



Hospitalito Atitlán

Newsletter February 2010

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Make your gift now!

Your gift to Hospitalito Operations helps ensure that we can continue giving excellent care at a discounted rate to those in need.

For Operations:

Your gift to **Hospitalito Construction** will ensure that the communities around Lake Atitlán have a hospital to visit for years to come. And even better, your gift will be doubled by the Kendeda Fund!

Celebrating the Month of Caring

Dear Friend,

Here in Guatemala, Valentine's celebrations last all month - the "Month of Caring," and celebrate not romantic partners, but all of those friends, family, and other important people in our lives and community. With that in mind, everyone at Hospitalito would like to celebrate you, our wonderful family of friends and supporters. Without you, Hospitalito would not be able to bring excellent, affordable medical care to the poor population of Santiago Atitlán and the surrounding communities.

This issue focuses on the care provided by the superb Hospitalito staff and medical volunteers. Not only is that care excellent but, in keeping with Hospitalito's mission of serving the poorest populations, it is extremely affordable and no patient is ever turned away for lack of funds. A medical consultation, for instance, only costs \$1.20, and an emergency room visit costs \$3.00. Understandably, such low patient fees can only cover half of the hospital's annual operating costs. For the other 50%, Hospitalito relies on generous donors like you.

Every donation, of every size, makes a difference:

- \$15 subsidizes twelve visits to our clinic
- \$25 subsidizes eight emergency room visits
- \$50 subsidizes a typical treatment for a trauma victim, including ER fees, x-rays, and medication
- \$100 allows 16 children to breathe easier by subsidizing their asthma treatments
- \$250 pays the monthly salary of a full-time nurse
- \$312 can save the life of a newborn and its mom by subsidizing the cost of an emergency C section
- \$1,000 covers a month's salary of a full-time, experienced physician

Thanks to the support of people like you, Hospitalito is now able to care for nearly 900 patients each month - and that number is growing

For Construction:

daily. Your gifts make health care available to some of Guatemala's poorest citizens. Please continue to support the mission of Hospitalito at whatever level is possible. Every gift counts, stretches far and is greatly appreciated.

Happy Day of Caring!

Donate by mail:

Amigos Hospitalito Atitlán
425 NW 10th Ave.,
Suite 305
Portland, OR 97209
Phone: (503) 595-0553
Fax: (503) 905-0509

Bonnie O'Neill
Chair, Amigos Hospitalito Atitlán?

P.S. Your generous donation will help ensure that high-quality, affordable medical care continues to be available to the poor living around Lake Atitlán. [Click here to give now.](#)

Special Thanks to our most recent donors:

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A Newborn's Fight for Life



On May 13th 2009, Francisca Ajcot Sol, 32, gave birth to her third son, Mois?. He was born at home with the help of a traditional midwife. "On the fifth day, my baby quit nursing, and didn't stop crying. I was very worried because right then he turned purple," said Francisca Ajcot. She was home alone in the township of Chacaya, about five miles south of center of town, as her husband had left for work. "I shouted and asked for my neighbor's help. When they arrived, they told me that I ought to bring the baby to the hospital so he could be examined. They also called the EMS for the transfer to the hospital," said Francisca Ajcot. "I felt desperate and miserable to watch my baby stop breathing, little by little."

"When we made it to the hospital, my baby was immediately seen by a pediatrician in the emergency room." Mois? was diagnosed with hypoglycemia (low blood sugar), jaundice (yellowed skin), malnourishment, hypoxia (lack of oxygen) and sepsis (severe, whole-body infection). He arrived to the hospital in critical condition, but after receiving medical attention, he stabilized and was put in phototherapy.

"My baby spent five days in the incubator, my husband and I were at the hospital during this time, looking after our recuperating baby," said Francisca Ajcot. "I give thanks to all doctors that attended my baby, because they truly saved the life of my little one."

The family also worried about the cost of the Hospitalito services, but received a discount through the Social Department. "We left happy with the service we received," said Francisca. "Now, my baby is nine months old and he eats well. He says pap?and mam?and he is a very active baby. We are very happy to watch him grow."

