

Intouch

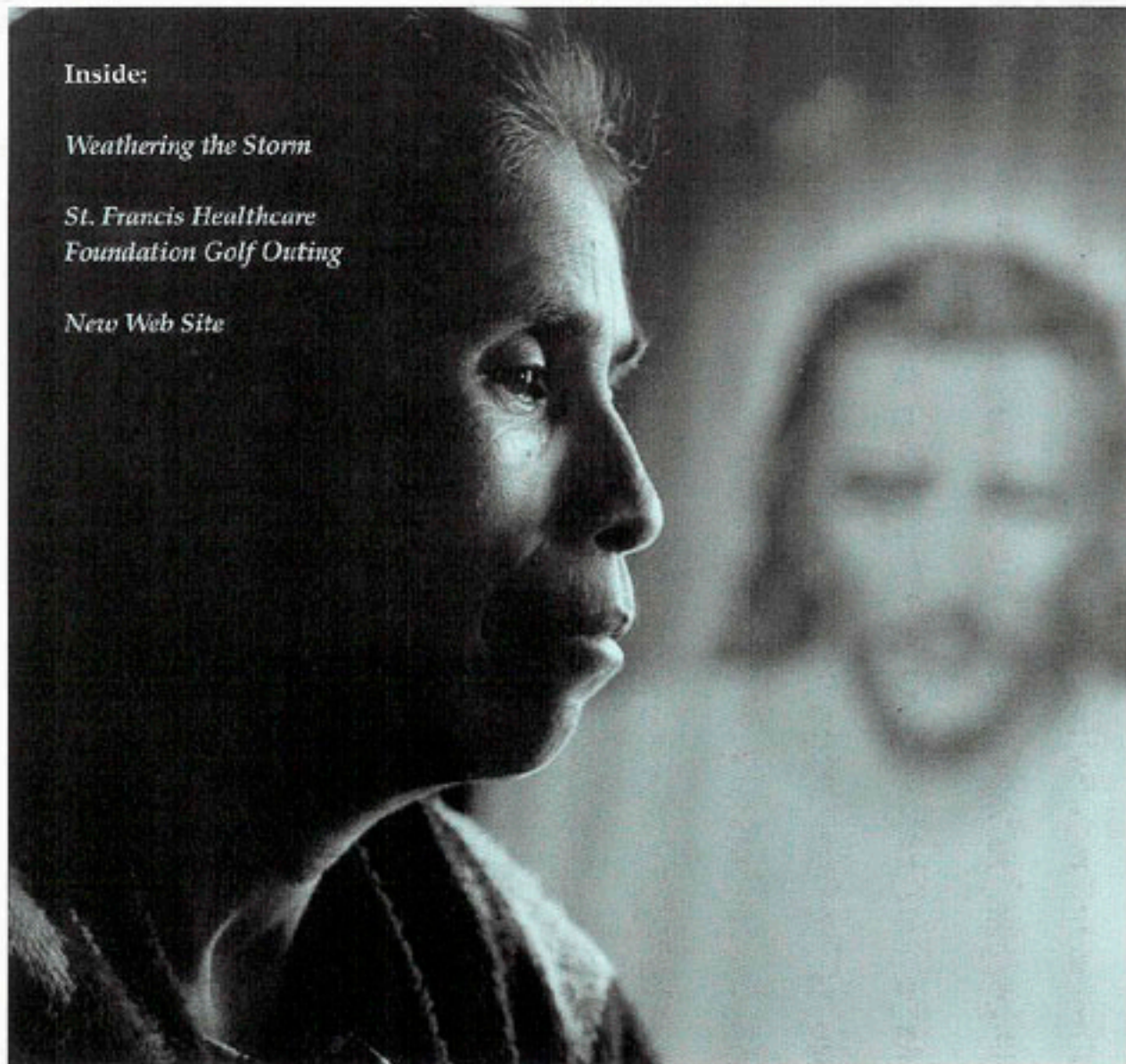
June & July 2003 • *In touch* newsletter is printed monthly for the employees and friends of St. Francis Hospital.

