



Providing Hope and Healthcare for Maya Families

AMIGOS Hospitalito Atitlán

December 2013

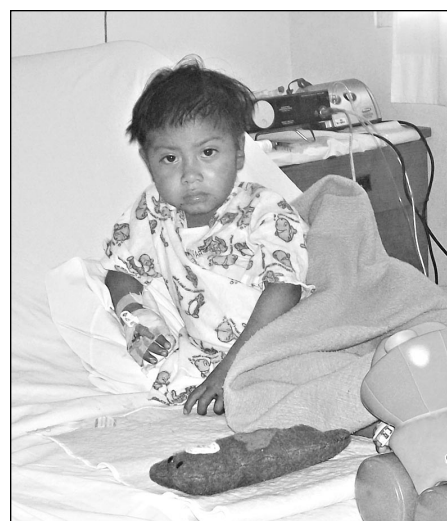
Committed to the Health of Local Children: Salvador's Story

When Salvador Calí Damián's mother brought him into the HA emergency room in March, his cough and flu symptoms had turned into serious respiratory difficulties, and he hadn't eaten in three days. The three-and-one-half-year-old was found to have severe hypoxia (lack of oxygen) and an increased respiratory rate. He was diagnosed with pneumonia.

The doctors told Luisa, Salvador's mother, that he had to stay in the hospital to receive the care needed for his recovery. At first, she was upset that her son was going to be hospitalized. Salvador's father was not working, leaving the family with limited financial resources, and Luisa could not pay for his care.

Luisa was referred to the Hospitalito social worker who told her that she didn't have to worry about the cost of care. The most important thing was for her to concentrate on following the doctor's orders, so that her son could get well and come home. Salvador received three days of IV antibiotics and oxygen. Five days after his mother brought him into the emergency room, he was ready to leave. Luisa was given additional medicine to continue his treatment at home. Salvador returned to the Hospitalito for a follow up visit with the pediatrician, who found his health greatly improved.

Salvador's grandparents, who provide this family with moral support, were extremely grateful. Not only for Salvador's improved health, but also for the fact that they only had to pay 10 percent of the cost of his hospital care. For hospital staff, who are committed to the health of local children, it was another happy ending.



Little Salvador receiving antibiotics upon being admitted to the Hospitalito.

Help Us to Continue to Make a Difference! Make a Year-End Contribution Today!

Hospitalito Welcomes New Board Member



Lidia Ramirez Esquina is well known to many of our visitors. She is the business manager at the Hotel Bambú, and has been elected as the newest member of Asociación K'aslimaal, the Hospitalito's Board of Directors. To introduce her conventionally seems somehow second best, so how about this? Lidia spent three months in Alaska as a volunteer building low-income housing....

Lidia is a 24-year-old Tz'utujil businesswoman with an interesting past. In 2008, she spent a semester at the Institute For Training & Development, an exchange program in Amherst, MA. She is trilingual. "I want to help my people in my community," she said. "I (also) want to learn (about) cultures." Lidia has previous experience in development work and has recently returned to study for her licenciada at Universidad Galileo.

A detail saved for last: Santiago Atitlán held its first official long-distance run for women last year – a six-mile course. Lidia won. For years, the hospital has been looking for a board member who could represent the indigenous woman's perspective. The board and the staff at Hospitalito Atitlán welcome Lidia's sense of purpose on our team.

Hospitalito Atitlán Needs Your Help!

**Please help patients like
Salvador get to access
medical care.**

Your contribution buys medications and supplies, pays salaries for dedicated medical personnel and maintains the hospital, medical equipment, and the ambulance.

Your donation saves lives.

Amigos Hospitalito Atitlán
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Jonesport, ME 04649
www.hospitalitoatitlan.org

The Hospitalito Lab is Expanding to the Next Level

When the Hospitalito Atitlán's first lab opened in 2005, it was capable of performing only the most basic tests. The tech was trained by medical volunteers and also did hands-on training with a lab technician on the other side of Lake Atitlán. Donors and volunteers provided equipment. Still, hospital physicians sometimes doubted the results of in-house tests and sent them across the lake to Panajachel for verification.

But things have changed. In 2010, Cristobal Ramirez, who has worked in the lab for seven years, received his degree as a lab technician, underwritten by a scholarship from Share the Dream. This year, a third-year resident has become part of the lab team, thanks to a partnership with the Chemistry and Pharmacy faculty at the University of San Carlos. This collaboration has resulted in a plan for taking the lab to the next level.

Equipment additions in 2013 include a laboratory ventilation hood donated by John and Rita Nelson and delivered by Nathan Boddy, who brought it to Guatemala in the pick-up truck that he and his wife Dr. Johanna Dreiling donated. This hood allows HA to test sputum for the tuberculosis (TB) germ without risking the health of the staff. Additional new lab equipment was purchased thanks to donations from Rotaract Club of Chicago, Zane State College Medical Lab (Zanesville, OH), Rotary Club of Springfield Southeast and HOLA (Helping Others in Latin America) Sertoma (Springfield, MO).

Cristobal, nicknamed Crystal Ball by medical volunteers, says, "I'm very happy with the advances we have made. We are now more professional, and half our equipment is automated." Cristobal received training in testing for tuberculosis. Local TB testing is performed in the HA lab at no expense to the patient thanks to an alliance among various organizations.

The HA lab has come a long way since 2005, and we are continually striving to make it better so that our patients can receive state-of-the-art onsite testing services. Our next priority will be to do microbiological cultures.



HA lab technician Cristobal with new equipment and help.

HONORING LYNNE ABRAHAM

Hospitalito Atitlán serves its community thanks to its many donors. Each year, we single out one person whose support of the hospital is special and unique. This year, we honor Lynne Abraham. Lynne became a HA supporter when her daughter Dra. Leah volunteered from 2005-2007.

