining together give birth to the Amazon itself. It’s the kind of place that you can get mystical about, if you’re so inclined: the true origin of the mightiest river on the planet.

We travelled from village to village in the usual conveyance, a vibrating hardwood boat – and the proximate cause of boat butt (a very mild form of pressure sore, a nuisance somewhat greater than a mosquito bite and somewhat less than a stubbed toe). Thanks to the agile and efficient crew led by Segundo (“call me Shego”) Coloma Cahuaza, the routine of travel on warm, muddy rivers and busy schoolroom clinics was quickly mastered.

What stands out, even with only 72 hours of reflection, was the non-routine, the unexpected. For example, I had prepared for this trip by reviewing case vignettes on the Gorgas tropical medicine website. Felt pretty good about my knowledge base. But wouldn’t you know that at the end of our very first day, in the gathering dusk and a crushing rainstorm, a guy appears at the clinic door saying that he has a snakebite victim down by the river. It was a pit viper bite, two hours prior, and the victim was in a world of hurt. Uh-oh: I hadn’t reviewed toxic bites and had never seen a poisonous snakebite in my life. Lucky for me, Dr. Alex Sandoval was along, had seen many of these in his time at Hospital Regional de Loreto, and knew what to do. We spent the night giving snake anti-venom, steroids, and antibiotics, and at first light he was shipped downriver to Nauta and Iquitos. His life was saved, but as I write this the fate of his leg is still uncertain.
There were other surprises, large and small.

The 19 year-old pregnant girl whose labor had stalled. The 35 year-old fisherman with a herniated cervical disk. The 5 year-old boy with septic arthritis (or worse) of the elbow. Of course this kaleidoscope of medical findings had to be put into social context in order to be tractable. This is where Rosa Aranzabal, translator, Spanish tutor, social facilitator and cumbia dancer extraordinaire – excelled. Those of us who were newbies to the Amazon benefitted greatly from her instant interpretations, both linguistic and cultural.

And then there were the dentists. This year’s RNPS trip was unique in that it included 3 full-fledged dentists, who were equipped with gear for not only pulling teeth, but for repairing them. This proved to be a tremendous attraction for a population that otherwise has essentially zero access to dentistry. Normally, their teeth just start falling out or breaking off at the roots somewhere in their 20’s or 30’s, with consequences for nutrition, chronic inflammation and cosmesis. The over-subscribed Amazon Promise dental clinics always ran late, giving those of us on the medical side a chance to swing by and learn a bit of their art for ourselves, an unexpected perk.

The dental effort can’t be described without mentioning Jose Luis Valles, who spent countless hours getting stuff to function - drills, mixes of resin, you name it – and getting practical advice from dentists in Iquitos. The enduring success of the dental program depended greatly upon his attention. As if that weren’t enough of a portfolio, Jose Luis’s primary role with us was as an Amazon wilderness guide. He has over 20 years of experience at this, and was ever so generous in sharing his insights. If you want to know how to catch a Caiman crocodile without being bitten (clever dental link, huh?), Jose Luis is your guy.

There were a host of reasons why I signed on for this trip. Foremost among them was that creeping sense that some of us get, working in the American healthcare system, of practicing medicine in a bubble, and the desire to reconnect in some meaningful way with a more representative sample of the world’s 7 billion people. Then there was the selfish desire for personal growth – improving my Spanish – and a bit of adventure.

Amazon Promise offered a terrific opportunity to address all of these interests with a group of likeminded souls. The staff is just outstanding, from Jackie Carroll, who gets you to Peru, to Adriana Calizaya, who gets you back, and everybody in between, including of course that abiding presence, Patty Webster herself. I’m not the only one in my group who wound up referring to this as “my first AP trip”, as in, “there will be others”.

Even if the price of admission is another bout of boat butt! ☹️
Reflections on a Medical Trip
Greg Dopulos, MD
Albuquerque, New Mexico

It is hard to believe that I have been to Peru with Amazon Promise five times in the last three years.

