

# MISSION OF HOPE, BOLIVIA NEWSLETTER

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**Jacob after surgery**

## Jacob's Story

Charagua is an isolated Mennonite farming community about 7 hours from our clinic in Santa Cruz. The road to Charagua is mostly dirt and gravel with many pot holes. The Mennonites who live there are very poor and very traditional. The horse and buggy is still their main mode of transportation in and around the colony. Charagua has had very little rain for the last 4 years, so crops have suffered and food has been in short supply.

Jacob is a 6 year old boy who came to the clinic in Santa Cruz from Charagua. He is one of 12 children. He was born with a tumor protruding from an opening on the back of his head. Right after his birth, he had a surgery to remove the tumor. His parents were told that he would need a second surgery at 6 years of age.

Jacob came to the clinic having visual disturbances and problems with his balance. Worse, other kids his age had discovered that by poking the soft spot on the back of Jacob's head, they could cause him to be off balance, become dizzy and faint.

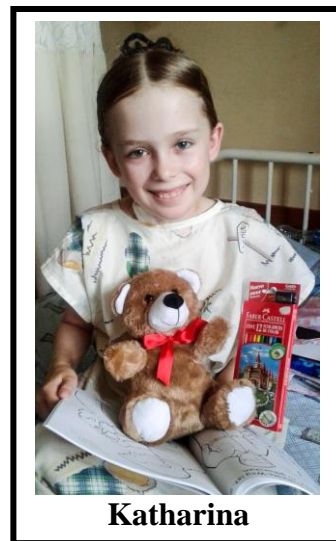
Jacob needed a special neurosurgery to close the opening at the base of his skull and protect his brain from a potentially life-threatening situation. Jacob was admitted to a public hospital in Santa Cruz and had a very successful surgery. **Mission of Hope paid for all of the expenses related to Jacob's surgery** using a special fund that was created by one of our donors.

## Katharina's Story

Katharina is an 11 year old girl who also came to the clinic in Santa Cruz from Charagua. She is one of 8 children. Her parents told us that she has been sickly since infancy. She never had the normal energy or growth of a healthy child. When she was 5 years old, her parents took her to a doctor near their colony, who could not find anything wrong with her and just gave her vitamins.

Finally, in January of this year, her parents brought her to see a doctor in Santa Cruz. The doctor told them that Katharina's spleen was quite large and she had gallstones. The doctor said the only cure was surgery to remove both. Katharina's parents knew that they could not afford surgery, so they returned home without any hope of helping their daughter.

A few months later, someone in the colony told them about Mission of Hope, where everything is free. When Katharina came to our clinic in Santa Cruz, she was very pale and very thin. **Mission of Hope** arranged for Katharina to have the surgery she needed in a public hospital and **covered all of her expenses**. Within days after her surgery, Katharina looked like a different child! She is now healthy for the first time in her life!



**Katharina**

**THE \$150,000 MATCHING GIFT CHALLENGE**  
continues until December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018. Every dollar we receive between  
now and the end of the year up to \$150,000 will be doubled!

## Gonzalo's Story



**Gonzalo after his surgery**

Gonzalo is a 55 year old teacher. For the last 25 years, he has been slowly losing his hearing. He went to many doctors, but all they did was remove the wax in his ears. About 10 years ago, he went to a specialist who told him that surgery would not help him and that he should get a hearing aid.

Gonzalo's hearing loss made teaching very difficult because he could not hear the students' voices when they spoke in class. Each time a student spoke, he would have to walk over to their desk in order to hear what they were saying.

In the spring of this year, Gonzalo's hearing diminished so much that he began to think he would have to quit teaching. Then something happened that changed the course of his life!

Gonzalo is very close to his sister, Aleida, who also has a significant hearing loss. She had a Saturday afternoon appointment to see the Mission of Hope ENT team that had just arrived from the US. Normally, Gonzalo tutors a student at that time, but on that particular Saturday, the student called to cancel the tutoring session. So, Gonzalo told Aleida that he would be happy to accompany her to the clinic.

The US doctors examined Aleida and explained that her hearing loss was due to a damaged nerve and could not be helped by surgery. They asked her if anyone else in the family had hearing loss, and she pointed to her brother, Gonzalo, who was seated next to her. The doctors then examined Gonzalo and determined that he was a good candidate for surgery! They asked him if he wanted a surgery. Gonzalo said he did not know what to say. But his sister encouraged him saying, "Do it! It has to be God who brought you here!" So, Gonzalo said, "yes."

Gonzalo says from that moment on, there were no more worries and he felt completely at peace, knowing that he was in good hands. Gonzalo had a very successful surgery and his hearing has been restored... He no longer needs a hearing aid! Before leaving the hospital, he wrote the following letter to us in English...

*I didn't want to leave without saying a few words to all of you. Even though it is my second time in a hospital as a patient, I can tell [you] that our hospitals are very different from what I found here. If you happen to go sick to a hospital you'll find hours of waiting, not a smile, not a kind word, despite the suffering (and anxiety) you're dealing with...*

*Here, your "Good mornings," your "How are you?", your smile, your kind words is a warm welcome... that's where the difference starts.*

*When you heal one person, you change his/her life... but it's not only his/her life that you change but all the family of this person... you change the life of many, many people.*

*So, in my eyes, you are angels working silently and that's why my family and I are very, very grateful. I feel blessed for having met you... there are no words to express what I feel (and I'm sure what everybody else feels).*

*I hope you will continue doing this wonderful work you do. May God bless you, ALL of you. Gonzalo Lara*

The **\$150,000 matching gift challenge** money will be used to provide free medical care to the poor in Bolivia during the year 2019. Mission of Hope, Bolivia takes its financial stewardship very seriously. **We are a debt-free mission and almost 100% of all donations go directly into our Bolivia program!** As we close out the year 2018, we want to **thank you for giving** so generously throughout the year to support our work. **Together, we are making a difference!**

**To God be the glory for this very special ministry!**

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