



the CHALLENGE

MOVING EARTH TO SHARE HEAVEN JUNE 2023

Cementing New Relationships

Volunteering in Nicaragua

Partners for the Harvest

Giving Coalitions

Accomplishing More Together

What Draws Us Back

A Family's Commitment to Missions

Remembering Why We Serve





PARTNERS FOR THE HARVEST

A MESSAGE FROM TIM JOHNSTON, DIRECTOR OF PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

I can remember it like it was yesterday. It sounded like a wolf’s howl or a wounded cat crying over and over. Throughout the community and the jungle brush surrounding our mission home in Papua New Guinea, the wailing echoed all day and into the night. Someone had died in the village, and the women’s wailings and grief left an everlasting impression that formed another cry deep within me. (At a very young age, God impressed upon my heart the hopelessness of the lost and the great need to take Jesus to the lost people of the world.)

I knew that I never wanted to attend one more funeral without hope. I knew I wanted to give my life to missions to share the message of hope, the Gospel of Jesus Christ so that no one would cry ever again at the prospect of a godless eternity. Then, when I was 18, God challenged my heart through my study of His Word at Bible school to be part of taking the Good News to the nations.

I came to a crossroads in my life and felt I could not ignore the immense need to reach those without hope, so my wife Jan and I chose to be part of the solution by participating in the Great Commission. This passion eventually led me to serve as the Director of Partnership Development at Friends in Action International.

Biblical Principles and Partnership

The biblical principles of stewardship, transparency, and accountability undergird Partnership Development

at FIA. We genuinely count those of you who pray, who give, and who go to support our ministry as our dear friends! We pray for you and enjoy learning about the details of your life—both the happy and the challenging—so we can make those prayers specific.

The checks you mail, or the online notifications received when you give, are not the goal for us. They are just evidence of our partnership. You are out there in your places of work, neighborhoods, and churches—using your influence, resources, and blessings to invest in the eternal. We never lose sight of the people who help make every project possible! Thank you!

Every dollar counts because each gift is an offering given sacrificially, joyfully, and as unto the Lord Himself.

We recognize that every dollar counts because each gift is an offering given sacrificially, joyfully, and as unto the Lord Himself. We subject ourselves to the scrutiny of an external and autonomous auditing committee and the sound counsel of our independent Board of Directors to ensure your giving is appropriately managed and allocated according to your wishes.



We are excited about some new ways to partner with FIA this year:

- 1 **Coalitions of Giving:** Smaller businesses or churches can increase their giving impact by joining together (see page 3)
- 2 **Legacy Giving:** Annuities, wills, endowments
- 3 **Tribute Giving:** In honor of a special person or milestone
- 4 **Commodity Giving:** Gifts-in-kind or discounted materials
- 5 **Event Sponsorship:** Our banquet save the date is in this issue!

I often think of Luke 5:7 as a metaphor for Partnership Development at FIA. As Jesus provided a great haul of fish, the disciples got busy trying to pull in the nets bursting with fish, but they couldn’t do it alone. “And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink” (Luke 5:7, KJV). God has made us fishers of men together. We cannot do it alone, nor were we meant to. We are so grateful that we can call on our partners to come and help pull in the harvest that God has prepared for Himself!

Thank you for partnering with us! Your giving makes a difference. Never underestimate what God can do with what you offer Him! You are helping to transform wails of hopelessness into cries of praise. “I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue” (Psalm 66:17, KJV). ■



GIVING COALITIONS: Accomplishing More Together!

What do a business entrepreneur, an HVAC company owner, and a financial professional have in common? A heart for the Great Commission and an interest in strategic investments of their resources!

FIA's giving coalitions pool resources to make greater global and eternal impacts. Individuals, churches, or businesses choose a high-impact, large-scale need and focus their prayers and dollars together toward meeting that common goal.



In this case, three businessmen agreed to contribute toward purchasing a new generator—an indispensable piece of equipment for FIA's work among the Rama Cay people of Nicaragua. The generator helps to power tools used during community transformation projects, provides refrigeration to help feed work teams and villagers, and meets lighting and electrical demands.

\$24,000 to purchase, package, and ship the machine to Nicaragua is daunting to any single giver. By pooling their funds, these men recognized a way to meet the practical need, spurring on the work and ministry through their support (see Hebrews 10:24-25).

