

Open House

OPEN HOUSES: SAT & SUN 2-4PM #51 CLAMERTEN RD., STOUFFVILLE



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Hospital destroyed by mud slide

From page 1.

one-week missions or two-week missions," he said. "Other ones were really quite long - they wanted you for a year or half a year or longer and ... I have a busy practise here in Stouffville, which I like."

But then an ad that read: 'doctors needed urgently' caught his eye.

"So this one, they were happy to have me come for a month."

In February 2008, Dr. Patterson made his first trip to Guatemala's Hospitalita - the little hospital, which was two hours away from the closest major hospital in the state of Solola.

However, the facility wasn't even actually a hospital. It was a retrofitted vacation home. The original hospital was destroyed in a 2006 mud slide.

"You have to picture it, the operating room is in what was either a living room or a dining room (because) there's a fireplace in the corner," Dr. Patterson said. "The other rooms in the villa are sort of unrecognizable other than you can sort of figure which ones were bedrooms and they're probably examining rooms (now)."

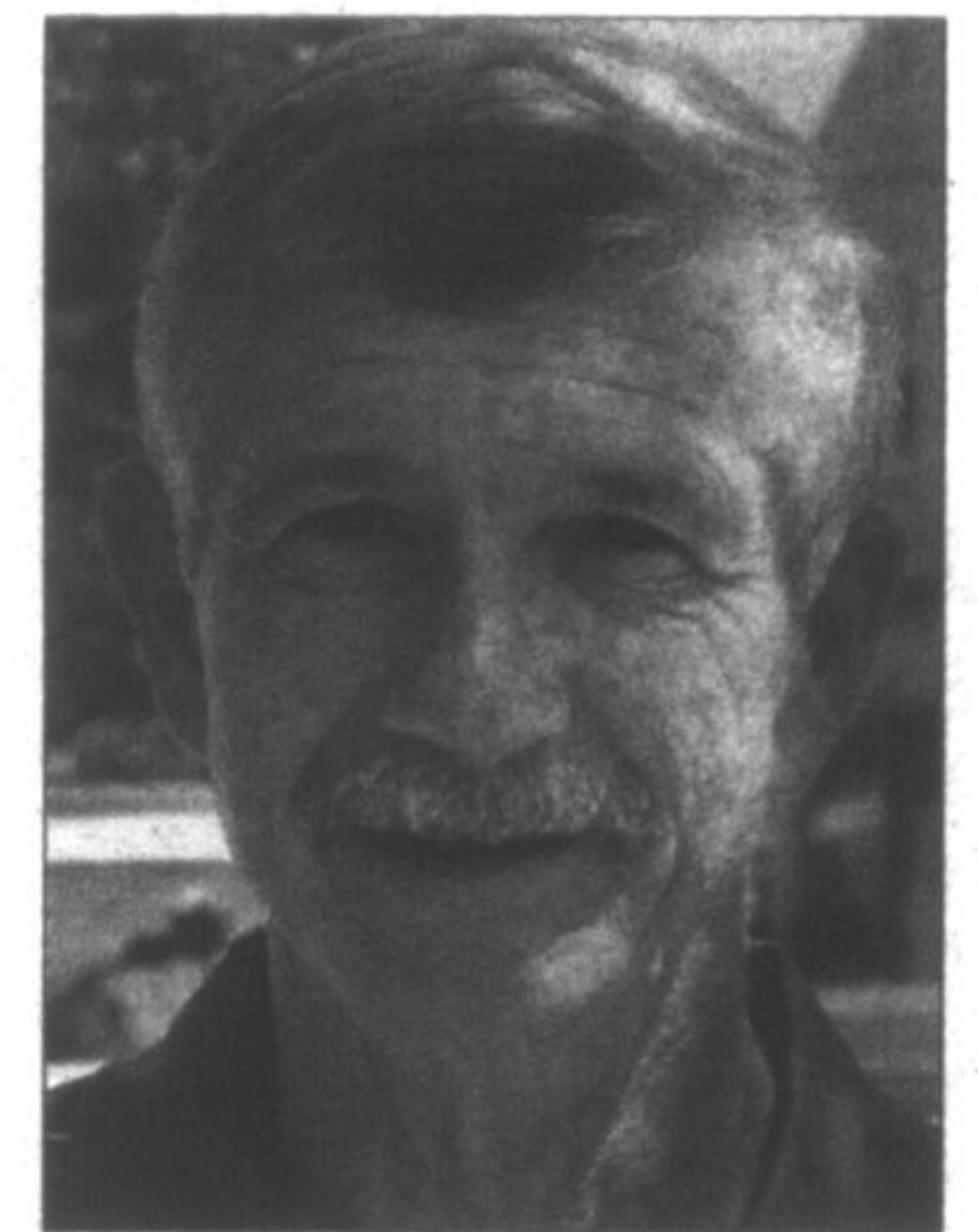
The purpose of Hospitalita was to create an obstetrical presence to reduce maternal morbidity and mortality in the area, according to Dr. Patterson.

Along with being able to provide obstetrics assistance, Dr. Patterson was drawn to Hospitalita because there was also an element of teaching involved.

"Maternity care in Guatemala and certainly in this Myan area is mainly handled by midwives who are usually the daughters of other midwives and have no specific training other than on-the-job training with their colleagues," Dr. Patterson said. "They're not equipped (to handle complications) nor do they understand the complications."

Along with being able to provide obstetrics assistance, Dr. Patterson was drawn to Hospitalita because there was also an element of teaching involved.

"My other thought about volunteer-



ANDREW PATTERSON: Stouffville MD responded to "doctors needed urgently" appeal in ad.

ism is to impart knowledge, not go in and do, but to impart knowledge while you are there," he said.

Dr. Patterson got to do quite a bit of teaching as there were a handful of medical residents from the United States also volunteering at Hospitalita, along with Guatemalan physicians, whom Dr. Patterson supervised.

This past February, Dr. Patterson returned to Santiago de Atitlan.

"I went back because the first experience was so satisfying," he said.

In between Dr. Patterson's two visits, a lot changed. First, his Spanish improved and the construction of a new and modern hospital was well underway, thanks to a fundraising effort in the United States.

"There was a community health centre (that) had been established in the town of Santiago and they were actually handling a lot more of the routine deliveries, but they were still sending the complicated deliveries to our hospital," he said.

Dr. Patterson plans on returning to Santiago de Atitlan for at least one more mission once the new hospital is complete.

"(I) hope that with a new hospital facility, that perhaps a permanent association with a university in the United States makes sense because you need to have Spanish-speaking doctors in order to work there," he said. "If there was a steady stream of physicians and their supervisors down than it would bring the quality of medical care there to a level of excellence."

Raw milk warning issued

Health Canada is reminding you not to drink raw, unpasteurized milk because it could contain bacteria that can make you seriously ill.

Several different kinds of bacteria that could be found in raw milk, such as salmonella, E. coli and listeria, have been linked to foodborne illness. These bacteria can lead to serious health conditions ranging from fever, vomiting and diarrhea to life-threatening kidney failure, miscarriage and death.

Children, pregnant women, older adults

and people with a weakened immune system are particularly at risk.

Because of these health issues, the food and drug regulations department requires that all milk available for sale in Canada be pasteurized. Pasteurization kills the organisms that cause disease while keeping the nutritional properties of milk intact. Raw milk has not been treated to make it safe. It also is not fortified with vitamin D.

For information, contact Health Canada at 613-957-2991, toll-free at 1-866-225-0709 or online at hc-sc.gc.ca