

**The Episcopal Diocese of Georgia
2019 Companion Diocese Commission Annual Report**

51 Missioners Worked in Partnership with Dominican Episcopal Communities

For the past nineteen years, the Episcopal Dioceses of Georgia and the Dominican Republic have bonded in a companion relationship sharing the love of God. This relationship between our two dioceses is a vibrant part of our diocesan ministries, both home and abroad.

During 2019 to date, fifty-one people on two mission teams from the Diocese of Georgia worked alongside Episcopal congregations in two locations in our Companion Diocese of the Dominican Republic. The fifty-one people on these “Go Teams” were supported by parishioners in their home churches, family members, friends, and corporations as the “Home Teams” to provide funds and supplies for the projects the teams accomplished. A third mission team plans a trip to Las Carreras in October 2019.

St. Peter’s (Skidaway Island, February 16-March 2, 2019) The optical clinic and surgical missioners sponsored by St. Peter’s worked in two groups in the city of San Pedro de Macorís. The first set of 26 missioners conducted optical clinics from February 16-23, and the second set of eleven missioners conducted optical surgeries from February 21-March 2. Over the course of the five-day optical clinic, the optical team worked in the local Episcopal health clinic and examined the eyes and eyesight of 910 patients, dispensed 425 prescription eyeglasses, 522 readers, 573 sunglasses, and made referrals to the surgical team for cataract cases. The surgical team removed cataracts and pterygium growths in 98 patients in a local hospital in San Pedro de Macorís. In preparation for this trip, the team raised over \$100,000 and purchased equipment at discounted prices to be used in the surgeries -- an Alcon phaco-emulsifier (for shattering and removing and then replacing the affected lens), an operating microscope (for the surgeon to watch the work in progress), and an autoclave (for cleaning and sterilizing instruments). These pieces of equipment were installed temporarily in a local hospital, but in the future the team hopes that structural modifications in the local Episcopal clinic will make it possible for them to be used for surgical procedures in that setting. This trip marks the sixth year that this optical clinic team has been in the Dominican Republic, and the second year for the surgical team. The team plans to return on January 25, 2020.

Christ Church (Valdosta, June 17-24, 2019) – Fourteen missioners on the team sponsored by Christ Church (Valdosta) worked from June 17-24 in the village of El Pedregal, the site of the Dominican diocese’s rural conference center. The main projects during this trip included painting colorful murals in two kindergarten classrooms in the local Episcopal school, building a bedroom for a handicapped village resident, teaching sewing classes, conducting a veterinary clinic at a local animal rescue center, and forming a “teen team” of three teenage missioners and eight teenage villagers to spend four days together learning sewing and woven bracelet crafts, cleaning up trash and planting bushes on the grounds of the conference center and village, exploring a local ecology center, and helping to staff the team’s annual “splash party” for 125 village children. Mary Jeannette Pringle de Quezada, the wife of the Rt. Rev. Moisés

Quezada Mota, Bishop of the Diocese of the Dominican Republic, was a member of the team for the second year, working with the sewing classes and the “teen team” projects. Bishop Quezada also joined the team for two days to share in the team’s activities and excursions. Soon after returning home, the team sent \$32,055 in donated scholarship funds to support 91 children in the local Episcopal K-8 school for the 2019/2020 academic year. This trip marks the nineteenth year that this team has been in the Dominican Republic. At this time, a 2020 trip has not been scheduled.

St. Anne’s (Tifton, October 2019)

St. Anne’s is planning a mission trip in October to the village of Las Carreras, which they last visited in October 2018 to participate in the consecration of a church they had built over the course of the past eight years. In October 2019, they plan to install a security perimeter fence for the church and do other light construction work in villagers’ homes.

Each of the two completed trips was featured in *From the Field* twice, once during the week the team was in the Dominican Republic and then again after the team returned to Georgia. These articles included photographs of each team and summaries of the work that was accomplished. This publicity pattern will be followed for the St. Anne’s trip in October.

Julia and Julius Ariail (Christ Church, Valdosta) continued to serve as co-chairs of the Companion Diocese Commission during 2019 and represented Bishop Benhase on the board of the Dominican Development Group, a coordinating agency for the dioceses with companion relationships with the Diocese of the Dominican Republic. They have resigned these positions as of December 31, 2019. Effective on January 1, 2020, Bishop Benhase has appointed Haydee and Jim Toedtman (St. Peter’s, Skidaway Island) to serve as commission co-chairs and DDG representatives. For more information on this ministry in the Diocese of the Dominican Republic, consult the Companion Diocese Commission’s webpage at <http://georgia.anglican.org/diocesan-ministry/companion-diocese>.

Julia and Julius Ariail
Co-Chairs, Companion Diocese Commission
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