Coalitions are being formed among a diverse community of believers from many different spheres: Sunday school classes, churches across North America, philanthropic individuals, businesses, women's groups, and even families. Some coalition givers remain anonymous. Others choose to interface. Some are multiplied through matching funds, while all are making life-changing, eternal impacts among the least reached people groups in the world!

We have plenty of opportunities if you are “likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind” (Philippians 2:2) through a joint giving venture!

Help Fund a Well: Bring Jesus, The Living Water, to unreached people in an area where less than 0.2% have ever heard the Gospel (\$10,000).

Ranch Development: Invest in restoring and revitalizing a ranch development project to feed NiVan villagers in Vanuatu (\$26,000).

Build a Hurricane-Resistant Home: Remediate unsanitary living conditions among the Rama villagers in Nicaragua (\$8,000).

Or contact FIA's Partnership Development team to craft a giving plan with you!
TimJohnston@FIAintl.org or 717-579-7001

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Our focused diligence has enabled us to receive Charity Navigator's coveted 4-star rating, good standing with all seven standards of financial stewardship with the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA), the top-rated badge from Great Non-Profits.org, and GuideStar's platinum transparency rating.



SCAN TO
LEARN
MORE ►





Cementing NEW RELATIONSHIPS

RACHEL MCKEEHAN | FIA VOLUNTEER IN NICARAGUA

The Rama men were eager to learn about and use the steel bending machine. Tasked with creating 22 cages to hold the footings that would support the structural columns for the kitchen and dining facility, the villagers caught on quickly and enthusiastically. The building would allow for a communal area for cooking and a gathering place for eating after church services, during work projects, and when the community gathers. Our work was the next step in preparing to lay the structure's foundation.

We talked as we worked. The air around me was moist, and I commented that it would rain soon. "It looks like rain, but it won't," one man spoke in his Rama Creole language. There was enough English peppered through that I could understand what he meant. Since the monkeys in the trees nearby weren't hollering we could continue our work without fear of getting the tools wet. And he was right. It never did rain.

This was my first time traveling with Friends in Action. Having worked for four years as an adventure outfitter in Wyoming, I wasn't nervous about

the simple living conditions. I had been an animal packer and cooked for dozens of people over an open fire. I was more nervous about meeting the Rama Cay villagers, understanding their culture, and figuring out how to help them. My nervousness quickly dissipated as the people welcomed me. They were excited to see the FIA staff and continue the Bible lessons with the missionaries.

I spent time with the Rama women cooking over coals on the ground or a firebox. Paulina and I worked together on chores foundational to their everyday life. We prepared rice, beans, and fish for the work team and those who gathered to listen to the chronological teaching of God's Word.



The women taught me how to fry a jack fish in a unique way—a recipe I'm now enjoying at home! The cooking process was laborious and required attention to keep the open flame consistently hot. The women used a huge kettle or rounded vat to sit on the fire and placed a lid on top with coals. The heat from above and below created oven-like conditions to make the bread. They fried bananas four or five diverse ways and used veggies to create tomato salad, peppers and onions, or sauces they poured on the meat. The villagers referred to FIA's meals as *mejora*, or improvement, because they usually could only afford beans and rice.

Understanding The "Why"

As we worked, we talked too. I began to understand the importance of the construction project and the "why" behind what FIA was doing. Over time, the villagers who had come to learn trade skills through community transformation projects like this one were now faithfully attending Bible teaching sessions each week. The grass hut structure was packed with 65 or more villagers listening with rapt attention and asking spiritual questions. Rick and Eunie Johnson,

FIA partner missionaries who have been sharing the Gospel with the Rama for the last decade, mentor and lead them as they study the Word.

The focus of this latest project made sense—the Rama people build relationships over food. When people gather to share a meal, they also share their hearts and lives. A designated cooking and dining area would help host large gatherings and enable people to interact and share more freely. I could see how this project would catalyze more opportunities for the Gospel and discipleship.

