

# MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

## Trip to Guatemala with Horizons of Friendship impacts Cobourg physician

Dr. Paul Caldwell sees first-hand how \$13.2 million Canadian project will benefit Mayan Indigenous women and children

**Cobourg, ON, (14 June 2016)** – Local family physician, Dr. Paul Caldwell, will share with Cobourg residents his experiences as part of local non-profit organization **Horizons of Friendship's** (Horizons) field visit to Guatemala to prepare the launch of a multi-million dollar maternal, newborn and child health (MNCH) project generously funded by **Global Affairs Canada**.

The Wednesday, June 22<sup>nd</sup> presentation at the Cobourg Public Library will feature Dr. Caldwell's impressions of the challenges facing pregnant women, mothers, and young children in Guatemala's predominantly Maya K'iche western highlands. "A K'iche woman is more than 25 times more likely to die during pregnancy and labour than the average Canadian woman," notes Dr. Caldwell. "And it's heartbreaking that the vast majority of these deaths are entirely preventable."

The **Reducing Gaps for Indigenous Peoples in Totonicapán, Guatemala** initiative led by Horizons aims to significantly reduce health gaps in marginalized Maya K'iche communities by improving the culturally-appropriate delivery and use of life-saving MNCH services, directly benefitting over 218,000 people. The project was made possible by considerable funding from Global Affairs Canada that matches every dollar contributed by Horizons six to one.

Dr. Caldwell will also address the importance of Canadians' support for life-saving, community-based health interventions like the one underway in Guatemala. "I spoke to some of the Guatemalans that Horizons' project will benefit, and there is no shortage of appreciation for Canada's solidarity. I encourage the Cobourg community to come learn about the difference that they can make to the health of women and children in Guatemala."

The free public event at the Library's Rotary Room (200 Ontario Street, Cobourg) runs from 7PM to 8:30PM with light refreshments provided. All are welcome.

### Quick facts:

- Every day around the world, approximately 830 women die from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth, and 99% of maternal deaths occur in developing countries like Guatemala, which has the fourth highest maternal mortality rate in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- The Guatemalan province of Totonicapán has a population of over a half million people, 97% of whom are indigenous Maya K'iche.
- The **Reducing Gaps for Indigenous Peoples in Totonicapán, Guatemala** project has a \$13.2 million budget and runs from 2016-2020, with Global Affairs Canada generously contributing \$11.4 million and Horizons of Friendship fundraising \$1.8 million for its contribution.

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### Contact:

Debbie Morales, Resource Development Coordinator  
Horizons of Friendship  
905-372-5483, ext. 13  
[dmorales@horizons.ca](mailto:dmorales@horizons.ca)

### **About Horizons of Friendship**

Horizons of Friendship is a Canadian international development organization founded in 1973, based in Cobourg, Ontario, and built on one abiding principle: helping people help themselves. Working directly with grassroots partners, we empower local people to address needs in their communities and to make social and economic change happen on a big scale.

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