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Your gift to Hospitalito Atitlán helps ensure that quality medical care continues to be provided to those in need.

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Help Hospitalito Celebrate a New Hospital and a New Year!



Heroes of Hospitalito: Permanent staff at the dedication celebration.

On November 19th Hospitalito Atitlán marked a wonderful and joyous moment in our history. We opened the doors of our new hospital. The day was filled with much excitement, much celebration, many long speeches, and immense gratitude. There were many people to thank, from our dedicated donors and supporters, the skillful construction teams, the board and staff, and those that have volunteered from both within our community and from around the world. This has truly been a partnership of many peoples, which makes the victory all the sweeter. We are contacting you to ask you for your continued support.

Constructing a new building is only one step in the larger dream to create a permanent resource for the community of Santiago Atitlán. Other essential steps include developing the human resources needed to continue to make the services we provide accessible to all. As the construction crew continues to build and equip the new facility, we are now turning our focus towards filling the big, beautiful space to meet its full potential.

Our first priority is to develop our permanent staff. We have created scholarships to help our current staff obtain further training and skills. As we increase the responsibilities and services needed from the already hard-working staff, we wish to increase their pay as well as hire more permanent staff.

We want to reward the hard work of the team that has been so dedicated to keeping the hospital operating from a difficult, "temporary" location for five years. These are perhaps the most important heroes of the Hospitalito. We also need to keep costs low and want to be able to create discounts whenever necessary. Essentially, we want to improve the lives and jobs of our own team while they work hard to do the same for the community.

As the holiday season and the new year approach and as we enter a new and incredibly important phase at the Hospitalito, we hope you will help us celebrate and look towards the future with hope. Together, we have all made it so far, and we ask that you support us in this next big endeavor.

We are hoping to secure \$40,000 in operations funding before January 1st. This would allow us to hire one more physician, two more nurses, and pay competitive salaries to all of our staff. Please consider making a donation to operations now. Every amount shows appreciation, support, and hope to the current staff and true heroes of our beloved Hospitalito Atitlán.

As always, we thank you for all of your past support, time, energy, resources, and faith. We wish you all a happy and healthy

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holiday season!

Sincerely Yours,

Francisco Sojuel


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Beds In, Ribbon Cut!


Thanking our biggest donor
The Kendeda Fund.

After a long night of last minute preparations, the hospital was dedicated amid a vibrant and mixed crowd on Friday, November 19th. Kids dancing to music, people flying out by private airplane, the presence of the Maya Authority and the press interviewing university professors from the U.S. were all part of the festivities. Volunteers had arrived early in the morning to help with the final polishing and cleaning. After the floors were freshly buffed a local priest walked the halls, blessing each room with holy water. Live marimba music greeted the people as they arrived late Friday morning. Attendees found seats under an incredibly clear sky, lightly shielded from the sun by long streamers and strands of colored balloons that had been strewn across the new parking lot.

The commencement began with the acknowledgement of the many Hospitalito celebrities in attendance. The immensity of this project was clearly evident as the front stage filled with many partners and VIPs. A series of speeches was delivered, thanking the army of donors, volunteers, medical and construction professionals who were needed to bring the new hospital into existence. Speeches were filled with gratitude and much emotion. After thanking everyone for all the hard work and dedication they have put in to this point, speeches also had reminders about the importance of continued support. From the side of the building, rebar could be seen from the future inpatient ward and this image mirrored the calls for a continued interest in the Hospitalito.


Board President Francisco Sojuel
passing out pieces of the ribbon.

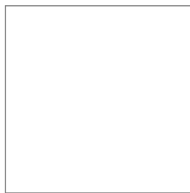
When the speeches were finished, a traditional ribbon was cut. A small stampede was diverted. Finally, the guests were rewarded for their patience; all were able to roam the beautiful halls of the new building. After, everyone gathered for more music and the tamales and horchata that had been supplied by the municipalidad of Santiago Atitlan. The celebration continued long into the evening. Eventually, everyone had gone and the crew was able to take up their posts again. Much work was needed to prepare for the rest of the weekend.

