

Local woman to volunteer at maternity clinic in the Philippines

By Nate Smelle

In early June Hannah Torrens will be packing up her things and hopping on a plane headed for Davao City in the Philippines. Upon her arrival in the Philippines fourth largest city she will begin a two and a half year long stint volunteering at a maternity clinic. On Friday, May 1 Torrens held a fundraiser at the Bridge Community Church in Bird's Creek that included a pasta buffet, desserts, door prizes and a photo booth. The funds she raised will be used to finance her travel expenses and the operating costs of the clinic. Torrens said that every year this clinic alone helps in the births of more than 1,500 babies so they need all the help they can get. While volunteering in Uganda Torrens first became concerned with global poverty, and with how inadequate people's access to medical care is in other parts of the world. During this volunteer trip she experienced severe poverty firsthand on numerous occasions, however there were a few defining moments that really motivated her to spend her life helping others.

"Often the best access that people have to health care around the world would not even be an option here," said Torrens.

"We wouldn't even go to one of those clinics because they would be seen as too unclean and under resourced. When I was in Uganda six years ago I volunteered in a rural hospital where the women had to supply their own black garbage bags to give birth on. They used sticks for IV poles, and basically there was no nurse to take care of you. If you don't have relatives to feed you really don't get fed well you were in the hospital. The amount of poverty is unbelievable."

Recognizing that midwives and doctors are needed around the world Torrens decided she could help others best by becoming a midwife herself.

"Midwives and doctors are needed around the world," she said.

"Midwives can train faster though and meet a lot of the needs right away to relieve some of the pressure on doctors."

Once she develops the skills necessary to become a midwife, Torrens plans to return to Africa to work with child soldiers and human trafficking victims. She wants to become part of the community so that she can make a lasting difference with people she helps. A big part of her motivation to help others comes from her faith, Torrens explained. She believes that to be a person of faith one needs to practice what they preach.

"I'm a Christian and I don't just say that I take it seriously," said Torrens.

"Christianity is about loving God and loving others. If Christians were raised to take their faith seriously and started loving people then the whole world would be different. There would be a lot less suffering."

By the end of the night Torrens had raised more than \$3,000 towards her goal of \$24,000. To learn more about Torrens campaign visit her GoFundMe page at www.gofundme.com/s27t6g; or contact Hannah at 647-886-7851, or by email hannahconpanna@gmail.com.