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### **The Chiapas Project Inspires Blair Students**

Dr. David Brody and Dr. Joanne Liegner spoke as part of the Society of Skeptics lecture series on December 5, 2002 in Armstrong-Hipkins Center for the Arts about their medical missions to Chiapas, Mexico.



The two doctors spoke of and were accompanied by Ernesto, an 8-year-old crippled youngster they brought back to the U.S. to undergo corrective leg surgery. Ernesto was born with the tendons of his legs too short and has never been able to walk. Thanks to the Brody/Liegner family, the Shriner's Hospital of Philadelphia and Newton Memorial Hospital, Ernesto will undergo the major surgery in December. He is currently living with the Brody/Liegner family and attending school in Andover, New Jersey. Ernesto's touching story affected the entire audience and prompted many Blair students to ask questions and find out whether they could perhaps become part of the project during their next spring break.

Founded in 2001, the Chiapas Project was inspired by the efforts of former Blair student, Nick Brody, who at 16 yearsold spent the entire summer of 2001 as a volunteer at a boy's orphanage in the capital city of Tuxtla Gutierrez, run by the Salesian Sisters. Nick was joined by his sister, mother Dr. Liegner (gynecologist), and father Dr. Brody (dentist), along with Sister Ernestina Vieyra of Mexico City, in August for a week's work in the remote town of Ocotepc. This small group represented the first medical/dental volunteers to travel to Ocotepc, the center of the Zoque people. Since then, the Brody/Liegner family has led a semi-annual trip to rural Chiapas accompanied by up to 25 volunteers.

The Chiapas Project seeks to provide free medical and dental care to the indigenous Zoque people of the State of Chiapas, Mexico, while encouraging volunteerism and personal growth amongst young people and medical/dental professionals. The Chiapas Project travels to southern Mexico twice each year, once at the end of the summer and again in the late winter. Their next trips will be August 17-24, 2002 and mid-March 2003. To learn more about the Chiapas Project or to become a volunteer, please visit <http://www.chiapasproject.org>.

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