I have learned that it takes me several months to get the supplies that may be needed on each trip. The supplies that are always in demand -- vitamins (adult and children’s), bandages, antibiotics, syringes, ace bandages, etc. -- are items that we take for granted here in the States, but they need to be bought and they cost money. Besides giving away 20,000 or more vitamins on each of my past trips, we also give a bar of soap, toothbrushes and oral dehydration salts to each person that we see, and this is before they even get to pharmacy. These are costs that most of us are not aware of but essential in providing good basic medical care.

By now I’m sure you are asking, “why is he telling us this simple stuff?” Even though I am an Emergency Room physician and have set broken bones and surgically removed masses and foreign bodies, I have found that the simple signs of caring sometimes have the greatest impact. What I have noticed on each trip is that even though we have a different mix of volunteers, it always seems that we have the right person(s) to fit the particular problems/illnesses that we see. During trips when we have had very sick children for example, we always seem to have a Pediatrician with us.

I have been asked many times why I do these trips. I really do not have a good answer other than this: I feel that I truly get out of the trip more than I give. I know that this may sound strange coming from a physician, but this is one place that I can treat people as people. I do not need to run a lot of tests, but just listen to them, examine them, and put all of my medical training to use. Then the best part comes; they SMILE and say THANK YOU from their hearts. If that does not recharge your soul, nothing will. That is why I say I get more than I give.

I do not know how many times Patty has told the group on each of my trips that plans have changed. I guess that is another one of the reasons that I love these trips. In the Emergency Room things can change in minutes, so to be told that plans have changed feels normal.

If you cannot tell by now, I am getting excited for my next trip. I know that these trips are not for everyone, but if you have ever thought of a way to recharge your soul and want to find out what is truly important in life, come with us. If you are not that daring, then at least support an organization that truly touches people -- without strings.
AP Launches New Dental Program
Dr. Robert Fulton
Director of Dental Health

Amazon Promise now brings a full service dental clinic to the indigenous people of the Amazon River, enabling us to save and restore teeth that in the past would have been removed.

To develop this capability we have designed and built a portable dental office that can be set up in minutes and broken down equally as fast. It has a compressor for air, a vacuum motor for suction, water for irrigation, and all of the materials needed to provide first class fillings.

I field tested the unit on our last trip in July to the Yarapa River. After working through some of the inherent bugs when implementing new equipment and procedures in this remote setting, I can assure you that it worked as well as my own in-office equipment. In fact, Dr. Rusvel, our Peruvian attending dentist, liked it so well he became the official cosmetic dentist of the Yarapa River people for our trip. Dr. Rusvel is very good at his profession and we are lucky to have him join us on these trips. I thank him for his untiring help.

In all I am very pleased with the way the dental program is evolving for Amazon Promise. A second unit was built for the recent October medical trip to the Pacaya Samiria National Reserve, enabling us to double the number of patients we serve. Each unit costs us approximately $1,800 to build and can be brought to the remotest regions of the jungle.

It is very labor intensive to bring surgical and restorative dentistry to the remote areas we service, and without the continued help of my trusted friend Jose Luis who is my interpreter, office manager, location spotter, light holder, hand holder and so much more, this could not have been done.

Thank you all for your help and continued support for all Amazon Promise has accomplished over the years.
Emergency In The Jungle: A Patient Story
Patty Webster

During our most recent medical clinics in October in villages of the Pacaya Samiria National Reserve, we were faced with several emergencies.

Jose Da Silva is the mayor of Buenos Aires, a small village located in the Reserve. On Tuesday, October 19th we were holding clinic in the village of 20 de Enero. Jose was out harvesting Aguaje palm fruit, a job that allows him to provide a meager subsistence for his family. After hauling the large sacks of fruit to his canoe, he was relieved to remove the uncomfortable, knee-high rubber boots he was wearing all day. He had worked the entire day without stopping to eat, so he was also looking forward to getting home for dinner, his first meal of the day.

As he stepped towards his canoe he looked up and noticed a storm moving in…when it happened.

