

# MISSION OF HOPE, BOLIVIA NEWSLETTER

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## THE GIFT OF HEARING

During the week of April 16-20, 2012, the Ear, Nose, and Throat surgery team provided a week of **free surgeries** to 53 Mission of Hope patients. Through these surgeries, 20 patients received the gift of hearing as **hearing loss was restored**. In some cases, patients had been without hearing for many years. An additional 25 patients received the **gift of hearing** as they were given free solar-powered hearing aids.



**Juan**, 4 years old, is now hearing for the first time! His mother tells us that the change has been dramatic! For the first time in his life, he is able to repeat words correctly and follow the sound of music playing in a different room.



**Alexandra**, 4 years old, came to the clinic on the last day of the surgery week with her ears so full of thick fluid that she could not hear anything! The team was able to add her on to the schedule and now she hears everything!!



**Ricardo**, 15 years old, suffered 4 years with constant infection, pain, and drainage from his ear, resulting in complete hearing loss. His father abandoned him and his mom did not have money for treatment. Ricardo had a successful surgery and is now hearing!



When **Carlitos** was 12 years old, his teacher punished him for not doing his homework by hitting him so hard in the ears that everything inside just “exploded” and he lost his hearing. His dream has always been to hear again. With his new hearing aid, his dream has come true!

## Victor's Story

**Victor**, 23 years old, was **born without ears** but that did not keep him from pursuing **his dream of becoming a doctor**. Victor is in his 3<sup>rd</sup> year of medical school! Victor has done very well in his classes up until now by seating himself in the front of the class. The bones of his inner ear enabled him to hear if he was close to the person talking and there was no background noise. But in a group of students talking, he could not understand anything. As a result, he became very introverted and kept to himself. He avoided any kind of social situation and had no friends.

Victor recently started his clinical practice and found that he could hear nothing with a stethoscope. This essentially brought his studies to an end. He could not advance any further in his studies without this clinical experience. The surgery team was able to open up and form an ear canal, so that even though the outer ear is missing, **he can now hear in the operated ear!** Victor said that everything was so loud after the surgery, he almost had to cover his ear! Since having surgery, Victor has become much more confident and outgoing, and **now he can hear with the stethoscope!**



**Victor after surgery**

## YOU ARE INVITED TO OUR 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION!

Mission of Hope, Bolivia opened a free medical clinic in Santa Cruz, Bolivia on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2002. To date, more than 200,000 patients have passed through our doors to receive free medical care! The anniversary celebration will take place **Saturday, July 7<sup>th</sup>** in Fishersville, VA. **Pastor Alex Merguzhis**, a long time volunteer in our clinic, will be the keynote speaker. He will be sharing stories from the Santa Cruz clinic and also talking about the clinic we are ready to open in Sucre. This will be followed by a time of fellowship. If you would like to attend, please email Cindy Thacker at [cindytha@cstone.net](mailto:cindytha@cstone.net) for details of time and place and directions. **To God be the glory!!**



**Denil after heart surgery**

## Denil's heart surgery

Denil's story was featured in our December, 2011 newsletter. Denil's family had sold everything they had trying to keep Denil alive. When he arrived at the Mission of Hope clinic, **he was so weak that he could hardly walk**. He was 13 years old and he weighed only 57 pounds! Denil was evaluated at a hospital in Cochabamba, Bolivia that specializes in heart surgery for children. The doctors there informed us that Denil's health was in very critical condition. **Denil needed an aortic valve replacement as soon as possible in order to survive**. Many of you sent gifts designated for Denil's heart surgery. On February 21<sup>st</sup>, Denil had a successful aortic valve replacement and a very successful recovery without any complications. Denil is so happy that he had the opportunity to have surgery! He says that now he does not get tired! He is back in school and leads a normal life. A big **"Thank you!"** to all who gave. **Together, we are making a difference!**

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