



Jud Archer for BKD



Archer family photo

Consultant lends support to hospital patients in Honduras

When Paula Archer met 8-year-old Franklin, her life changed and her heart grew bigger. The Honduran boy, abandoned by his parents, has Spina Bifida and is a regular patient at Hospital Escuela. Franklin welcomed Archer's friendly face and gentle care as she visited him daily and offered many hugs.

In October 2008, the BKD managing consultant spent a week in Honduras on a trip with Operation New Life (ONL), a medical ministry dedicated to serving the surgical needs of the poor in a safe hospital environment by partnering with and educating local surgical teams.

"I personally met and prayed with very sick children and scared parents, especially moms," says Archer. "Not having a medical or surgical background, I wasn't sure what purpose I could really serve. I learned quickly it was to provide a touch and a warm smile . . . to meet with them and let them know they were not alone in the room and someone really cared. When I say alone in the room, I mean literally. Sometimes four families could be in one room but not providing support to each other. Hondurans are incredibly self-sufficient people; it's part of their survival. However, when approached, they welcomed us with open arms and quickly accepted our prayers and hugs."

ONL medical and clinical staff performed surgeries, including cleft palate repairs and knee replacements, while teaching Honduran physicians. ONL also provided medical equipment such as

hospital beds, anesthesia machines and hip and knee prosthetics because the 1,800-bed facility, built in the 1930s, lacks adequate equipment.

Archer took the trip to Tegucigalpa, Honduras, a country in Central America with 7.6 million people, with her husband Jud and stepdaughter Christina. Jud Archer is a member of the ONL technology team. He records procedures performed by ONL surgeons and sends a live feed to a Learning Center where Honduran physicians congregate and learn in a video classroom.

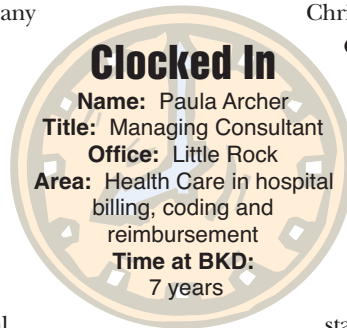
"When we arrived at Tegucigalpa airport, there were radio and TV stations waiting to interview our team,"

Jud Archer explains of their trip. "They broadcast that the American doctors were coming to their city to perform surgeries for a week. Several hundred people showed up at Hospital Escuela the next day with hope of being able to see an American doctor who would agree to perform the surgeries they needed. Some people traveled for days to get there. Some have waited years to be surgically treated. It was an overwhelming picture."

Archer says her trip made her thankful and reflective.

"It sounds so cliché to say that the trip made me feel thankful, but it did. Thankful for the new friends I have in Honduras and the team at ONL. Thankful for the broken tiles in my kitchen and my 15-year-old carpet," Archer says. "My needs are very small when compared to those of Franklin and all the others. I try to reflect on them every day so I don't forget too quickly." **BKD**

During her trip to Honduras, **Paula Archer**, above left, became friends with Gigi, a medical staff at Hospital Escuela. She, along with her husband **Jud** and stepdaughter **Christina**, above right, spent a week in Honduras assisting ill families and children at the hospital.



Paula Archer for BKD

Franklin, a young boy who has Spina Bifida, visits Hospital Escuela often for treatment.

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BKD Life