Just as we had finished up clinic that Tuesday in the village of 20 de Enero and were cleaning up and putting away our clinic supplies, a monsoon like thunderstorm rolled in. At the same time a man came running in yelling that his friend was down at the shore in a canoe and had been bitten by a fer de lance, a venomous pit viper snake. Several team members put on their rain ponchos and headed to the river to check on him, while the rest of the team set up a treatment area. The wind, rain and lightning were overwhelming, yet through the downpour our team members and villagers carried Jose up from the shore and across the soccer field covered in a poncho. We laid him on our makeshift table while the team went into action to stabilize him and clean the wound site. He was also cold, wet and muddy from the rain and falling into the river when he was bitten. He was screaming in pain.

Anti-venom kits are expensive, about $250 each, and contain two vials of meds. You never know how many vials you will need for just one patient -- sometimes up to 6 or 7. On this day we had three vials in our stock. Jose did not show an allergic reaction to the first anti-venom test, but after administering pain medication and one vial of anti-venom he began to complain of itching all over his body, and a rash appeared.
Antihistamines were administered and the reaction quickly subsided, but we wouldn’t be able to give him any more anti-venom. Jose’s pain was so intense that he seemed to be in a state of delirium. At one point he tried to remove his IV and get up off the table. Nothing seemed to work for the pain, and his leg was so swollen he could no longer move his toes. It was a long night. Volunteer Dr. Rick Roher and Dr. Alex Sandoval, our Peruvian MD, took turns staying up all night to care for him. His wife also arrived with two of their children.

Early the next morning Jose seemed to be slightly more sedated, yet the edema in his leg was worse. He was carried back across the soccer field in a hammock to a waiting speedboat that rushed him several hours to the nearest clinic in the jungle town of Nauta. From there he was immediately transferred to the Regional Hospital in Iquitos, another 2 hours. We were all very concerned for Jose, and because we were in a remote area with no cell signal we wouldn’t know anything for several days.

Three days later Amazon Promise president Patty Webster returned to Iquitos and visited Jose in the hospital. The swelling had gone down considerably, and he was on high doses of antibiotics and pain medicines. His wife was out looking for family members to help pay the $26 daily that was required to pay for his medicines. He mentioned that he felt very sad, alone and abandoned -- a common reaction when one suffers a trauma and is taken from their home to a foreign place. We assured him that he was not alone nor abandoned and would be taken care of. Amazon Promise is making sure that Jose has the medicines and personal supplies he needs.

 Anyone involved in medical relief work knows that your work isn’t over just because you finish up in a village. You have to follow through with anyone that requires further care. That’s the responsibility you take on when you decide to offer care.

At the writing of this article, November 2, Jose is not out of danger. We were notified that he has severe anemia and a super infection at the wound site. He needs two pints of blood, blood collection bags and a surgical debridement that is to take place in the next couple of days. We will be at Jose’s side to make sure he receives the treatment necessary to save his leg.
You Can Help

Amazon Promise relies on private support to fund operations, expand services and provide a wide range of care to urban and rural communities in Peru.

If you would like to make a gift, please mail your check or money order to:

Amazon Promise
P.O. Box 1304
Newburyport, MA, 01950
USA

You may also donate via PayPal by following this link to our website:

HTTP://AMAZONPROMISE.ORG/index.php?pagename=pay_donate

Thank you for your support!
High Water, Low Water or No Water?
Bob Hyzy, MD
Medical Director, Amazon Promise

In February, Amazon Promise held its second University of Michigan Medical School fourth year elective. This time we had seven students plus two additional U of M faculty: Drs. Tim Nostrant and Aditi Dave. Having moved the rotation from September (“Period 5” for our students) to February (Period 10), I now encountered the Ucayali and Yarapa Rivers at high, rather than low water. Gone was the quarter mile beach on the Ucayali River we had played futbol on in September. The Yarapa River, site of the Yacumama Lodge where we stay, was now 50 metres across rather than 20 metres as it had been in September. At high water, the Ucayali had broken through into the Cumaceba River somewhere upstream. Just downstream from the lodge where the Yarapa and Cumaceba river meet, the muddy brown Ucayali River water now merged with black Yarapa River water. At this convergence of the two rivers, we frequently saw pink dolphins in the river feasting on the fish. In high water the dolphins come upstream!

