

December 2016

## International Eye Institute Team Restores Sight of Three Siblings

Twice a year for the last decade, teams from the International Eye Institute (IEI), of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, have donated their time, talents, and resources to the Hospitalito to provide much-needed eye surgeries and care.

During IEI's most recent visit in October the team evaluated a family with three blind children from Santa Clara la Laguna. The children—Francesca, age 9, Antonio, age 6, and Clarisa, aged 18 months—were all diagnosed with congenital cataracts, a common, treatable cause of visual impairment that runs in families.

Following the initial consultation, Dr. Justin StormoGipson and Mike Oswald, CRNA, the leaders of the IEI team, were very hopeful about the likelihood of completely restoring all three children's eyesight. Each was scheduled to have the cataract repair surgery on one eye.

All three operations were a success, and by the end of the afternoon, the children were on the road to recovery and restored vision. In May, they will return to have their other eyes repaired.

The IEI team is one of many that provide surgeries for local residents. Patients who can pay provide small contributions towards the cost. Those without financial resource receive surgeries for free.



Justin StormoGipson, MD and Mike Oswald, CRNA with the Sac family after their surgeries.

## We need your help providing surgeries and care to our poorest families!

Donations made before December 15th will be matched by the

Samir D. Gergis Charitable Trust

[www.hospitalitoatitlan.org](http://www.hospitalitoatitlan.org)

Or mail a check to Amigos Hospitalito Atitlán 2220 Shallow Well Rd. Manakin, VA 23103

## New Ambulance Needed: Looking for Fundraising Partners

It's hard to believe that the Hospitalito's ambulance will soon be five years old. And after daily trips over deteriorating roads, it's nearly ready for a well-earned retirement! We hope to get a new one in 2017, and we're looking for civic or community organizations interested in a fundraising project to help us make this goal a reality. Know of a potential partner? Please let us know at [info@hospitalitoatitlan.org](mailto:info@hospitalitoatitlan.org).

## Tackling a Taboo Topic via Classroom Education

In the Maya community, sexual topics are taboo, which promotes myths and misunderstandings about sexuality and pregnancy. This contributes to a high adolescent pregnancy rate — the highest in Latin America. Fifty-four percent of indigenous women and women without education give birth before age 20. Even more concerning, over the past three years, pregnancy rates have increased among girls between the ages of 10 - 14.

### Bringing Education to the Community

Through funding provided by the Conservation, Food & Health Foundation, Hospitalito Atitlán developed a training booklet entitled *Nuestra Sexualidad Responsable* (NSR), which covers healthy relationships, sexually transmitted diseases and contraception using the story of a Tz'utujil couple, Ana and Andrés.

Sex education is mandated by Guatemalan law, but teachers lack the resources and training to effectively breach the topic with students. The Hospitalito's project coordinator led a training for 35 health science teachers in Santiago in the use of the booklet. Over 1200 students have now received instruction and the Hospitalito hopes to expand NSR in the coming years to reach girls who have dropped out or never attended school.



The booklet used for the trainings: "Our Responsible Sexuality: What do we need to know in order to create a full and happy life?"



Arturo and Joanna in front of the Hospitalito

## Donor Spotlight

Hospitalito Atitlán's work is successful thanks to its many donors, such as Joanna and Arturo Matheu. Mr. Matheu owns Promisa, Procesadora de Minerales, a stone materials retail business in Guatemala, and the couple has a vacation home near the Hospitalito. When HA faced a medical emergency in 2008, Mr. Matheu not only helped coordinate an air evacuation, but also offered his heliport if such emergencies took place in the future.

Since 2012, Arturo and his wife have been making generous monthly donations of Q10,000 (\$1,250) in honor of their two children. We are deeply grateful for their confidence and support of Hospitalito's work, and as they end their time as HA Health Partners we hope to find new monthly donors.

## Visit our Website to Become a Monthly Health Partner Today!

## Diabetes Program Update!

Our "Managing Diabetes" program, underwritten by the World Diabetes Foundation, began in 2012. This six-year project has netted impressive accomplishments.

