

## International family planning Nonprofit works to improve women's reproductive health

For 20 years, Family Health International has sought to make safe, effective contraceptives available in developing countries, and to stop the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, including AIDS. Now, it's also working on a few projects in the United States.

By KATHERINE NOBLE

Yesterday, nearly 250,000 babies were born. Tonight, during the evening news, the planet's population will grow by another 10,000. Although family planning has stabilized the birth rate in the United States and Western Europe, birth control is a foreign concept to many in developing countries.

For others, it either simply isn't available, is prohibitively expensive or is too difficult to get.

An international nonprofit in North Carolina has been working for more than 20 years to make safe and affordable birth control available to every woman, and man, who wants it. It's also been working to prevent

the spread of sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS.

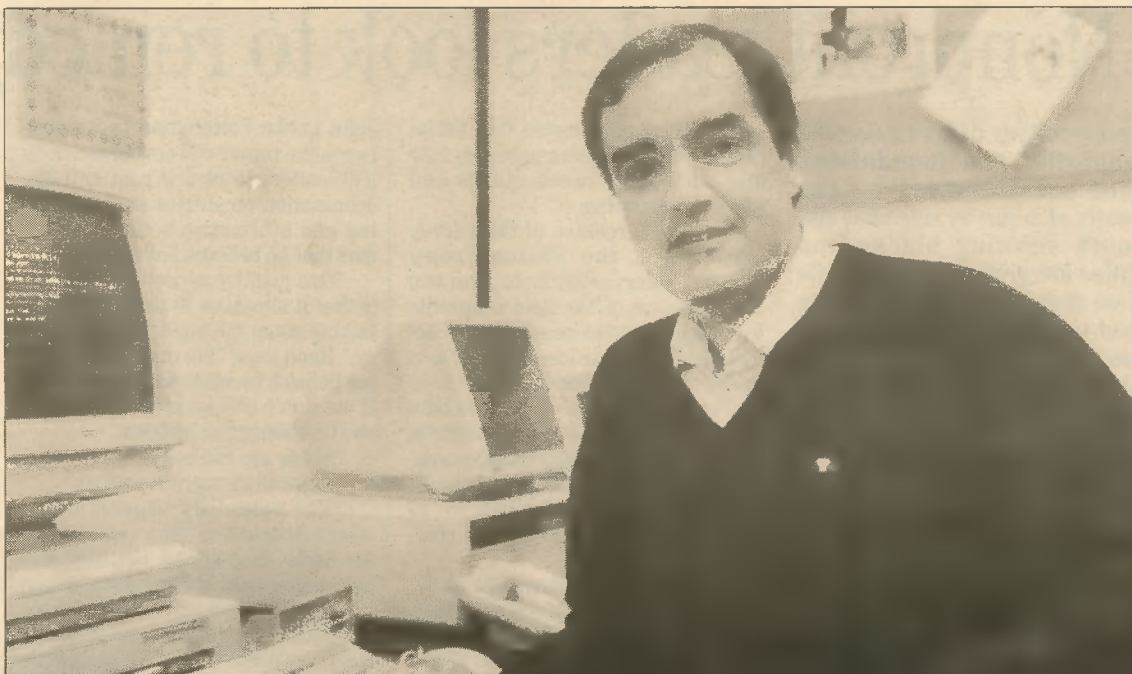
At Family Health International, respecting a woman's right to choose to use birth control is a guiding principle.

"What we are trying to do is to provide safe, effective and voluntary ways for people to control the rate of birth," says Nash Herndon, spokesman for the organization.

The term "population control" isn't part of the lexicon of the staff of more than 400 people at this research and technical assistance organization. Control, they say, rubs against the grain of their mission, which is developing and providing contraceptive choices to women and, as more methods become available, to men as well.

In fact, one of Family Health's newest projects is a study that seeks to understand both the positive and negative consequences of a woman's decision to use family planning.

For example, says Arlene McKay, Family Health's director of development and adviser to the organization's Women's Studies Project, in some developing countries a woman



Carlos Alberto Petta, a leading obstetrician and gynecologist in Brazil, is spending a year at Family Health International learning clinical trials techniques to use in his research on family planning.

Photo by John Fletcher Jr.

### HEALTH

gains respect in her community by having children. For her, a decision to use birth control has consequences far beyond what it does for a woman in the U.S.

Like all of Family Health's research, the results of the five-year Women's Studies Project will be shared with policy-makers, researchers, service providers and women's advocates in the countries

in which the studies are done.