In Iquitos, I had looked forward to Belen being flooded in February, but it was not. During my two previous visits to the region in the October 2007 and September 2008, the ground in Belen was hard packed and dusty under the huts on stilts. Global warming is rapidly melting the glaciers of the Cordillera Blanca (see below), the Andean high peaks which feed the Ucayali and Maranon Rivers. These two great rivers of Peru join to form the Amazon River not far from the Yacumama Lodge.

Speaking with AP president Patty Webster at our AP board meeting in June, I was reassured to learn that Belen had indeed flooded in March, somewhat later than usual. Nevertheless, I was left to wonder what the future holds for the peoples of the Amazon River Basin. Will global warming eventually lower water levels and change the centuries-old ways of indigenous peoples in the remote regions?

Our trip in February was hot. On three previous AP medical expeditions, including one in February during summer in Southern Hemisphere, I had not suffered from the heat. On this trip, our first day in the jungle found me flat out in my hut at the Yacumama nauseated from dehydration (in my underwear … too much information, I know). Fortunately, I rallied after one or two liters of fluid. I’m not complaining: some people go to Florida to beat the Michigan winter; I go to Peru.

Even when the rivers are low, one good overnight rainfall is all that it takes to go from getting out of your boat to push, to shooting down the river in half the expected time in a brown torrent. The rivers go where they want to go: the Ucayali broke through to the Cumaceba, the Amazon now almost bypasses Iquitos. Some things are a constant: AP has been an ongoing presence in the region for over 17 years.

However, Amazon Promise is evolving too: we want to grow our organization. While bigger is not necessarily better, we believe in order to achieve our vision of sustainable health care delivery to the populations we serve, we must expand the organization in size, in funding and in our ongoing presence in the region. To further these ends we are seeking new board members, we have built a temporary clinic in lower Belen, and we have new volunteers assisting with grant writing and program outreach.
¡SOY CAPAZ!
Past, Present and Future of HIV Education & Prevention in the Amazon
Elena Deem, PhD
Director of Educational Program

Amazon Promise has been aware of this situation since the 1990s. After witnessing firsthand the increased numbers of HIV-infected patients, AP has been increasing its focus on the preventative and patient-care activities that might help stop the epidemic from spreading. In 2006, the Board prompted the establishment of ¡Soy Capaz!, a concise HIV-prevention and patient care program/campaign for AP to use as a platform from which to concentrate specifically on this particular phenomenon.

Each one of us, regardless whether we have been to the jungle or not, has a set of images stored in our minds when we hear the words “Amazon Rainforest”: wide muddy rivers snaking through the jungle in lazy loops; exotic fruit and flowers; tropical birds, animals and insects; and for some perhaps, a range of infectious diseases that microscopic organisms might inflict on human bodies. However, it may be difficult to fit HIV/AIDS—linked primarily to the Western civilization and to the African and Asian continents—into the context of the South American Amazonia.

Yet, the existence of the HIV virus is now an undeniably fact in the Upper Amazon Basin. Indeed, the Peruvian Ministry of Health has upgraded the status of HIV in the province of Loreto in the Upper Amazon Basin from “occurrence” to “epidemic.”

Iquitos, a city of more than half a million inhabitants set in the middle of the Amazon Basin, now ranks second in the prevalence of HIV infection in the whole of Peru. From this center of commerce, the virus continues to spread—in a geometric, rather than arithmetic scale—into the far-reaching corners of the Basin, affecting its Mestizo and native communities lodged deep in the Amazon jungle. Because of the limited resources of the Peruvian Ministry of Health and Education, most of the endangered communities do not receive any information about HIV, let alone condoms, formal training, and medical care. It is a situation that has the potential to erupt into a pandemic, with deaths from HIV comparable to that in the African and Asian communities where entire villages succumb to the infection.
At its inception in 2006, our first strategy for HIV prevention was informative, in both the approach to the topic and the content of the program. Amazon Promise had been operating in the communities for years and was able to provide crucial socio-cultural information about the people in these communities and potentially sensitive areas. Javier Villanes, Peruvian Office Manager, has been intrinsic to the design of the program and its implementation. In our first ¡Soy Capaz! intervention on the Yarapa River, we prioritized sensitizing the communities to the issues of HIV prevention through a series of public lectures, first-time promoter training, and school workshops.

