



BOULDER MANTE SISTER CITIES COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT

"It's impossible to overstate how pivotal my year in Mexico was in shaping my worldview and setting my goals for the future"

Jesper Frant

March 1, 2013

Background: The Boulder Mante Sister City relationship is an outgrowth of an annual medical mission to Ciudad Mante, Mexico developed by Boulder Community Hospital (BCH) and several outreach programs with Boulder Rotary and First Presbyterian Church in Boulder. A formal proclamation uniting the cities of Mante and Boulder in a Sister City relationship was signed in January, 2000.

Medical Mission Suspended: Shortly after the medical team had been in Mante in 2010, reports became available of drug related gang activity in the Mante area. Boulder Community Hospital began monitoring the situation in Mante later that spring. In the summer of 2010, David Gehant, Boulder Community Hospital CEO cancelled the 2011 mission. He called Dr. David Rodriguez and explained the need to cancel the mission because there was no way to guarantee the safety of the 100 medical personnel that comprise our team. Subsequently, the medical missions for 2012 and 2013 were also cancelled.

Elfa Rodriguez, sister of the founder of the medical campaign, Dr. David Rodriguez, reports for the citizens of Mante, that the decision to cancel the medical missions has left a huge "gap" in the community and region around Mante. In many cases, it was the only option for medical service that the poor and underserved had.

Mante delegation visitation: As reported in our annual report filing on March 1, 2012, a delegation from Mante came in early April, 2012. Highlights of that visitation follows:

- Dairy Center for the Arts: A plaque was dedicated on April 1 describing the origins of the 24' X 42' mural painted on the north wall of the Dairy Center by Mante artist Florian Lopez in 2001
- First Presbyterian Church: Dr. David Rodriguez presented a plaque to honor First Presbyterian Church for the close relationship between the church and citizens of Mante over the years.

- **Boulder Community Hospital:** The delegation from Mante presented a painting to BCH President, David Gehant in appreciation for the 20 year medical campaign. (See story below)
- **City council proclamation:** The City of Boulder issued a proclamation signed by Mayor Matt Appelbaum declaring April 1-7, 2012 Boulder-Mante Sister City week.
- **Musical instruments:** Several musical instruments donated by Boulder citizens were presented to the Mante delegation to be used by the Mante community band and citizens.
- **Recognition:** The Boulder-Mante Sister City committee presented an award to Erick Diaz for his years of support to the medical campaign and support of the Sister City relationship.



Art Gift to Boulder Community Hospital: The Mante delegation brought a beautiful painting, titled “Gratitude,” of a young Mexican girl which was presented to Boulder Community Hospital in honor of the 20 year medical campaign. It has

“Gratitud” by Professor Silvia Maldonado Gonzalez

since been decided that the painting will be hung in the exhibit area of the new Anderson building which was formally dedicated on Feb. 9, 2013. Additionally, the hospital has decided to frame the painting with a tree with leaves naming each of the medical workers sponsored by Boulder Community Hospital who traveled to Mante over the course of the previous twenty years.

Telemedicine: To make up for the void left by the absence of the BCH medical campaign, the Sister City committee has been working on developing a telemedicine project between BCH and the Mante Civil Hospital.

We were hoping to receive a list of the medical specialties that would be most valuable to Mante that we could make available from the Boulder side--possibly those that were coming regularly from Boulder to Mante and providing valuable service. We were also looking forward to receiving ideas for telemedicine peripherals that could be available in Mante and/or outlying clinics.

Jaws of Life: On Jan. 19, 2013, the Boulder Emergency Squad donated a “jaws of life” and accompanying generator to the Boulder-Mante Sister City Committee. In turn, the Sister City Committee arranged for shipment of the equipment to Cruz Roja (the Red Cross) in Mante, Mexico.



The jaws of life is an hydraulic rescue tool used by emergency rescue personnel to assist vehicle extrication of crash victims as well as other rescues from other small spaces.

According to Erick Diaz, this tool will be of great value to the Red Cross in Mante, which responds to emergencies beyond the city limits of Mante where the fire department does not go.

Sister City International spotlight on Board Director: In mid-2012, Sister City International did a feature story on one of the Boulder Mante Sister City directors, who joined the Board in his high school years, spent a year studying in Mante and is currently doing graduate work at Columbia University. One of his main goals in his studies is to promote the concept of telemedicine between Boulder and Mante.



