

Castañer Newsletter

BRETHREN SERVICE PROJECT
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BRETHREN SERVICE COMMISSION
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P U E R T O R I C O

MEET THE PROJECT WORKERS

Hello, we're so glad you've come to visit our project. First let's go into the office and meet Ralph Townsend, the director of the project, and then we'll go on a tour of the rest of the project. Ralph's jobs are many. He is the administrator, advisor to the personnel, co-ordinator of all the areas of the project, and a father of four youngsters who you will meet later out in the Unit School. Along with his many other duties as director of the project, Ralph has been extremely busy in the last few months working with the architects and contractor on the plans and preparations that go with the building of the New Castañer General Hospital.

Also here in Ralph's office we'd like for you to meet his secretary, Sharon Neher. She does the typing and also keeps the records of the hospital campaign.

In the office just next door we find Esther Petersime, the bookkeeper for the project. Esther is a popular girl and especially on pay days and around noon each day as she also has the job of distributing mail to the people on the project.

While we are here on the first floor of "Casa Grande" let's go on in to the O.P.D. (out-patient department). This is where the doctors spend a great deal of time during each day and often part of the night, treating patients with a variety of complaints and illnesses. The doctors are very busy with patients right now, so let's not interrupt their work to introduce them, but in the office to the left we find Dr. Tom Hall, the acting medical director and in the other office is his wife, Dr. Francoise Hall. Not only does she work treating patients during the day, but they have a family of two small children; Eric, age 2, and Lita, age 1 1/2 months, at home to care for. Several Puerto Rican aides help keep the O.P.D. running smoothly.

As we step outside the door of O.P.D. and look down over the fence, we can see Dave Bollinger working on one of the project vehicles. Dave is the mechanic and is called on to fix many things.

There is Gene Hartman coming in with the eggs. Gene works in maintenance and also is taking care of all the chickens on the project. Gene is the popular ice cream maker too.

We can see Doyle Neher down at the barn just finishing up chores. He milks and takes care of the dairy cows and other animals on the farm. He also has planted a project garden which he cares for.

Let's visit the hospital now and find out who works there. In the Laboratory and Pharmacy we find all Puerto Rican workers. Around the corner in the office is Elsa Groff. She is an R.N. and head nurse in the hospital. Elsa works the day shift at the hospital plus taking care of her family of four children. Elsa's husband, Everett, is the English teacher in the Puerto Rican school.

We won't see Bernice Stoner, R.N., right now as she is still sleeping after a busy night shift at the hospital. Ofelia Rodriguez, a Puerto Rican R.N. is now back at work after a several months leave of absence. The duties of the nurses are many and varied, from sewing up wounds to delivering babies. The R.N.'s have much good help for the Puerto Rican aides who are always on duty.

Let's go on down the steps to the kitchen below the hospital. Here, besides the several Puerto Rican cooks, we will probably find Mildred Townsend, wife of the

.. DAY AT CASTANER GENERAL HOSPITAL

It's 7 A.M. of a typical week day morning. Elsa Groff has just arrived at the hospital to begin her day along with five "ayudantes". As she is parceling out the work among the aides, Drs. Tom and Francoise Hall are eating breakfast as their lively son Eric clamors for some and baby Lita sleeps in her crib. By 7:30 Tom is on his way to Spanish class and at 8 the baby sitter has arrived for the morning and Francoise is on her way to begin rounds in the hospital. She's eager to know how her new meningitis case is getting along. Tom arrives at 8:30 to check his patients. The big concern of the day is how Carmen is getting along. Several weeks ago here in the hospital she had twins, a boy and a girl. Now she is back in the hospital with a very severe pneumonia. She is so upset at having to stay in the hospital while her twins and two other youngsters stay at home. She needs lots of assurance that the babies are doing well on their new formula and that she will be better, but ever so slowly. What with one twin or the other awake all night after she took them home, it's no wonder she's so run down. She just hasn't had enough rest.

Then it's off to clinic for the doctors. There with the help of Tefel and Lita (aides), they will try to see about 20 to 30 patients in the general clinic. After lunch, if necessary, they finish general clinic and begin pediatric and pre-natal clinics. It's January and many of the youngsters have colds. We've survived the measles, mumps, and whooping cough epidemics for the time being. There's one case to refer to the social workers. The program of social work has been reactivated as of this month and it is hoped that the study of problems in individual cases will help lead to a better understanding of community problems as a whole. Ten cases have been undertaken as of this writing, and are a considerable challenge for the new social workers. The emphasis is on positive constructive solutions to problems instead of simple charity handouts. One example is urging families to grow gardens or keep cows where they have land available.

After Eric wakes from his nap, Francoise goes home to care for the youngsters and prepare supper. Tom is delayed by a big machete cut that requires sutures.

By this time Elsa has gone home and Ofelia Rodriguez, who returned to work 3 P.M. to 11 P.M. just this month, has the hospital well in hand. It's a busy evening, what with four "emergencias" in O.P.D. Ofie checks them and decides which must see the doctor. Then of course there is the ever busy maternity department. At 9:06 P.M. a brand new baby boy checked into the world weighing 6 lb. 2 oz.

By 10 P.M. Dr. Tom has made it to his home after reading x-rays, writing orders on the new admission and putting on a cast.

At 11 P.M. Ofie gives the report to two reliable aides and Bernie goes on call. It was her day off so that's why you haven't seen much of her. All seems quiet and sleeping till 2 A.M. when a lady comes in with a dislocated jaw. She's very upset and it takes some time to get her quieted. And wouldn't you know, that intercom that connects us with the doctor's house isn't working tonight. Bernie must run over to "Casa Larga". There's nothing that seems funnier or more exasperating than trying to wake the doctor from outside his house when three other families are trying to sleep in the same building.---Finally the lady's jaw gets replaced and all is quiet until 4 A.M. when a two-year old comes in with very severe "fatiga" (somewhat resembling

