Midwifery in the Americas: Marrying Mayan & Western Medicine
Exchange Program - June 26 – July 3, 2010
Hosted by the Highland Support Project, Partners in Service Program

The work of a midwife in Guatemala is an ancient art form, using philosophies and techniques that are virtually unknown in Western medicine. Her practices are founded on the belief that we must achieve and maintain a balance between humans and the environment. In the highlands of Guatemala, midwives are often the only health care providers for many miles in isolated, rural communities. They are eager for more knowledge of medicine and the opportunity to develop their abilities in order to improve the quality of care given to their patients. Therefore, Highland Support Project (HSP) is offering an opportunity for health professionals, social workers and interested others, from the US to visit Quetzaltenango, Guatemala to participate in a weeklong exchange with a group of Guatemalan midwives.

Janett Forte, with the VCU Institute for Women’s Health will be serving as a team leader.
Contact information: Phone 804-827-1200 e-mail: jforte@vcu.edu

As the team leader I will be working closely with HSP staff to organize our group, recruiting participants and serving in a leadership capacity on the trip itself. Please contact me directly with questions or to secure an application. We have room for 10 to 15 participants.

****** April 12, 2010 is deadline for applications and $250 deposit **********

Trip Details: A standard 8 day trip with all expenses paid, including transportation, food, and lodging is only $950 plus airfare.

Tentative Itinerary - includes cultural, educational, service and exchange aspects. We plan to make adaptations to suit the objectives of our group once our team has been identified.

Saturday
- arrive in Guatemala City
- drive in private van to the village of Panajachel, where team spends the first night
- visit famous Lake Atitlan
- in-country orientation and team meeting

Sunday
- travel to Chichicastenango and tour the largest outdoor indigenous market in Guatemala
- travel to Quetzaltenango, also know as Xela, settle into retreat center, where the team will be housed for the week
- meet with our hosts from Highland Women's Association (AMA) Asociacion de Mujeres del Altiplano to develop our team and the details for the week- team building session
Monday & Tuesday
- meeting with Midwives
- service & exchange projects in Xela
- team presentations with midwives
- accompanying a midwife on home visit
- lessons from midwives on medicinal herbs

Wednesday & Thursday
- service & exchange projects in Xela
- visit new clinic in village of Chucutaman, which lies in Santa Catharina Valley
- provide on site health assessments
- consultation sessions to assist in the development of chart documentation systems
- develop ideas for tracking particular diseases of pregnant women in Guatemala.
- accompanying a midwife on home visit

Friday
- baths in a ‘Temascal’ sacred Mayan site
- visit a ‘bone-setter’, similar to an orthopedic surgeon
- meet with spirit guides
- trip debriefing and processing
- plans for continued involvement

Saturday
- shopping and sightseeing in Antigua (depending on flight schedule)
- return flights to US

The itinerary will be tailored to the interests of trip participants so we will organize an informational team meeting in the next few weeks so we can develop our trip itinerary to match interests and needs of participants and answer any questions for those trying to decide.

For more information visit: www.partnersinservice.org www.highlandsupportproject.org or www.womenshealth.vcu.edu

Basic logistics – Deadlines - The trip is scheduled for Saturday June 26 to Saturday July 3, 2010

90 days before departure date: - April 12, 2010
Applications due with $250 non-refundable deposit. If you would like Highland Support Project to purchase your airfare @ $550 round-trip, please let us know.

60 days before departure date = April 26, 2010
Half of remaining payment balance due from each trip participant

May 3, 2010 – purchase own air fare deadline (within travel parameters for arrival in Guatemala City) otherwise after this HSP will require the $550 to purchase your ticket.

30 days before departure date = May 26, 2010
Remaining balance of payment due

Saturday, June 26, 2010 – on our way