Meanwhile, we began gathering information regarding the sexual behavior patterns in each community, and conducted voluntary, anonymous HIV-testing. We found out that there was little knowledge of HIV and its prevention, and no available information concerning the topic. We also encountered resistance to condom use and associated misconceptions about condoms, in part because there were no promoters in the villages working with the communities on HIV prevention and care.

Since 2006, the following changes have taken place in the communities we have served:

- Heightened awareness of the nature of HIV, its transmission and prevention where there was none prior to the implementation of the program.
- Increased demand for condoms among males and adolescents: from nearly zero interest in 2006 to 90% participation in village lectures sponsored by ¡Soy Capaz! for the last five years (Note: condoms are rarely supplied by the Peruvian MOH. We need significant financial support to purchase and distribute condoms to these villages).
- Increased community involvement with the ¡Soy Capaz! Project.
- Participation in couples counseling whereas previously only one partner was present.
- Greater openness to the discussion of issues such as infidelity, drunkenness, family planning and the methods of protection from HIV and other STIs, protection of women and children.
- Growing tolerance of minorities (transsexuals, homosexuals) and people living with HIV.
- Clear shift towards more autonomous behavior in women (greater interest in protecting themselves and negotiating/enforcing protection with partner).
- Greater interest from parents in educating and protecting their adolescent children.
- Improved collaboration between local authorities and promoters in order to secure necessary intervention in cases of abuse of sexual and protection rights.
- More trained health promoters, some becoming self-sufficient in their promotional and educational activities concerning confidential counseling / intervention / public education.
¡Soy Capaz! is a multi-tier project with distinct introductory, implementation and self-sufficiency phases. On the Yarapa location of our pilot project, we are moving toward the phase of self-sufficiency with more trained promoters available in each village for private intervention and to perform public education in our absence. We continue the provision of condom supply to the best of our abilities. In other locations, we are in the implementation phase where we have already introduced the public to the HIV/STI issues but have not yet reached the point where a shift in the perception of HIV and other STIs and behavioral changes may ensue. Therefore, emphasis is placed on the repetition and continuation of education.

¡Soy Capaz! offers interactive educational methods, continued basic promoter outreach and training, establishment of a collaborative network between promoters and local authorities in every village, and a special focus on women’s rights and empowerment and on protection of women and children/adolescents. The program is gender-equal, meaning that it is working to dismantle the socio-cultural stereotypes that are detrimental to HIV protection priorities for both men and women.

We will continue teaching the mechanisms of safe sexual conduct for the development of negotiating skills in a relationship, and pointing out dangerous and detrimental habits and behavior (e.g.; lack of mutual respect, spousal abuse, drunkenness, infidelity). Last but not least, we will continue to engage schools in HIV-prevention workshops designed specifically for the age category of 12-16 years.

Something’s Stirring in the Amazon Jungle

CURTAILING THE SPREAD and IMPACT of AIDS/HIV in the PERUVIAN AMAZON JUNGLE

http://somethingsstirring.blogspot.com
Amazon Promise Project Shines at Global Health Conference
Stephanie Garbern

Inspired by our experience as part of the July 2009 medical expedition, Bonnie Crouthamel and I took a refreshing break from our medical school classes at Albert Einstein in the Bronx, NY and traveled to Cuernavaca, Mexico to represent Amazon Promise at the Global Health Education Consortium (GHEC) this past April 9-11¹.

The 2010 conference’s theme was “Learning from South/South Collaboration” and brought together students and educators involved in global health from countries all over North and South America and even Europe. We worked with Elena Deem, Director of Educational Programs, to create a poster describing AP’s ¡Soy Capaz! program. Not only was creating and presenting our poster extremely valuable to us as students, but we had a lot of fun talking to conference attendees from around the world about Amazon Promise’s projects and accomplishments as well as our personal experience in the Amazon. There were over 50 other posters displayed describing projects in Mexico, Ecuador, Haiti and other sites, but AP was the only project based in the Amazon River Basin which really emphasized how vital AP’s work is.