Every month for eight (8) years, Lynne has taken the time and care to write a \$50 check to the Hospitalito's general operating fund, trusting us to use her donation in whatever way we think will best serve our patients. Her husband Stan has also been a supporter, spearheading Rotarian initiatives benefitting HA over the years.

Hospitalito Atitlán thanks Lynne, and all our donors. Their generosity allows the Hospitalito to carry out its mission of providing access to healthcare to the people of Santiago Atitlán, regardless of economic status.

And as for Dra. Leah... She has moved on and is living in Chicago with her husband Anthony Suarez and their five-year-old triplets!!!

Felicidades Jacinto & Ezequiel

Hospitalito staff wishes to recognize the achievements of two employees pursuing career enhancement by continuing their education.

Jacinto Garcia has been central to the HA operating room since opening day in 2005. For four years, he has been studying every Saturday at Universidad Rafael Landivar in Xela. In November, he graduated with the title of professional nurse (RN). But Jacinto isn't done yet. This degree is a step on his way to earning his licenciatura (B.S. in Nursing), which will take another two years. Jacinto lives in San Pedro La Laguna with his wife and daughter, so his daily commute includes two boat rides.



Ezequiel Sosof started with HA seven years ago at the beginning of construction and is now coordinator of maintenance. Every Saturday for two years, Ezequiel has left home at 4 AM for the Escuela Técnica Superior Kinal in Guatemala City. In November, he earned his diploma and license as an electrician. He hopes to continue his studies, "Me gustaría (I would like to) estudiar electronics; tal vez seguir en la Universidad."

Ezequiel took advantage of the HA merit scholarship program to achieve his diploma. The program provides two benefits: qualified employees can improve their credentials and the hospital acquires a more professional staff. Employees agree to remain at the hospital for at least as long as their scholarship. Both men paid their travel, food and incidental costs themselves.



Volunteer Fills HA's Urgent Need for Obstetrical Coverage

Dr. Victoria Mui volunteered at Hospitalito Atitlán (HA) in October with the intent to include some international health experience in her career as an OB/GYN. This was her first experience in the role of volunteer doctor.

"Everyone tells me, '[the patients] are so lucky they have you here,' but to me it's the other way around. I feel very privileged to be able to provide care to women who may have otherwise not received it. And the fact that they trust me—a stranger who doesn't speak their language—to do so is amazing."

Victoria came to Santiago Atitlán last April to take a week of Spanish classes and check out HA as a place to volunteer. She is currently in her third year of residency at the George Washington School of Medicine in Washington, D.C, where she practices in a clinic for the underserved population of the city.

Victoria found a life lesson experienced by many volunteers here. "I learned a whole new perspective on clinical judgment. I was forced to trust my instincts without the technology that I comfortably rely on in the States," she said.

She wants to come back. "Being a volunteer is different than visiting or going on vacation. When you work and interact with the people here, you feel like you are already setting down roots. When it comes time to leave, you are already thinking about coming back."



Dr. Mui and HA staff physician Dra. Asminda Xon review a patient file.

Experience Guatemala and help save lives as a Medical Volunteer!

SURGICAL TEAMS



126 patients line up for surgical evaluations.

In 2013, Hospitalito Atitlán will have hosted a total of eight international surgical teams, treating a total of about 400 patients. These statistics are rising as word of the new hospital building with its improved medical facilities spreads through the international medical community. These jornadas provide crucial medical care to a populace with little other recourse for more technically dependent medical treatment.

- Acupuncture - 106
- Cleft Lip - 36
- Dermatology - 11
- General Surgery - 19
- Urology - 9
- Ophthalmology - 60
- Pediatric Dentistry - 113

HA Outreach Brings Healthcare to Underserved Communities

Local Puestos de Salud (health centers) are the sites of bi-monthly medical and prenatal visits by Hospitalito specialists. The beneficiaries are Tz'utujile Maya in San Antonio Chacaya and Cerro de Oro, who previously did not have access to care.

HA educators and nurses are also leading monthly classes at the Puestos for Madres Consejeras (literally "Mother Counselors"), Facilitadores de Salud (healthcare facilitators) and local nurses. The sessions cover a range of life-saving topics that can make a difference in community health. Participants use the knowledge and skills learned to help improve the well being of their neighbors. Previously, the government program was known as Promotores de Salud ("Promoters of Health.")

The Madres Consejeras visit homes to offer advice, to encourage pregnant women, and to help new mothers with their babies. The facilitadores de salud make home visits when neighbors are sick, checking in on both the patients and their families.

These free clinics and trainings will continue into 2014 thanks to the Strachan Family Foundation.

The program not only promotes peer health counseling, but also exposes our medical volunteers to the healthcare system in rural underserved areas of the Guatemalan highlands.



Cerro de Oro graduates of the healthcare worker trainings.



OR nurse Jacinto simulates the arrival of a patient to the emergency room with ER doctors participating in the CME.



Above: Tour guide Dolores Ratzán and CME participants visit a Maya medicine man.



Left: One-on-one medical Spanish classes for every student level.

Spanish and Cultural Immersion CME at Hospitalito Atitlán

Physicians can improve their medical Spanish and learn more about Maya customs and culture at Hospitalito Atitlán's five-day Spanish & Cultural Immersion CME course.

Students must have studied basic Spanish. They will learn to perform a variety of medical tasks in Spanish, as well as learn how to better connect with patients from other cultures.

CME October 2012

"I loved the week and learned a lot in a short time. If you want a unique, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to do CME in Latin America, come to Hospitalito Atitlán!"

-Andrew Smith, MD
Boston Medical Center, Boston, MA

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