

*Dear Friends,*

When Siempre Unidos (SU) first began its work in Honduras in 2000, we saw a lot of pain, stigma and isolation. For example, “Geraldo,” a 29 year-old man weighing only 90 pounds, had no familial support and was very close to death when we met him.

Today our 420 HIV-positive patients receive free anti-retroviral medications and the social and nutritional support needed to remain healthy. Thousands more are tested for HIV and Hepatitis B at our health fairs and during our visits to brothels, bars and prisons.

2015 was a big year. We launched our 90-90-90 major gifts campaign to raise \$270,000 over three years to purchase vans and hire new staff to continue education and testing of commercial sex workers, gay men, transgendered people, prisoners and soldiers. We expanded our services to impoverished people living in slums. Amy Rankin-Williams joined our team as Executive Director and brings 20

years of experience in the nonprofit and global health sectors.

One of the most rewarding parts of this work is to see our patients’ health improve. Geraldo’s weight is normal and he is no longer in and out of the hospital. “My life has always been one of rejection due to my sexual orientation and then my HIV diagnosis,” he says. “I did not know the meaning of acceptance and family until I came to Siempre Unidos.”

Many of you know The Rev. Pascual Torres and helped build our clinics. I hope you enjoy his message and this report



SU staffer Yolany Montufar, medical student Gina Reza, Denise Main, Amy Rankin-Williams.

on the work we’ve carried out with your tremendous support and friendship.

*Denise M. Main*

**Denise M. Main, MD**  
Co-founder & President, Board of Directors

## TWO HUSBANDS

In 2002, “Marta” learned she was HIV-positive and had TB. “I thought I was going to die in the following days. I didn’t want to eat,” she says. “I didn’t want to go to the local hospital; I was afraid someone from my neighborhood would see me.



Marta and her daughter embrace.

People look at you and say ‘this one has HIV, this one has HIV.’ I’ve always lived with this fear.”

Her 16 year-old daughter, “Lisbeth,” sits next to her and cries when she hears her mother describe the discrimination.

To avoid detection, Marta came to Siempre Unidos for treatment. She brought her indefatigable spirit with her. “Other people see those of us with HIV as depressing. They have a misguided way of seeing other people,” she says. “I feel I am a worthy, dignified woman. I am a strong woman.”

“HIV simply is” Marta declares. “Is it going to defeat me? No. It causes me problems, I get rashes, but I have adapted. I tell my husband, ‘I have two husbands.’ He asks ‘Who is the other?’ ‘HIV’ I tell him. I sleep with it. I have meals with it. He laughs because I think this way.”

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## CLINIC-BASED SERVICES

### Siempre Unidos Clinics Deliver More than Medication

The only nongovernmental organization authorized to provide HIV treatment in Honduras and sought after for its wrap-around support services, our patients travel by boat, bus and car to receive care at our San Pedro Sula and Siguatepeque clinics. They join over 420 HIV-positive and 1,200 primary care patients treated annually.

SU services go beyond dispensing medication. The staff visits patients in their homes when they initiate treatment and return if nutritional, emotional or adherence-related problems are identified. We provide monthly food baskets to people living on less than \$2 daily and who may suffer poor outcomes due to malnutrition and their HIV status. Monthly support groups meet and individuals and couples receive counseling. Commonly explored themes include loneliness, depression,

stigma, work-place discrimination, right to privacy, self-efficacy and setting goals.

We are tenacious in ensuring the best possible outcomes for our patients. For example, “Linda,” pictured right, took a 2-hour bus ride to our clinic with a non-functioning immune system and weighing only 70 pounds. She was fed breakfast and taken to a hospice care center. Our doctor and nurse monitored her condition, our home visitors provided support and companionship, and Pascual, our Honduran Executive Director, brought Linda’s children to stay with him to be close to their mother. Board member Dr. Jay Lalezari, a HIV specialist, delivered a new antiretroviral regimen she could tolerate. She was reunited with her children, gained weight and remains in our care.



*Linda begins treatment at Siempre Unidos.*



*Linda two months later.*

## ADVOCACY

### No More Paper Bags

The violence in Honduras has caused backlash from right-wing extrajudicial groups who target marginalized individuals. Sex workers and the LGBT community have suffered particularly and SU staff has been threatened and harassed. We compile reports on murders and assaults and publicize them on a website to bear witness and raise awareness.

Last year, we organized 5 marches in solidarity with people who are gay, commercial sex workers, and/or HIV-positive and against transphobia. Walking freely and without disguise is a big improvement over 10 years ago when our patients wore paper bags over their heads due to stigma.

A final way we have advocated for our patients and marginalized communities is by enlisting the help of our patients who are attorneys who provide pro bono legal



*SU staff and volunteers march on International AIDS Day.*

representation to people experiencing violence and discrimination due to their HIV status and/or sexuality. With the staff’s assistance last year, they were able to help

a battered transgendered woman receive compensation from her assailant.



## OUTREACH

### Grant Expands Testing, Finds High HIV Prevalence Rate

With funding from the Gilead Foundation, SU increased its HIV and Hepatitis B testing and found a 9% prevalence rate among people tested in slums, city parks and market places (Hep B rate was below 0.5%).

