

## **VOSH Illinois mission to Esteli, Nicaragua, February 19-27, 2011**

Our mission took place in the northern region of Nicaragua. Our group enjoyed strong local support from the Lions Club of Esteli-Decano, Nicaragua D-5. Our main contact, who facilitated our ability to work in Nicaragua, was Lion Sergio Romero. We are very grateful for his help. The team traveled by bus to a different clinic site every day. Our favorite commute was to Limay. It was very scenic taking 2 hours to travel 60 miles on dirt roads. Every small town we went to gave us a warm reception and had plenty of patients in need for us to work with.

Our VOSH group included 25 people: 4 optometrists, 1 ophthalmologist, 2 Illinois College of Optometry 3<sup>rd</sup> year students, 3 opticians and 15 supporting persons. Local support included a local optometrist and 5-10 Lions each day. Co-leaders of the trip were Drs. Alfred Rosenbloom and Tracy Matchinski. Dr. Rosenbloom continues to be a core member of our VOSH-Illinois missions. Another special friend, Dr. Cecilia Escobar, joined us from Mexico. Dr. Escobar is our local host in Oaxaca, Mexico.

### **Towns and Number of Patients:**

|         |     |
|---------|-----|
| Esteli  | 375 |
| Limay   | 364 |
| Ocotal  | 368 |
| Condega | 372 |

Total patient count was 1,479. We distributed over 2,000 pairs of glasses. We also distributed 750 pairs of sunglasses and over 150 magnifiers and telescope to patients with visual impairments. We also dispensed many therapeutic eye drops for glaucoma, infection, inflammation, allergic conjunctivitis and dry eye syndrome. Our main referrals included glaucoma, cataract and diabetic retinopathy. Not as many pterygium were seen, but we did see toxoplasmosis, nystagmus, optic atrophy and achromatopsia.

The Lions Club of Esteli-Decano, Nicaragua D-5 hosted us for an amazing party on our last night in Esteli, including good food and company, local rum and a great Mariachi band. The Lions Club was a pleasure to work with and we cannot wait to go back.