Family Health works only in countries in which it can collaborate with the government and other agencies and individuals. Sustaining of the family planning and health programs they help start is possible, Family Health says, only with government cooperation and collaboration with people who live in the country.

One way Family Health helps to ensure that family planning and reproductive health take hold in developing countries is through a fel-

lowship program that brings top researchers from other countries to Durham for a year.

Carlos Alberto Petta, an obstetrician/gynecologist from Brazil, is the second Mellon Fellow in Contraceptive Health at Family Health. He is studying clinical trials techniques that he can use in his own country. Last year's fellow was from China.

Like many of Family Health's pro-

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### Winning partnerships

## Housing awards highlight nonprofits

The state's first shared residence for the elderly and a neighborhood rebuilding project spurred by nonprofits are among the winners of the 1993 Housing North Carolina Awards.

The N.C. Housing Finance Agency has named five housing projects in Asheville, Ahoskie, Henderson and two in Greensboro as winners of the fourth annual statewide competition.

Programs were judged on affordability, creative financing, design, cost-effective construction, services and effectiveness.

Here are the 1993 winners:

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Pitcher Plants are among the plant species protected by the state's Nature Conservancy.

Photo courtesy of The Nature Conservancy

### Saving plants and animals

## Nature conservancy wins award, opens land management office

The North Carolina Nature Conservancy has long been recognized as one of the country's most active chapters, and last year it was named the nation's outstanding chapter. It recently opened the state's first regional land management office in Wilmington.

By KATHERINE NOBLE

Every week, hundreds of plant and animal species become extinct, the natural communities that were once their homes replaced by concrete or damaged by pollution. Most of these species vanish before scientists have studied them, leaving their possible benefits to man unknown.

Thanks to the efforts of the North Carolina Nature Conservancy, a non-

profit organization dedicated to preserving plants, animals and natural communities, some of these species, and their homes, are being saved. But the Conservancy does more than simply stop development. It manages the land it buys, helping sometimes fragile natural communities thrive.

### ENVIRONMENT

Some of the most complicated and demanding preserves are on North Carolina's southeastern coastal plain. To better manage these lands the Conservancy opened its first regional land management office in Wilmington in September. It plans to open similar offices in the mountains and other areas of the state in the next few years.

"The area of land that we own as nature preserves has grown so large

that it's become apparent that the best way for us to manage these is to have people in the various regions in the state oversee land in that area," says Ida Phillips, communications officer for the state's Nature Conservancy.

Establishing regional offices for land stewardship is a new undertaking for the 16-year-old Conservancy. Before September, it ran all its operations out of its headquarters in Carrboro.

North Carolina's efforts haven't gone unnoticed outside the state. Last year, in recognition of its rapid expansion and complicated and demanding preservation efforts, the international Nature Conservancy named North Carolina's Conservancy its outstanding chapter.

"We've just really had an incredible year, and couple of years," says

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### BRIEFLY

#### Homeless children publish book

A book of stories and poems written by students from A Growing Place school for homeless children in Raleigh is now available from Voices Community Press. The publication of "Listen" was funded by a grant from the Junior League. For information, call (919) 836-9500.

#### Raleigh dance group changes name

The Raleigh Dance Theater has renamed itself the Carolina Ballet Theater to more accurately reflect its mission to serve the Triangle region and to coincide with a major fundraising drive. The 10-year-old organization about to launch a \$1.6 million capital campaign for the 1994-95 season.

#### State offers free history catalog

The N.C. Division of Archives and History is offering a new catalog listing the state's Civil War Roster series and other titles. Among the division's longtime best sellers are paperback books on Tar Heel legends, lighthouses, pirates and highway markers. For information, call (919) 733-7442.

#### Hospice sponsors support groups

Hospice Center of Living in Asheboro is sponsoring support groups for caregivers of Alzheimer's patients. Groups will meet on Mondays and will provide help with feelings generated by caring for ill family members. For details, call Anne Lambe, (910) 672-9300 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., weekdays.

#### Divinity school offers scholarship

The Gardner-Webb University School of Divinity in Boiling Springs has established a scholarship in honor of a Shelby couple who started the endowment. The Carlos L. and Constance C. Young scholarship will be given to students "who have committed their lives to full-time Christian service."

#### New clearinghouse for family support

The North Carolina Clearinghouse for Family Support and Empowerment offers a database of statewide programs for families and communities. The Greensboro-based nonprofit can help those interested in starting new programs. For details, call Laura Altizer, (910) 333-6302.