The more we talked, the more I sensed the Rama believers' concern for my spiritual foundations. Different villagers asked me on many occasions if I had “complete trust.” They asked if I understood that Jesus alone was the means to salvation. They were referring to 1 Corinthians 3:11, “For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (NKJV). As Christians, having a solid foundation means having the right foundation. If we base our faith on anything other than the Cross of Jesus Christ, then that foundation is faulty. I once heard someone say, “If you get Jesus wrong, it doesn't matter what you get right because your foundation is wrong.” They wanted it to be clear in my head and heart that I was not trying to gain eternal life through doing good works or buying God's favor. The foundation of my spiritual life had to be by faith alone, in Christ alone.

The cement poured into the cages the villagers and I had built, creating the foundation for the kitchen and dining facility. I smiled, thinking about the living metaphor right in front of us. What a joy to realize the firm foundation the Rama believers had in Christ. “Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, ‘Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.’” (2 Peter 2:6, NKJV). ■



PAPUA NEW GUINEA

“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”

– Mark 16:15 (KJV)

What Draws Us Back

A FAMILY'S COMMITMENT TO MISSIONS

JAY BRUBACHER | FIA ASSOCIATE

This past March, our family left our home in Ontario, Canada, and made a two-day, 25-flying-hour trip to Wewak, Papua New Guinea (PNG), for a two-week stay. We are blessed to have served here many times over the past several years, once staying for 18 months between

2015 and 2017. We became Friends in Action Associates after seeing firsthand how FIA encourages and supports the missionary community, helping to accelerate the spread of the Gospel to people in hard-to-reach places. We feel that our gifting matches FIA's vision.

The itinerary and focus of these trips are different each time, but that's the nature of life as a missionary in *the land of the unexpected*. We make prayerful plans but hold them loosely as the culture, climate, and nature of the job demand flexibility and a sense of humor.



Serving With Our Hands and Hearts

We spent much of this trip on the FIA base in Wewak, working on a simple construction project to increase the efficiency of the base. Our two teenagers, Jack and Lena, and I connected two outbuildings with a second-story bridge and built an exterior staircase to allow access to the offices and storage. God blessed and strengthened our hands so that we could finish the entire project in the time we had. My wife, Krista, cooked, cleaned, sewed, hosted, and pitched in wherever she was needed, as there is always so much to do when serving in a jungle setting in a developing nation. We assisted with fuel and supply runs to bush locations and various other tasks. It was so special to see the PNG national people working within the missionary

community and growing in their faith and understanding of God, learning to be a light to their communities.

FIA has a close relationship with Ethnos 360, formerly New Tribes Mission, in PNG. Sitting across a table from friends and partners in ministry was wonderful, sharing a meal and long conversations about our joys and defeat. FIA has played many roles over the years in preparing and supporting Ethnos 360 missionaries who are planting churches in remote bush locations by building airstrips, purchasing/arranging/transporting supplies, constructing houses, making repairs, and more. It's exciting to see the Lord bring His Word to tribal groups who now know and love Jesus. Ethnos 360 missionaries are at work in many tribal locations in PNG. Some are at the beginning of the process, learning the heart language and beginning their culture study. Others have just presented the Gospel for the first time after many years of difficult preparation and are seeing a church born. In two villages, New Testament translations have just been completed (both of which have had airstrips built by FIA). Another village hosted a large Bible conference (very unique!) and saw many people strengthened in their faith. We were able to assist in loading and delivering food, fuel, reading materials, and other supplies to this group in preparation for the conference.

It has been a great blessing to serve the Lord in these places, and it was so sweet to be there with our kids again and see them engage as older teenagers. They see how the Lord is at work building his church through various mission organizations, strengthening believers, and continuing to reach remote tribal groups who are waiting to hear the Gospel of Jesus.

So, What Is It That Keeps Drawing Us Back To PNG?

It's certainly not the climate, bugs, potholes, or lack of amenities. It's not the long flights and long days of travel.

What draws us back are the people—seeing their hearts savor the light.

What draws us back is the work—using practical gifts that the Lord has given to build his kingdom.

What draws us back are the long-term friendships—missionaries who gladly give their best to reach the unreached.