Saturday's activities included more tours of the facility for large donors and a beautiful lunch of pulique in the main waiting area.

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The Kendeda Match remains open
 until July 2011!

If you are interested in donating to
 construction please contact us.



A new Rotary International Grant for
 medical equipment is in the works.
 Contact us if your Rotary Club would
 like to join the effort.

Simultaneously, many staff members and volunteers were gathered at the old hospital to organize and pack for the move. Later that same day, the physical move would commence. Stay tuned to our blog to see photos of the celebrations, the move, and the first days of the new Hospitalito Atitlan!



Traditional Midwives At The Grand Opening.

New Moms, New Friends



Lisa Gatti with her sponsored mother, Elena Pacay Tzina and 3 month old Lisa Antonieta Quieju Pacay.

"Of all of the activities I have done to get to know people in Santiago and all the effort I have made to try to be helpful, nothing has compared to holding my new little namesake," reports Lisa Gatti, a long-term volunteer in Santiago Atitlan and at the Hospitalito. She is one of the new sponsors of our Maternal Infant Program. Recently, she was able to attend the monthly Maternal Infant meeting and to meet the family she sponsors, including the new, little Lisa.

The meeting began as they do every month: A group of women gathered in the education room, holding infants and keeping an eye on their other children. A while after the set start time (this is, after all, Guatemala time) the hospital's social worker entered the room with a large smile and a folder of papers under her arm. Everyone found a seat, except for one toddler whom was too busy running between legs. Vicenta Chavajay (Chenta) warmly greeted them all, speaking in Tz'utujil. She also introduced Lisa as one of the sponsors, though stated that the woman she was sponsoring had not yet arrived.

Soon, Chenta was pinning up and passing around the contents of her folder which consisted of hand-drawn depictions of different modes of feeding as well as different foods. She began the monthly educational topic: nutrition for the first year. The women were soon completely engaged in the topic, both verbally and in action. They were eight women in total, asking and answering questions, laughing and making comments for each other. They were also actively practicing what was being preached; breastfeeding their children.



Vicenta Chavajay leads a meeting about nutrition.

The scene in this room was not unlike scenes all across the world. Women with babies gathered around to share experiences and advice. Yes, there was important information which Chenta artfully presented. Just as important though, was the opportunity to come together and to give and receive support as new mothers. Women of any culture, background, or situation can appreciate this type of interaction and support. The Maternal Infant Sponsorship Program not only provides the necessary prenatal testing, vitamins, and

<http://blog.hospitalitoatitlan.org/>

delivery assistance, but it also creates circles of women. It helps to bring them out of their own homes and their own exhausting responsibilities. Here, they can support each other as they learn and talk about the healthiest ways to raise their families. The smiles on the women's faces as well as the high level of enthusiasm and engagement showed that this meeting was more of a treat than another responsibility.

Approximately half-way through the meeting, a woman entered with a baby in her arms. When Chenta saw her crossing the room, she pointed to Lisa, sitting in the corner, and announced that this was the sponsor. Elena Pacay Tzina rushed over and promptly handed the 3-month old Bundle-of-Joy to her. Lisa, meet Lisa. Everyone giggled, everyone smiled, except perhaps Lisa and Lisa, whom gazed at each other most intently.

"As a labor and delivery nurse, I have held many babies and been a part of many wonderful moments during this precious period of life. But, watching the whole scene, and realizing that I was a most active and critical agent in this very positive experience, was just incredibly touching. I want every woman to have an opportunity and group such as this. I also want every baby to have the health resources available through the program. Holding Lisa in the midst of this very happy meeting, I was very moved by the difference I was making in this one child and one woman's life. It was incredible," Lisa stated after the meeting.