Michael Straus
Missouri State University
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Redefining "Active Retirement" Nurse Kathy Roach



Kathy Roach, RN, is one of Hospitalito Atitl?'s most faithful returning volunteers. She worked in the first Hospitalito in Panabaj, was there for the mudslides in 2005, and has returned to Santiago Atitl? once or twice a year ever since, for up to six months at a time.

"I think it is a place where I can make a difference. I keep my focus on the goal, which is to deliver quality healthcare to the people of Santiago Atitl?," Kathy says.

As we walk around the construction of the new hospital, she sees yet another phase of the hospital's growth. "Hospitalito Atitl? is definitely necessary, not only to care for the people here, but also as a teaching facility. We volunteers need to share our knowledge with the people that work for the institution. We can't lose that aspect, as the patients in the long run will benefit from receiving quality medical care," she said. Kathy, now retired, has worked as an ER nurse, in orthopedics, ICU and towards the end of her nursing career, in a Williamsburg, Virginia, school. Here in Santiago, she has found that she enjoys teaching the Hospitalito nursing staff.

"I retired from my nursing job on a Friday in June of 2005, the following Monday I arrived in Santiago Atitl?," said Kathy. "My role has changed, as well as being the nurse clinician, I am also the nurse educator. I have to learn to step back and let the other nurses do the job, sometimes it takes a little longer, but that is the only way for them to learn."

Teaching isn't all she does at Hospitalito. Kathy was present during the first surgeries at Hospitalito, on her first visit. She remembers "after 35 years, I was back in OR, and I could remember all those instruments as they were similar to ones we used during my training in the 60's. My learning curve went straight vertical and I was pretty happy." Kathy can also put disaster relief on her long list of accomplishments at Hospitalito Atitl? - on October 5th, 2005, Kathy woke up in a town paralyzed from mudslides. Without thinking twice, she put her services to use wherever she could. "I have memories of breaking into Rxiin Tnamit [another clinic in town] with a woman in active labor. I called two other volunteer doctors that were stuck on the other side of town. 'You can do it, you can do it', they encouraged me."

Kathy stayed in the clinic as more patients came in, and, as she remembers, "eventually another doctor showed up. Little Diego was brought in with two broken legs. We thought he was going to die, he was so cold. Another nurse and I held him between us to warm him

up. Eventually he went to the National Hospital in Solol?" Little Diego lost his immediate family, but recovered and now lives with relatives. He tells his story in the short film about Hospitalito, available at www.hospitalitoatitlan.org.

Kathy continues: "We moved over to Centro de Salud for a few days. The town was in crisis, but as a medical personnel you learn not to get upset. Only afterwards will you have time to sit down and review the situation." Over the years, her connection with Santiago Atitlán has only grown stronger.

"Everybody knows me and the people make me feel comfortable. In the beginning they greeted me 'Buenas Dias, Doctora', now it is the more familiar, 'eeh'. Part of my heart and soul belongs to this village. Little by little I see changes, but you have to be patient, changes come slowly, as long as the good things overtake the bad, it is progress," said Kathy, as she remembers a patient whose arm was chewed up by my machinery, and how she and a doctor managed to stop the bleeding. "Last year a worker with only one arm greeted me – it was him! He could easily have died, but there he was working and making a living," said Kathy.

With her 69th birthday around the corner, and in spite of a bout with thyroid cancer in 2008, Kathy isn't just traveling to Guatemala. Last year she walked part of the pilgrim route Camino Santiago to Santiago de Compostela, the Spanish town whose patron saint, St. James, gave Santiago Atitlán its name. "Sometimes, when I get called in to the hospital, and walk along the lakeshore at 2 in the morning, I cannot help but thinking to myself, "hey, I thought you retired!", but as long as my health and energy allow me, I will keep on coming back."

