

The Worm Project

Combating World Hunger Through Parasite Removal

Newsletter

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Annual Banquet A Big Success

By Gary Delp, Board President



The Worm Project's annual banquet was held on September 16 at the Franconia Heritage Banquet & Conference Center. We are so thankful for the wonderful turnout of over 200 attendees who enjoyed a free meal that included the rice and beans that is typical in countries

where we work. After the meal, guest speakers included three of our partners from other charitable organizations who talked about their de-worming efforts around the world: Howard Schiffer, President and founder of Vitamin Angels, Debra Bara of Children Without Worms, and a local hero now working in Haiti, Mary Benner of Hope for Health. God's presence was evident as the speakers' words inspired me to work harder to raise money to help His children.

My best memory from the banquet came when we recognized two girls with beautiful hearts for helping other children. These girls decided they could make a difference in the world. One was a nine year old named Katie Casale, whose story was featured in our last newsletter. Katie had asked guests invited to her birthday party to make donations to The Worm Project instead of buying her presents. The other was a six year old girl named Anju who helped raise money with a lemonade stand. As I invited each girl to the front of the room, Katie, the nine year old, came forward with a huge smile as I told the audience about how she made it possible to purchase medicine to treat 15,000 children through her sacrifice. Six year old Anju, with encouragement, tentatively walked to the front a little overwhelmed by the applause of the audience. It's understandable that all the applause would be intimidating for someone just six years old. However, as she turned around to view the video and saw the picture of her at her lemonade stand, she began to smile. It was then, I knew that she would be fine. These two girls helped show us adults how to make sacrifices for those less fortunate than us and be bold in doing the Lord's work.

Fighting Worms with Lemonade

Anju had participated in a lemonade stand fund raiser through school and wanted to try her own lemonade stand for a different project. After brainstorming a list of charitable projects her church, Plains Mennonite, was involved in, Anju

picked The Worm Project because it would directly help other kids like her. She thought she could sell more lemonade at a church fellowship meal, so she set up her lemonade stand next to the drink table. Anju and Tommy, her



Anju's Lemonade Stand Sign

helper, are very thankful for the church's generosity in helping them raise \$199.31 for The Worm Project. Anju is excited to do another lemonade stand in the future since this one was such a success.



Anju and Tommy sell lemonade to help The Worm Project

My Experience on a Distribution of De-worming Pills

By Dr Clarence Freed



I met Shelley at the orphanage on my first visit. She was approximately six years old. She had been in the orphanage for a number of months. She and all the children in the orphanage had signs of malnutrition with diminished muscle mass and extensive skin problems. Shelley however had some distinct personality problems for a young child. She was cranky, she was depressed, she was sour in her interaction with everybody including me. Nothing made her happy or smile.

On my first trip we de-wormed all the children with albendazole. The next day Shelley came out of the bathroom screaming because she was passing worms. She had no idea what was happening to her. Two months later when I visited the orphanage again Shelley was a totally different personality. She was happy, she was pleasant, she was outgoing. It was a complete transformation. The personality changes were so dramatic, and I could only attribute that to the fact that being infested with worms changed her body chemistry so much that it affected her personality and who she was. Today she is a beautiful 11-year-old child with a very outgoing, pleasant personality.

I was in northern Haiti doing clinics when I encountered this story in the village. A Christian family had a young boy approximately eight years old. He had a large belly, and one day he stopped eating. No matter what the parents did he just wasn't hungry and said he couldn't eat. The village priestess said he was cursed with a demon. After four days of not eating, his father told him he had to have some nourishment. He gave him a piece of candy to suck on. As he sucked on the candy the



Dr Freed treating a young child

hungry worms in his intestine came up his esophagus into his lungs and he died. As they prepared his body for burial worms came out of every orifice in his body. The heartbroken family said to the voodoo priestess, "see it was not a devil, unfortunately our child was just filled with worms."

In one of the villages, I heard this story told by the family of a 12-year-old boy. The story shows how worm infestation causes susceptibility to any kind of disease.

When a child is infested with worms the worms eat up to 25% of the nutrition from the food that the child eats. The worms also cause anemia. These infested children then develop what is called acquired immune deficiency disease of malnutrition. Their immune system diminishes away to almost no immunity and no resistance to disease. These children with the AIDs of malnutrition become very susceptible to any disease process.

They have no resistance and can die very quickly from anything. In this village this 12-year-old boy got a small pimple on his thigh. Within 24 hours it was infected. 24 hours later he had septicemia and sadly, within another 24 hours he died.



Dr Freed explains treatment to a child's guardian

De-worming Medicine Gives Honduran Mother Peace of Mind

Article and photos courtesy of Vitamin Angels

Surrounded by six of her children, Sinia sat with us under a canopy of trees. The shade was a welcome reprieve in the aptly named community of Hottest Sparrow in Roatan, Honduras.

Nataniel, at 11 years old, was the oldest of her children present. The other children descended in age down to three-year-old, Angelito. Not present were her three oldest children, ranging from 14 to 19 years of age. She also shared there were four additional children that had passed away from undisclosed causes.

Sinia witnessed the powerful impact of albendazole (de-worming medicine) firsthand. She recalled a moment after one of her sons received the de-worming treatment when a worm came out of his mouth, possibly trying to escape the effects of the medicine. Although they have access to a well for drinking, cooking, and washing, contamination by parasitic worms is a persistent threat to their water source.

The poignant memory, luckily, stands alone as the only occurrence within her family. Because of the effectiveness of the de-worming medicine, all of her other children are worm-free, Sinia asserted. She is grateful that her children continue to have access to the treatment and for the peace of mind it brings. Thanks to medicine supplied by The Worm Project, millions of children are free from parasitic worms.



Our Enemy

The roundworm is the most common of the parasitic worms that infect hundreds of millions of children. The Worm Project purchases medicine to treat children in countries where parasitic worms are most prevalent.

Disease

Ascaris lumbricoides, also commonly called roundworm, is a parasitic worm common in tropical and sub-tropical regions that causes a disease called ascariasis.



Closeup: Head of Roundworm

Symptoms of the disease vary and some people don't even know they are infected. People infected with multiple worms may experience diarrhea, abdominal pain, general malaise and weakness. These symptoms can affect people's ability to work and learn and impede physical and mental development. If not treated, worms may become so numerous that the small intestine becomes blocked and the child may die without surgery to remove the worms.

Lifecycle of Parasitic Worm (roundworm)

People become infected when they ingest fertilized parasitic worm eggs lying dormant in the dirt. Once in the body, the worm egg hatches and cleverly works its way through the body by passing through the wall of the small intestine and into the bloodstream where it travels through the liver and heart and into the lungs. After about 3 weeks, the worm is coughed up, swallowed, and returns back to the small intestine where male and female worms mate. One female worm can produce up to 200,000 microscopic eggs per day that are then passed back into the dirt via feces to start the lifecycle all over again. Adult worms can live 1 to 2 years inside the human host and may grow up to 18 inches long.

Treatment / Medicine

Albendazole is the drug of choice for treating parasitic worms in children and adults. The drug is safe and effective with few side effects. This medicine is available in a mint-flavored chewable tablet at a cost of two cents per tablet. Treatment guidelines for mass de-worming programs are one tablet every 6 months in areas with high rates of parasitic worm infections and one tablet every 12 months in areas with lower rates of infection.

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Web: wormproject.org
Email: Info@wormproject.org
Phone: (267) 932.6050 Ext. 123

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