"Originally I just thought this was a great way to support the hospital and to support a family in special need. When the family named the baby Lisa, I was struck by what a large impact my annual gift of \$300 was making. Surely just \$300 would not make that big of a difference. But, as I sat in the meeting and then as I held little Lisa, I understood the much bigger picture of the program. It gives care, extra care in fact, it gives relief, it helps create a natural support group, and it gives a great deal of hope. No wonder the women were all so happy and so grateful. I think every woman needs this!"

Hospitalito is delighted to report on the successful re-birth of our Maternal Infant Program! We have been able to enroll eleven families thus far, and they are each enjoying being part of this group. Chenta has been doing an incredible job visiting the most vulnerable areas of Santiago, identifying families most in need, and then engaging them in the program. We hope to grow this program to enroll many more women and create several cohorts and groups.



A new circle of friends.... Eight sponsored women come together for their monthly group meeting.

"When I left the meeting, I immediately called my own mother. I already had a lot of happy mental images of her and her close friends gathering when we were babies. They became a group while they were pregnant and had infants. Now, they still support each other through many different periods in life. After talking to my mom about the meeting, she decided that she and her friends should come together to sponsor a few women. As for me, I am dreaming up little treats that I can make for the whole group to celebrate the holidays. I look forward to staying in touch with Lisa and her family for many years."

Every sponsor has the pleasure of getting to know their family

through photographs, updates, and personal letters from the women. We also hope that many will be able to meet in person, if and when they make it to Santiago Atitlán. Based on the reactions of our current sponsors and enrolled women, it is a most rewarding and mutually beneficial experience! We hope you consider sponsoring a family and passing on this opportunity to your own circles. Follow this link to read more about the program and how to become a sponsor.

<http://www.hospitalitoatitlan.org /sponsorship.html>

Careful Care Saves Lives



Olga Rosal? Quievac L?ez
and her newborn, Elena.

After eight tumultuous days, Olga Rosal? Quievac L?ez, age 18 and resident of el Cerro de Oro, was able to bring home her newborn baby girl, Elena. On September 7th, Olga came into Hospitalito with her two parents, Diego Quievac and Francisca Lopez Yaxom. Olga was referred to Hospitalito by the clinic of San Lucas after having prolonged labor with severe pain. That same day, doctors at Hospitalito aided Olga in giving birth to Elena, whom weighed seven pounds.

Upon birth, Elena suffered meconium aspiration, meaning she had been under distress during the long labor and then inhaled some of her soiled amniotic fluid. This brings a risk of sepsis, and needs to be promptly treated with antibiotics and oxygen. Ideally, doctors wanted to send Elena to Solol?Hospital to receive ventilation treatment. However, Solol?Hospital responded saying that they did not have an available ventilator. So instead, Elena would have to stay in Hospitalito for treatment.

From the time of Elena's birth, her grandparents Diego and Francisca were extremely anxious and worried for several reasons. It was especially emotionally tolling on them because it was recommended that Elena be transferred to Solol?for ventilation; however this treatment was not available. Understandably, they then questioned whether or not Hospitalito would be able to save their granddaughter's life with their equipment. But the stressors did not end there. Not only did they fear for their granddaughter's life and health, but they were also afraid that they would not be able to pay for the entire cost of the hospitalization. Because of this, at one point Olga and her parents expressed that they wanted to take Elena home despite medical recommendations.

The social worker informed the family that the most important thing was to take care of their granddaughter and to let the doctors do their job. They need not worry about the expenses of the hospitalization, for a discounted price would be calculated in order to make the hospitalization affordable for them. After several hours of explanations, the doctors and the social worker were able to convince the family to stay. And, in the end, the family was incredibly grateful for their persistence.

Olga's father was truly impressed by the level of desire and effort that Hospitalito demonstrated in saving their granddaughter's life. He was especially grateful for the permanent and persistent attention given as well as the kind and patient explanations in their own language, Tz'utujil. "My daughter is a single mother and needed a lot of help from all of you," says Olga's father. "Thank

you so much for understanding our situation."

