

**The Episcopal Diocese of Georgia
2017 Companion Diocese Commission Annual Report**

Fifty-two Missioners Shared the Love of God in the Dominican Republic This Year

For the past 17 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 2017, 52 people on four mission teams from the Diocese of Georgia worked alongside Episcopal congregations in four separate locations in our Companion Diocese of the Dominican Republic. This number is an increase from last year's total of 38. The 52 people on the "Go Teams" were supported by parishioners in their home churches, family members, friends, and corporations as the "Home Teams" to finance the projects the teams accomplished.

The Outreach Committee of St. Peter's Episcopal Church (Savannah) sponsored the largest "Go Team" to conduct an optical clinic in the city of San Pedro de Macorís from January 21-28, 2017. The group of twenty included one ophthalmologist, three optometrists, and three opticians as well as 13 translators and volunteers. The final report from Dr. Alan Peaslee, one of the optometrists on the team, stated: "We admitted 964 patients. We dispensed 382 pairs of prescription glasses, 610 pairs of readers, nearly 500 pairs of sunglasses, and ordered 50 pairs of prescription glasses from home to be mailed back to the clinic to distribute. This week we referred a total of 137 for surgical care, 59 for surgical cataracts, 38 for uncontrolled glaucoma, 14 for surgical pterygia and 9 for severe or proliferative diabetic retinopathy, and the remainder for a variety of other treatable problems." This trip marks the team's fourth year at this location, and each year the vision clinic has grown. For more information, contact Dave Sweeterman <davesweeterman@gmail.com>.

The Southeastern Convocation of the Diocese of Georgia sponsored a team of ten missioners working in the villages of El Carretón and Jalonga from January 31-February 8, 2017. In El Carretón they checked on their previous work on a water system for the local Episcopal school, and in Jalonga they worked to activate bakery equipment in a building owned by the local Episcopal church that could be used to bake bread to sell to a nearby public school. This trip marked the sixth consecutive year this team has worked in the Dominican Republic. For more information, contact Rita Spalding <rstetta@gmail.com>.

St. Anne's Episcopal Church (Tifton) sponsored a trip with eight missioners to Las Carreras during March 18-27, 2017. This trip marked the fifth year that this team has worked in this community. They worked on construction projects for villagers, including pouring concrete floors for houses, and renewing friendships with people they had met on earlier trips. For more information, contact Troy Spicer <tspicer@abac.edu> or the Rev. Lonnie Lacy <Lonnie@stannestifton.com>.

Christ Episcopal Church (Valdosta) sponsored a trip with 14 missionaries to the Dominican Episcopal camp and conference center in El Pedregal from June 12-19, 2017. This team has worked in this community since 2001. The main projects for 2017 were building a house in the village for a local family, restoring the goals and nets on a basketball court, conducting a veterinary clinic, teaching Vacation Bible School for 130 school children, and sponsoring a splash party for the children. For more information, contact Julia Ariail <juliacariail@gmail.com> or Julius Ariail <julius.ariail@gmail.com>.

Each of the four mission teams 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.

Julia and Julius Ariail (Christ Church, Valdosta) continued to serve as co-chairs of the Companion Diocese Commission. As Bishop Benhase's representatives on the board of the Dominican Development Group (DDG), a coordinating agency for the dioceses with companion relationships with the Diocese of the Dominican Republic, they attended the board meeting of the DDG in Santo Domingo on February 15, the retirement celebration for the Rt. Rev. Julio C. Holguín as Bishop Diocesan on November 1, the seating of the Rt. Rev. Moisés Quezada as Bishop Diocesan on November 4, and the fall meeting of the DDG on November 6, all in Santo Domingo. Julia serves as secretary of the organization. Julius made an additional trip to the Dominican Republic from September 27 to October 4 to deliver supplies to the clergy and photograph churches and schools. He continues his work to assist with the development of the website and social media of the Dominican diocese and the Dominican Development Group. Both Julia and Julius also maintain the Companion Diocese Commission's webpage as part of the Diocese of Georgia's website at <http://georgia.anglican.org/?page_id=19>. For more information, contact Julia Ariail <juliacariail@gmail.com> or Julius Ariail at <julius.ariail@gmail.com>.

Julia and Julius Ariail
Co-Chairs, Companion Diocese Commission
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