Mujeres Aliadas Interim Progress Report

to Dining For Women

April 1 – September 30, 2012

1. Please share a brief description of what has been accomplished so far, including progress on the goals and objectives of the program DFW is funding. What impact has been made through DFW funding?

Since January, 2012 the following has been accomplished:

• Hired a full-time professional midwife and part-time nurse midwife.
• Hired the equivalent of a full time nurse (through hiring three advanced students, from our professional nurse midwife school, with nursing degrees, who rotate nursing coverage).
• Expanded the number of clinic days per week to four.
• One of the professional midwives has been capacitated sufficiently to become the Director of Clinical Services.
• Through the efforts of the nurse midwife, other staff have been capacitated to become directors of the midwifery school and the community program.
• Over 500 women and adolescents have received clinical services based on the model of professional midwifery.
• With the help of the midwives, over 1,500 women and adolescent girls have improved their knowledge of sexual and reproductive health and their health care rights through the community-based health and empowerment workshops and the school-based sexuality presentations.
• One of the professional midwives has been capacitated to conduct classes at the Mujeres Aliadas professional nurse midwife school and will be a primary instructor when a new class of students begins in February, 2013.
• One of our major goals is to establish strong relationships with local, state and national governments and health care providers so that they can see the value of care provided by professional midwives and help sustain our program. As a result of hiring the midwives, we have been able to demonstrate to these agencies the benefits of supporting our work. We have had excellent progress in this area including:
  1. Affiliating with the system of government-run rural clinics so that Mujeres Aliadas staff can conduct health education and empowerment workshops to their patients. This has been very
successful, with about 4 workshops conducted per month, with an average attendance of about 40 women.

2. Opening a new clinic in a high need area of the city of Pátzcuaro, in partnership with the local government.

3. We are having weekly meetings with the Ministry of Health for the state of Michoacán to explore how the Mujeres Aliadas model for care based on professional nurse midwives can be integrated into the government health system. The current minister is particularly interested in how we can contribute to lowering the maternal mortality rate in Michoacán since the rate has increased 31% since 2002. He has become a major advocate for our professional midwife school and he recently featured the school on the homepage of the Ministry of Health website and he visited our women’s center (photo included at the end of this report). In addition, he has instructed the director of the main public hospital in the state capital of Morelia to allow our students to attend clinic visits and deliveries. Three of our students started doing this in August, 2012 and the others will follow shortly.

• We have formed an affiliation with the Department of History and Anthropology of Medicine at the main public university of Mexico, UNAM. The activities associated with this affiliation include: (1) A doctor/professor from the medical school will be coming to volunteer with us for 6 months beginning in February, 2013; (2) Professors from the department will be working with us on joint research projects; and (3) They will be assisting us in doing an evaluation of each component of our project.

• In addition, we have formed many affiliations with other universities. These affiliations have led to: (1) Student interns coming to volunteer their time to learn and assist the project; and (2) Faculty coming to give lectures at the school on such topics as child abuse and emergency resuscitation.

• As a result of our success, one of our funders has asked us to replicate the project in another state of Mexico and other countries. With the limited funds provided, we have begun replication of the community health education and empowerment program to villages along the border between the southern Mexican state of Chiapas and northern Guatemala.

Most of the above would not have been possible without the funding from DFW that enabled us to hire the midwives and demonstrate an alternate model of health care, education and empowerment for women and adolescent girls.
2. **Has anything changed in regards to the original program goals and objectives?**

Mujeres Aliadas has grown and changed substantially since the goals and objectives were written in May, 2010, about 2 ½ years ago. At the time we wrote it, our main activity was the community health education and empowerment program operating in 25 communities. As a result of support from DFW and other foundations, we now have two clinics, a birth center, the school for professional nurse midwives, and we have expanded the community health education program to 47 communities, including 6 along the Chiapas and northern Guatemala border.

Although the original goals and objectives haven't changed, we have found as a result of our success to-date that an additional objective needs to be added. This objective is:

> Capacitate local Mexican women to assume responsibility of Mujeres Aliadas.

From the beginning, it has always been the goal that the organization be run by local Mexican women. We have made excellent progress towards this goal through funding by DFW of the nurse midwife position. She has been able to capacitate local staff to assume leadership positions in the management of clinical services, the midwife school, the community program and in governmental relations.

3. **Have you experienced any significant challenges or obstacles in implementation? If so, how are you addressing them?**

Through the hiring of two professional midwives, MA has been able to expand the number of hours that the clinics are open and thereby serve more patients. This has been very successful and well received by area women. However, the main challenge has been in raising awareness about the birth center. Since its opening in January of this year, we have found that local women have been reluctant to deliver with us as they are not familiar with professional midwives. However, we believe this is now changing as we currently have 42 patients who are seeing us for prenatal care and who have indicated that they plan to deliver with us. In addition, for the last 3 months we have averaged about 10 new pregnant patients per month.
We expect further increases in the number of births as we are about to launch a major publicity campaign (made possible by a grant from the MacArthur Foundation) to raise awareness of professional midwifery. This will consist of radio announcements, distribution of new pamphlets that directly talk about the need for professional midwives, the production of a 30 minute video on the need for professional midwifery in Mexico, and, for a limited time, births will be free (they are always free, but we usually ask for a donation).

4. **Has the timeline for the program changed from the original funding application?**

   We began using the DFW funds in January, 2012, after our new clinic space and birth center were opened. In addition, because we currently like sufficient funds to cover the all of the salaries of the clinical staff in 2013, we are expanding the timeline for use of DFW funds into 2013 (we had originally intended to use it all by the end of 2012).

5. **Has funding changed for this program? For example have you received unexpected funding from another source?**

   With respect to the provision of professional midwifery services, we have received funding for an additional professional midwife, at half-time for one year. Other funding we have received, but which is not directly related to the Dining For Women project, is for administrative costs, the professional midwife school, and the community program.

6. **How much of the original DFW restricted funds have been disbursed and how much remain to be disbursed?**

   Amount disbursed: $19,070
   Amount remaining: $23,193
Dr. Rafael Díaz Rodríguez, the Minister of Health for the state of Michoacán, and nurses who are interested in enrolling in the professional midwife school, at a Mujeres Aliadas presentation about the need for professional midwives. Below is a chart that Mujeres Aliadas created and presented to Dr. Díaz to illustrate the growing problem of maternal mortality in the state of Michoacán.
The Mujeres Aliadas women's center

One of two birthing rooms at the women's center.
Juana, one of the nurse midwife students, learning how to do a consult with a pregnant patient.

Margarita, second from left, a Mujeres Aliadas community coordinator, conducting a focus group with indigenous women from the island of Pacanda.