After two days, the baby showed signs of jaundice in addition to meconium aspiration syndrome and continued risk of sepsis. Elena was able to receive phototherapy along with her antibiotics and oxygen. She was carefully watched and monitored. This treatment plan was continued for the next six days. Eight days after birth Elena was healthy enough to go home, with only antibiotics. A week later, the new family came back for a check-up. Both Olga and Elena were healthy, happy and their discounted fees had been taken care of.

Goodbye, Adios, Anka, Baika a Nuestro Amigo!



The entrance of our "temporary" Hospitalito.

With the great excitement and celebration of the grand opening of our brand new hospital, also comes some moments of reflection. As we transition into this big beautiful building, it is also time to say goodbye to one of our dearest friends, allies, and supporters of the past five years: el otro Hospitalito. For the last five years, Hospitalito existed in a rather inconspicuous place, a lakeside backpacker's hostel. After the mudslide of Hurricane Stan destroyed the hospital in Panabaj a team of experts deemed the area condemned. Hospital Atitlán and its board were faced with the challenge of finding a new location to serve its people during a time when care was urgently needed.

Just days after the mudslide the K'aslimaal Board found a backpacker's hostel and the owners agreed it could be used as a temporary hospital. It was quickly transformed into a functioning emergency hospital. Just 16 days after the mudslide the first emergency cesarean was performed, saving a young mother's life. Over time, the living room with a fire place was turned into a surgical room fitted with overhead lights. A laboratory was developed in the kitchen of the hostel. Offices were added, and a ramp was built to connect the operating room to the patient rooms. The circumstances were less than ideal, however the drive to work towards our main goals remained constant: saving lives, helping those most in need, and improving the health of the community. And this old wooden building, with its many staff, did just that. In the end, this backpacker's hostel functioned as a hospital for 5 years.

Cristobal Ramirez Quijé who has been with Hospitalito Atitlán since 2006 and now works in the lab, states that that this hospital will be dearly missed for several reasons. "We won't have this view anymore," Cristobal said as he also jokingly added that he has plans to build a pool in the back of the new hospital to make up for it. Oto Vasquez Mozorriegos, one of the hospital's nurses, also commented on how hard it will be to give up perhaps one of the most magnificent views of Lake Atitlán, the volcanoes, and the bustling town.

In reminiscing about the many memories and stories from the old hospital, one of their best memories was, however, how our dog Canchita became part of the Hospitalito Atitlán family. "She didn't belong to the hospital in the beginning," Cristobal explained. "We adopted her." He then recounted the story of how one day

Canchita was found pregnant underneath one of the cabañas on the property. After her pups were born and left the hospital grounds, she just wouldn't leave. She's been a part of the family ever since.

Many have become part of this family over the years. Volunteers from all over the world, people of the community itself, medical students, business students, engineers, etc. have weathered the storm with us. Together, they have helped us endure the difficulties and helped us move beyond the challenges to succeed and aid the community of Santiago. Though much has happened within its walls during the past five years, people are excited to look forward.

"I will miss the charm, and how normal it became to search for bags of IV fluid in the fireplace of the OR. I'll miss the chickens in the waiting room and the funny creaky noises at night. I am not going to miss worrying about the roof caving in every time it rains," commented Tzanchicham medical celebrity Louise Kenny.

Febe Consuelo Sosof Sapalu who began working at Hospitalito over a year ago in the office of social work but who has recently moved over to reception, talked about how she will miss this small building even though she has been there for such a short time. "We work hand in hand here," she explained. "Sometimes it's nice that each department doesn't have their own specific space to themselves. We are all together, always working together."

As we enter the next phase of our transition into the newly built Hospitalito Atitlán, we will do so with great nostalgia. It is indeed time to move on. But we will never forget the old wooden Hospitalito with its majestic views. Nor will we forget the many friends, volunteers, relationships, successes, and memories that we've developed along the way. To help us remember the last five years, we have put together an album of photos.

[Click here to view and share the memories.](#)

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