What draws us back is the mission—knowing that God is at work in these remote parts of the world—for our good and his glory! ■





Hospital Misión Tarahumara
Chihuahua, Mexico
Sierra Madre Mountains

Remembering Why We Serve

MATT DURKEE | FIA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

“As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”

– 1 Peter 4:10 (KJV)



After five days spent drilling a water well in a village three hours away, a day of vehicle maintenance was the last bit of work to be completed before the end of the trip. Safe and reliable vehicles are essential to support the ministries of the Medical Mission in northern Mexico, and our service trip was coming to a close. On deck was the service of a 2014 Toyota 4Runner, the vehicle used to shuttle the hospital’s Mobile Clinic team to remote stations 3-4 times a week. Also requested was a safety inspection and brake service for a 1987 International truck, soon to be sent out on a 3-hour drive down winding mountain roads.

For the 4Runner, diagnostics and adjustments, a transmission service, brake job, lube and filter change, and a full frame inspection touches the surface of the maintenance required. The full service was 30,000 km (18,640 mi) overdue, partially done, or deferred because no one was available to do it. The International hadn’t had an inspection and adjustment in over seven years (the time of last real usage).

Double Duty Staff

As we closed out the day, Walt, the project manager for the hospital and our primary co-worker onsite, asked the team if we wanted to go on a quick one-hour hike into the hills surrounding the valley. As soon as some team members responded yes, the hospital staff called and pulled Walt away. One of the other hats he wears is that of a nurse and general anesthesiologist, including additional training in administering ultrasound intravenous (IV) lines. A malnourished and dehydrated child needed an IV that only Walt was trained to provide, as all her veins had dried up except for a tiny vein on her pinky. Forty-five minutes later, praise the Lord, the IV was in place, and she was receiving the life-saving fluids she needed.

Suffice it to say, it was too late in the day to make the hike, but this wasn’t the first time (or the last time) that Walt was pulled in multiple directions to respond to a medical need at the hospital or to provide building and operations support. Medical staff do double duty as maintenance staff.

That interaction reminded us again why we were there. Walt and the other staff are directly serving the Tarahumara people. The hospital’s doors never close to the sick—even on Sunday. Setting bones, performing surgeries, repairing cleft palates and setting club feet, cleaning wounds, and caring for the sick—this is life for those working at the Medical Mission.



Currently, no qualified or dedicated mechanics are onsite to manage the maintenance of the vehicles: three ambulances, two personnel transport vehicles, trailers, trucks, and 4-wheelers. Though not a priority compared to stabilizing a patient, these are critical tools needed for the hospital to connect with the services outside the four walls of the compound. **Thus, another reminder of why we serve—to stand in the gap when needed.**



The mission also needs personnel to manage the clean water program, helping to drill partner and community wells in the local communities around the hospital. The hospital has a drilling rig, air compressors, and all the tools needed, but no one is dedicated to managing the program. For the Tarahumara, water is an all-precious resource they often go without. The Mobile Clinic team sees children suffering the consequences of drinking dirty and contaminated water. The mortality rate of children under five is roughly 50%, and the leading cause of death is often associated with unsanitary water. A well can provide clean water that literally saves lives. **This is why we serve.**

After two weeks of servicing vehicles and drilling a well, we left praying and trusting that we were an encouragement to the missionaries and their partners. This is how we can help. This is how turning a wrench and drilling a hole can support those making a difference in people's lives for the sake of eternity. **This is why we serve.** ■



ANNUAL AWARENESS BANQUETS

3 DATES &
3 LOCATIONS

Save the Date!

FRIDAY, OCT. 27
6:00 PM

Community Bible Church
331 Anderson Ferry Road
Marietta, PA 17547

SATURDAY, OCT. 28
5:00 PM

The Sheraton Harrisburg-Hershey Hotel
4650 Lindle Road
Harrisburg, PA 17111

FRIDAY, NOV. 17
6:00 PM

**Four Rivers Environmental
Education Center**
25055 West Walnut Lane
Channahon, IL 60401

Celebrate how God is empowering FIA's ministries to speed the Gospel to unreached people groups!



**FRIENDS
IN ACTION**
INTERNATIONAL

FIAintl.org



PO Box 323, Elizabethtown, PA 17022
3950 E Harrisburg Pike, Middletown, PA 17057
Phone: 717.546.0208 • Fax: 717.546.0214 • USA Email: FIA-USA@fiaintl.org
501(c)3 Non-profit Organization



PO BOX 901, Guelph, ON, N1H 6M6
Phone: 905.642.9531 • CA Email: office.fiac@gmail.com
Charity Number: 818791212RR0001