Like most conferences, some of the plenary sessions left us yawning, but the real value of the conference came in the connections we made. For instance, one evening our faculty advisor (and founder of Doctors for Global Health) Dr. Lanny Smith held an unofficial forum where people could talk openly about global health concerns. We ended up sitting next to Dr. Oliver Fein, president of Physicians for a National Health Care Program, and talked about our project with him!

We were so proud to represent Amazon Promise and were even able to tell people some things they didn’t know about health care in the Amazon. We hope to continue helping AP however we can in the future! ☑

¹“GHEC is a consortium of health professionals, educators, students and institutions committed to improving the ability of the global workforce to meet the needs of underserved populations”.
http://globalhealtheducation.org/aboutus/SitePages/Home.aspx
New Volunteer Opportunities with Amazon Promise!

If you’ve thought about becoming a volunteer with Amazon Promise but have had difficulty finding dates or time frames that work for you, please check out our website for our new 2011 schedule. We have seven different volunteer medical expeditions planned for this coming year. With trip lengths ranging from 1-4 weeks, we are sure one of them will work out for you!

If you only have a week, but your availability doesn't match up with our planned one-week trips, you can join us for one week of any one of our longer expeditions during the year (excluding February and remote trips). This way you can choose whether you want to work in the city or jungle clinics.

So pack your bags and join the growing team of Amazon Promise volunteers!

Program Schedule

Our Facebook Page
http://www.facebook.com/pages/Amazon-Promise/193391831901

Our Videos
http://www.youtube.com/user/amazonpromise
Patty Webster Named CNN Hero of the Week

Every year, CNN accepts nominations for people going above and beyond the call of duty to help others around the world. On March 18, 2010 Amazon Promise President and Founder Patty Webster was named a CNN Hero of the Week on behalf of her lifetime’s work and dedication to help communities in the Amazon Basin have a healthier future. Over 10,000 individuals were nominated from over 100 countries in 2010.

Webster was featured in a short video on Larry King Live, then in a longer video on CNN’s morning show, American Morning. Additional media coverage included an additional on-line article about Webster and Amazon Promise on CNN.com; video broadcasts on CNN, Headline News and CNN en Español; subsequent coverage in The Huffington Post, Bloomberg Business News, and The San Diego Union Tribune; and numerous media hits on other news, blog and social networking sites in the U.S., Latin America and Asia.

As a result, Amazon Promise received an outpouring of inspiring emails, letters and kind words from past volunteers, friends and others who contacted us following the award announcement. The number of visits to our Web site jumped by 300% the day of the CNN broadcast, and we have continued to build an even greater network of friends and dedicated supporters. We are grateful and humbled by this recognition and support.

Our Other Heroes

Amazon Promise sincerely thanks Connecticut concert pianists James Kwan, Angela Suh, Yoo Jin Choi, Eliza Fath, David Suh, Jessica Kao, Brian Wei, and their wonderful teacher Kyong Hee Cho. This is the third year in a row the students have donated all proceeds from their fundraising concert 'Playing By Heart IV' to AP to purchase treated mosquito nets.
Amazon Promise extends its gratitude for the continued support from the following individuals and organizations:

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These contributions represent gifts and in-kind contributions from January 1, 2009 – August 31, 2010. Please contact Kristina@amazonpromise.org with any corrections to this list.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!
Patients Seen - 2009

Last year, Amazon Promise served more than 6,333 patients plus 178 dental patients. Those of you who have volunteered with Amazon Promise no doubt remember the joy of compiling our statistics at the end of a long day in clinic! All told, we saw 915 men age 15 and higher; 2,224 women age 15 and higher; 660 boys age 6-14; 838 girls age 6-14; 866 boys age 0-5; and 830 girls age 0-5. If this breakdown doesn’t ring a bell … then you’ve been away too long and should join us again for another trip!!! Thanks to our volunteers we were able to see 2000 more patients in 2009 than in 2008.

<table>
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<th>2009 Date</th>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Number of Patients</th>
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<td>16-February</td>
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