We expanded our work to the *bordos* – slums – where houses built up along rivers flood regularly and the communities have no schools or health services. We held day-long health fairs at public parks and

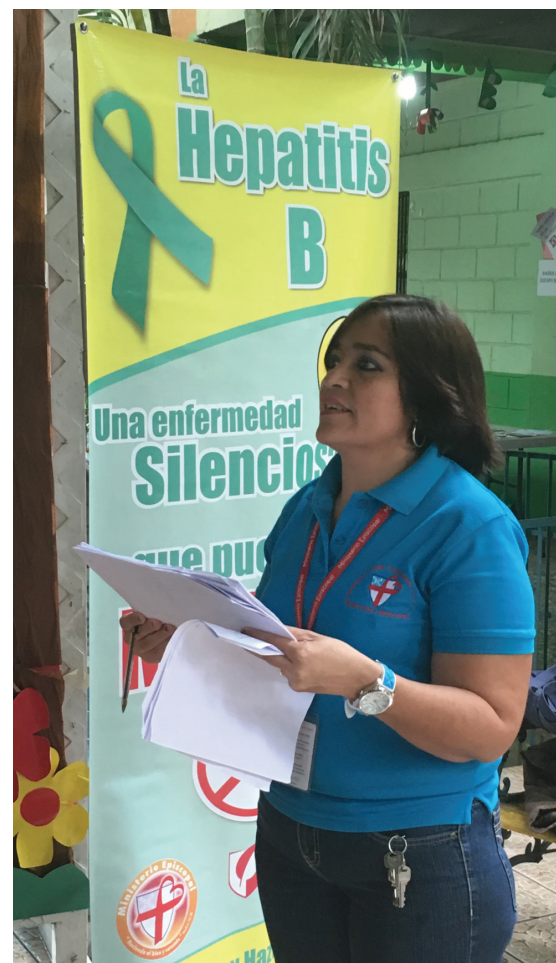
markets where we offered the testing as well as blood pressure monitoring, child and adult checkups, and other basic services. Of the 9% testing positive for HIV, 27% self-reported as gay or transgendered. SU staff ensured all enrolled in treatment.

Yolany, Xiomara and other staff continue their daily and nightly education and testing at brothels, clubs, army barracks, prisons and among the Afro-Carib Garifuna community to ensure these

groups – most with HIV prevalence rates between 4% and 10% – reduce the risk of transmission and access free treatment. Episcopal Relief and Development is a major supporter of this ongoing outreach.



Community members wait to be seen for HIV testing, blood pressure monitoring, well baby checkups and other conditions.



Outreach worker Delmy Medina shares a presentation on Hepatitis B.

## 90-90-90 CAMPAIGN

### Together We Can Limit the Spread of AIDS in Honduras

Siempre Unidos is uniquely poised to help stop new HIV infections and treat people with AIDS because we focus on the populations with the highest HIV rates – members of the LGBT and Garifuna communities, commercial sex workers, prisoners and people living on less than \$2/day. Our Campaign is aligned with the United Nations worldwide framework with the following goals.

#### Test 90%

Test 90% of people for HIV

#### Treat 90%

Treat 90% with antiretroviral therapy (ART)

#### Achieve 90%

Achieve low viral loads in 90% of people by 2020

*Viral load is the level of HIV in the blood. The lower the level, the healthier the individual and less likely to infect others. In fact, the likelihood of infecting one's partner can drop by 99%.*

Our goal is to raise \$90,000 per year between 2015 -2017. We are one-third of the way there. Sample annual costs include \$5,000/year for nutritional support for our impoverished patients and \$1,500 for 100 HIV test kits. You can learn more here:

<http://www.siempreunidos.org/donate/90-90-90-campaign/>





## A Message from El Reverendo

To all of you who support the work of Siempre Unidos, and on behalf of its team and beneficiaries, I want to take advantage of this opportunity to say GRACIAS for your contribution of generous donations that make it possible for us to carry out all the services that are provided through this ministry to benefit others.

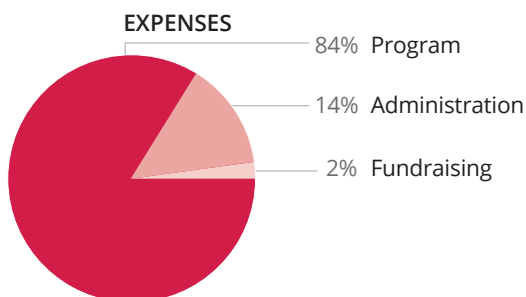
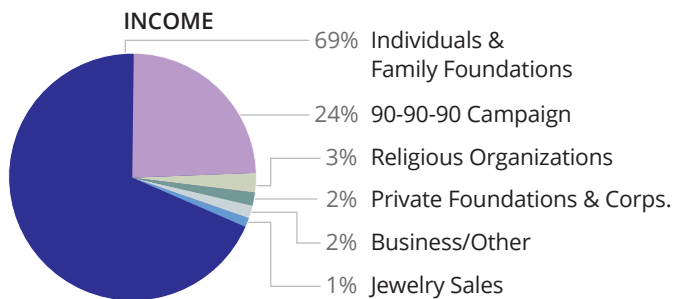


*Pascual makes a home visit to an HIV+ patient on her birthday.*

Siempre Unidos works with the very poor people of Honduras, many of whom live on less than two dollars a day. Each donation helps ensure that our patients achieve a better quality and longer expectancy of life. In many cases the welfare of an entire family, or of children and significant others, depends on the family member who lives with HIV. Be assured that our services are provided with quality and human warmth.



## FINANCIALS



*In 2015 Siempre Unidos' cash-basis income totaled \$370,088 and expenses totaled \$333,582. The net income was raised as restricted income and will be released for program expenses in 2016.*