Inside:

Weathering the Storm

*St. Francis Healthcare
Foundation Golf Outing*

New Web Site



A Guatemalan woman, lost in thought, sits in the waiting room of a small hospital in San Marcos, Guatemala, a stop on a recent medical mission trip led by St. Francis' Dr. Michael Elmore. He was accompanied by several other St. Francis staffers in this annual trip to the impoverished Guatemalan highlands. Story and additional photos on pages 6 and 7.

Guatemala

NO MATTER HOW
FRANCISCAN VA

Story and photos by Christopher Brooks, APR

It's a land of volcanoes, earthquakes, sorcery, colonial conquest, political corruption, military repression and crushing poverty. And in spite of all of this, the *campesinos* of the war-ravaged Guatemalan western highlands always put on a smile when St. Francis Hospital's Dr. Michael Elmore, gastroenterologist, and his medical mission crew make their annual visit to San Marcos.

"Of all my previous trips to Central and South America, this one was indeed amazing with respect to how the Holy Spirit moved in the lives of our trip members and those we ministered to," says Dr. Elmore about the late February trip, his 14th, to the Guatemalan "department" that borders Chiapas, Mexico. Of the 35 professionals and family members who made the trip, several have direct ties to St. Francis: Drs. Gerald Walthall, Jon Mandelbaum, Dave Dunkle and Mike Elmore; nurses Cecilia Quade, Lora Hiti and Amira Kehoe; physical therapist Jennifer Locklier; computer technician Mark Ely; and marketing communications manager Chris Brooks.

The group's medical activity centered on the El Jardin Hospital in San Marcos, run by Dr. Julio Fuentes, whom Dr. Elmore

befriended and who has coordinated these trips over the years. There, and at the nearby national hospital, Dr. Mandelbaum performed 17 surgeries in three days, some under trying conditions. The rest of the mission team was delivered in four-wheelers to three different remote mountain villages, some at 9,000 feet in the clouds, for day-long clinics amid the dust, wood smoke and tin-roofed hovels. Overall, more than 900 Guatemalans, many direct Mayan descendents, were examined and treated over a three-day period.

What all in the group came away with was a pervading feeling that these courageously happy people were having just as much a positive effect on them as the reverse.

"My eyes have been opened and my heart touched after working with the people of Guatemala," says Locklier about the mountain residents who suffer from the lowest lifespan of any indigenous people in our hemisphere — 47 years for men, 48 years for women.

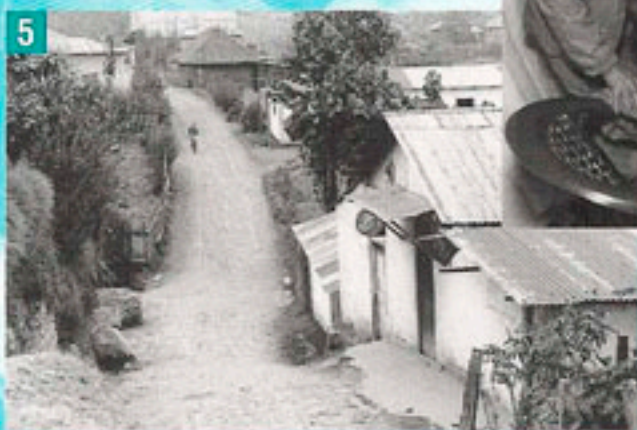
The sweetness of the people, the urgent need for care and the intense spirituality of the experience put a glow in the hearts and a rekindled spirit in all who were fortunate enough to work with these incredible people.

"A woman
thanked me
for the care
we had given
her — she said,
I cannot pay
you, but God
will for what
you have done."

David Dunkle, M.D.



7 FAR AWAY, LIVES MAKE IMPACT



1. The mission group begins its week in the Guatemalan highlands with a rally of prayer.
2. Dr. Gerald Walther performs an exam on a grateful Guatemalan villager.
3. St. Francis surgeon Dr. Jon Mandelbaum, Dr. Julio Fuentes and St. Francis gastroenterologist Dr. Michael Elmore discuss local medical conditions.
4. A young boy with a badly set broken left arm laughs with his grandfather, Dr. David Dunkle and nurse Geolia Quada.
5. Metal roofs and dirt paths are common in the western highlands.
6. Amira Kehoa, St. Francis nurse, gets hugs from children at an orphanage.
7. Trip leader Dr. Elmore examines a young patient, one of 900 cared for on the trip.