**27** clinics equipped for diabetes detection  
**31,332** diabetes detections performed  
**5,046** students taught about diabetes  
**664** health workers trained

## Making an Impact on the Lives of Mothers and Children

Guatemala has the highest mortality rate for children under five years old in Latin America according to UNICEF, and Tz'utujil Maya women have a high risk for complications during pregnancy. Thanks to your support, the Hospitalito is able to make a difference in the health and welfare of children and women in the Santiago Atitlán region.

### Eduardo Coj, 16 months old, Finca el Carmen Metzabal

Six months ago, Eduardo's mother brought him to HA's monthly Día de Salud (Health Day). He was suffering from malnutrition. Rehydration fluids failed to reverse his chronic bloating and diarrhea, and he was diagnosed with severe anemia. Eduardo was admitted to the Hospitalito, where he had several days of free care before he was transferred to Guatemala City hospital for two months of nutritional rehabilitation. When he returned home to his family, Hospitalito provided his family with food supplements and nutritious staples, along with personalized education for his mother on healthy eating.

Visiting the family today, Eduardo's mother Marta shyly tells us — with obvious pride — that her son has begun standing and has taken his first steps. Although this milestone is perhaps a little delayed for a 16-month-old, it's nothing short of incredible given his health a half-year before.



Community Program coordinators Victor Ramirez (left) and Bianca Mendoza (right), educating Marta on healthy food to aid in Eduardo's recovery

## Hospitalito Atitlán is committed to combatting anemia caused by malnutrition.

Eduardo is just one of 110 patients in four local communities where HA has screened for anemia thanks to a grant from the MASEK Foundation. With education and food supplements, we have been able to improve iron levels in 75% of those diagnosed. In January, a full time nutritionist from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) will join our team when we launch a new project —demonstrations of healthy cooking in community model kitchens.

### Neftalí Reanda Mendoza, 1 year 7 months old, Tzanjuyu village

Neftalí was brought to the emergency room with a severe cough and respiratory difficulty. He was admitted, hospitalized for three days and released. Two months later, he was readmitted with similar symptoms and diagnosed with bronchopneumonia and reactive airway disease. Upon readmission, our social worker evaluated the family's situation. Neftalí's mother is only 18 years old and separated from his father, who suffers from alcoholism and drug addiction. Neftalí's condition has remained stable since his last visit, but children like him depend on donations for lifesaving medical care.



Baby Neftali while hospitalized



Concepción with her newborn

### Concepción Ixtamal Gómez, 38 years old, Cerro de Oro village

Concepción, mother of eight, was 41-weeks pregnant when she came to the emergency room. Her gynecologist was concerned about delivery risks due to her age and length of pregnancy, so she received an urgent C-section and decided to have her tubes tied at the same time. With support of the Hospitalito and a visiting surgical team, the family only had to pay for the cost of anesthesia. With your help HA can provide affordable, safe births for women like Concepción.

## Help us provide lifesaving treatment for women and children: Donate Today

## Spanish and Cultural Immersion CME at Hospitalito Atitlán

Are you a medical professional looking to improve your Medical Spanish and learn more about indigenous Maya culture? Hospitalito Atitlán's five-day Spanish and Cultural Immersion CME course is perfect fit for people who have mastered basic Spanish and want to immerse themselves in the language in a medical setting. Participants receive one-on-one medical Spanish classes and are introduced to the rich Maya Tz'utujil culture, helping them to better connect with patients from other cultures.

**"It was a wonderful location to participate in an immersion experience. Santiago Atitlán is a little paradise with wonderful instructors."**

Dr. Anna Doubeni, November 2016

Accreditation and Credit Information:

Up to 25 AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)

Perelman Medical School - University of Pennsylvania

The Perelman School of Medicine of the University of Pennsylvania is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

The Perelman School of Medicine of the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine designates this live activity for a maximum of 25 AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)™. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.



## Sponsor a Mother and Child through HA's Maternal Infant (MI) Program



Vicenta Chavajay, Hospitalito's social worker and the MI Program's Coordinator, visits mothers and children on regular home visits.

Many mothers are very young when they enter the program, and receive free education on crucial topics such as nutrition, lactation, hygiene and other health related topics.



Mothers receive free medical care throughout their pregnancy and during childbirth, and children receive comprehensive care at HA until the age of five.



Visit our website to become a sponsor!



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