From the Desk of Dr. Chuc



I would like to begin by extending my sincerest gratitude to our distinguished donors, medical volunteers, and non-medical volunteers, all of whom have made efforts to better our community by giving us a part of themselves. I would also like to thank the Board of Directors of the Asociaci? K'aslimal for their drive and desire to create a hospital, one whose sole purpose is to offer quality health care to the needy in and around our community of Santiago Atitlán.

The beginning of this year is also the end of another chapter in the history of Hospitalito. The story of Hospitalito's contribution to healthy families, a healthy population, and a special focus on improving maternal and child health, continues.

I am also grateful for the recognition Hospitalito has received from Vifrio, a company who donated a children's playground and recycled flooring to the new hospital. The donation was made possible through

the President of the West Guatemala Rotary Club, Miguel Hernandez. And thank you to the East Salem Oregon Rotary Club who made their official donation of medical equipment January 16 of this year.

I want to give special recognition to CAFCOM, Starbucks, and Granos del Sur for the special attention and support they have brought to our construction project, both through their financial support and their visits to the construction site.

As I have always said, I could have the best medical materials, diagnostic equipment, supplies, medications, etc. - but without the people, these things would have no value. So, with emphasis, I would like to say to the team of professionals I have had the privilege of working with, Thank you for your work, your delivery, your accuracy, and your positive attitudes. The work you have done, and surely will continue to do, brings happiness to our community.

To close, I would like to recognize the hard work of several volunteers, though I name them with apologies to the many others who deserve mention: Fernando Leiva, Mark Lepore, John and Rita Nelson, Rob Meyer, Kathy Roach, Narda Sherman and Theresa Tortosa. We surely keep all of you in our hearts.

With sincerest thanks to all of you,

Juan Manuel Chuc, MD
Medical Director, Hospitalito Atitl?

Skiing for Hospitalito



When you hear "Guatemala," do you think "snow?" Well, think again! Thanks to a family of generous and creative Hospitalito supporters, this President's Day, Snowbasin Ski Resort in Ogden, Utah, hosted a ski race whose profits were all donated to Hospitalito Atitl?.

Dr. Jack Lyons, a dermatologist practicing in Ogden, visited Santiago Atitl? in 2008. He and his now-16-year-old son, Eric, saw the old Hospitalito, still buried in mud in the Panabaj neighborhood of Santiago Atitl?. On that trip, they were able to meet some Santiago residents, including a child who had lost his family in the mudslide. Eric was so touched by the story of the tragedy that the Panabaj children had lived through, he returned home determined to do something to help.

After some creative thinking, Eric wanted to use his love for skiing to help build a new hospital in Santiago Atitl?. Dr. Lyons was quickly sold on the idea, and gave a great deal of his time to organize the race and ask his friends and colleagues for donations. Meanwhile, Eric got extra help for Hospitalito as well - his Mom pitched in, publishing an article to raise awareness, and his Grandfather, also Dr. Lyons (Sr.!), made a

generous donation of his own.

Dr. Lyons, Eric, and all of those you've inspired to give - your gifts to Hospitalito, in terms of time, money, and enthusiasm have been greatly appreciated and encouraging for all of us! Thank you!

If you'd like to organize an event benefiting Hospitalito Atitl? in your community, please contact us at info@hospitalitoatitlan.org for tips, ideas, and support!

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Amigos Hospitalito Atitl? 501(c)3 Status Approved

Amigos Hospitalito Atitlan, a newly formed US non-profit corporation which provides grant support to Hospitalito Atitlan, is pleased to announce the receipt of its IRS determination letter establishing its tax exempt status under section 501(C)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The exempt status, which is retro-active to the date that Amigos was formed in March, 2009, ensures that US taxpayers can continue to support the Hospitalito with tax-deductible donations. "We are thrilled to receive our tax exempt status so quickly, and are gratefull for the generous support of the many donors who have made contributions in support of both construction of new hospital facilities as well as the subsidized medical services in the existing facilities!" said Bonnie O'Neill, Chairman of the Board of Amigos. Please visit the Amigos website at www.amigosh.org to learn more about Amigos.



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