Over 10 years ago, Jesper Frant, a high school student from Boulder, Colorado, went as an exchange student to sister city Mante, Mexico for a year. Today, Jesper recounts how life changing the experience was.

"It's impossible to overstate how pivotal my year in Mexico was in shaping my worldview and setting my goals for the future. Prior to my year abroad, I had traveled quite a bit with my parents and attended

bilingual school. I knew Spanish and was comfortable traveling in foreign countries, but looking back, nothing could have prepared me for the experience of being fully immersed in another language, another family and another culture.

Not only did my experience studying abroad help shape my worldview, it has guided many of my most important life choices: to stay involved with the Boulder-Mante Sister Cities Committee, to study international affairs at the University of Colorado, to write my honors thesis on the plight and potential of Mexican migrants living in the U.S., and to pursue a graduate degree in international development. But the most fundamental personal change I experienced as a result of my year abroad was developing a sense of empathy for those who – simply because of where they are born – cannot afford basic healthcare, a quality education, or even nutritious food and clean water.

Boulder and Mante share many things in common, but at no time were the differences more apparent than during the Boulder Community Hospital's annual medical campaign. Volunteering as a translator during my

year abroad, I saw thousands of people from hundreds of miles around Mante turn out for the opportunity to meet with the “gringo” doctors.

One day, an elderly blind man walked into the make-shift eye clinic to which I’d been assigned. The American doctors immediately diagnosed him with advanced cataracts, which had clouded his vision for over a decade. His condition had gone untreated due to a combination of insufficient access to properly trained medical professionals and limited availability of modern medical technology.

Guided by his granddaughter, the man was immediately moved to the front of the line, and within fifteen minutes his cataracts were removed and his vision was restored. I will never forget the look on his face, tears streaming from behind protective glasses, as he walked out of the operating room without the assistance of his granddaughter. “What a miracle. God bless you,” he repeated in a trembling voice as he hugged each American nurse and doctor.

Had this man been born in the U.S. his condition would have been treated years earlier. Unfortunately, the world is filled with this kind of basic inequality, but I believe that with a little ingenuity and a lot of hard work – as economist Jeffrey Sachs pointedly put it – “extreme poverty can be ended, not in the time of our grandchildren, but our time.”

Day of the Dead: One of the annual events which take place throughout Central America is remembrance of ancestors, known as the Day of the Dead, which occurs on November 1 each year. In other traditions, this is known as All Saints Day. Mira Canion, a former director of the Boulder-Mante Sister City Committee has created a book, titled “Tumba” (tomb), using photos from Mante, which describe the celebration.

City in a Suitcase: The Boulder Mante Sister City committee is working with the Boulder History Museum to create a “trunk” of items which describes life in a typical Mexican community. This trunk will be available to Boulder Valley classrooms and other groups, such as Girl Scout troops, as sort of a show and tell feature to describe life in an international setting.

Administration: In conformance with the requirements of City of Boulder resolution 631, the following information is provided:

A(1) Copy of Dept. of Treasury letter stating determination of status of organization under section 501(c)(3) is available for inspection, upon request.

A(2) List of Board members:

Norris Hermsmeyer, President
Pam Hyink, Secretary
Chan Mortimer
Rod Tuenge
Elfa Rodriguez

Jean Bedell, Vice-President
Rich Lopez, Treasurer
Celeste Landry
Jesper Frant
Jeannie DeMarinis

Andrew Fiscus
Gary Kahn
City Council Liaison: Tim Plass

Andrew Moschetti
Sharon Trompeter

Board Members in Mante:

Erick Diaz, Chairman
Catalina Cortez, Secretary
Consuelo Lopez, Treasurer
Erik Betancourt
Nancy Charles
Ma del la Luz Velazquez
Blanca Yanez
Jorge Bolado

A(3) By-laws of the Boulder Mante Sister City Committee state that membership is open to anyone with an interest in the work of the committee and membership shall not be denied to anyone based on race, religion, nationality, membership in a minority group, membership in a particular social group or because of expression of unpopular political opinions.

A(4) Financial report:

Starting balance Jan. 1, 2012	\$ 7,858.19
Revenue	300.00
Expenses	948.41 (Mante visitation)
Ending balance Dec. 31, 2012	\$ 7,213.54