

MISSION OF HOPE, BOLIVIA

NEWSLETTER

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Silvia's Story

Silvia is one of five children. She lives with her mother and father in a Bolivian town near the border of Brazil. At the age of 12, Silvia developed rheumatic fever, which resulted in **permanent damage to her heart**. By the age of 14, Silvia was having a lot of **chest pain and difficulty breathing**. Damage to the heart valves prevented the blood from flowing normally through her heart, and she was not able to get enough oxygen to breathe in a lying down position. The only way she could sleep was by sitting up.

Silvia's mother took her to many doctors, but **no one wanted to help**. The doctors told her that Silvia needed to see a cardiologist, but the family did not have money to pay for a specialist. Silvia's condition continued to worsen. Desperate to get help for their daughter, Silvia's parents **sold the house** they were living in! With the money from the sale of the house, Silvia's mother took her to a hospital in Santa Cruz. Doctors there told her that **Silvia needed a very expensive heart surgery** to replace the damaged valves.

Having exhausted all of their resources, Silvia and her mom returned home. Having sold everything they had of any value, the whole family was now living in one rented room. Silvia enrolled in the local university to study computer programming. She was now taking medicines to regulate her heart, but breathing and walking required tremendous effort. After 3 months, she dropped out of school. Silvia's body was so weak that she was losing hope of ever getting better. She became depressed and felt like giving up, but **her mother continued to cry out to God for help**.

Then one day, a friend came to visit Silvia and her mother. This friend had a son who worked at the Mission of Hope clinic in Santa Cruz! As a result of this friend's visit, Silvia and her mother made the 12 hour bus trip back to Santa Cruz and came to the Mission of Hope clinic. The medical team from the University of Oklahoma had also just arrived, and Silvia was one of the first patients to be seen. The medical team confirmed the diagnosis that Silvia needed a double valve replacement. The cost of the surgery at the Belgian hospital in Cochabamba, Bolivia, which specializes in this type of surgery, was estimated to be about \$9,000. The team prayed with Silvia and told her they would not forget her.

Silvia was admitted to the Belgian hospital September 30, 2008 for evaluation. Two weeks later, Silvia underwent a successful procedure to dilate the mitral valve and improve blood flow, which immediately improved her symptoms. She is now undergoing treatment for high blood pressure in preparation for a double valve replacement surgery in the very near future. **Mission of Hope, Bolivia has paid for all of Silvia's medical expenses** and is committed to paying for the valve replacement surgery as well.

Silvia is now 22 years old. The help she has received through Mission of Hope has changed her life, and **she now has hope for the future!** Silvia is very thankful for those who have supported the Mission of Hope clinic and who gave money for her surgery. **Praise the Lord!**

Ricky's Story



Ricky in the Belgian hospital

Ricky, age 10, lives with his mother and father in an Ayoré Indian village about 50 km from Santa Cruz in **extreme poverty**. Ricky had four siblings, but two of them died from diarrhea and dehydration. The mortality rate for infants and children in his village is very high because the water there is contaminated, the diet is poor, and the children do not receive the normal childhood immunizations to protect them from illness and disease. Although Ricky's parents are now making an effort to care for him, they have had problems in the past with alcoholism. During those times, Ricky has been in the

care of his grandmother, who was unable to properly supervise, educate, or feed him.

When the medical team from the University of Oklahoma came to work at the Mission of Hope clinic in Santa Cruz, they held a community outreach and set up a free medical clinic in the Ayoré village where Ricky was living. The team examined Ricky and diagnosed a **serious heart defect**. Considering the family history and the poor living conditions, it was **a miracle that Ricky was still alive**.

With generous donations from our supporters, Mission of Hope sent Ricky and his parents to the Belgian hospital in Cochabamba. The doctors there evaluated Ricky and determined that he had a large **hole between the ventricles of his heart**. They performed an immediate surgery to correct this **potentially fatal condition**. Ricky's **heart surgery was a complete success without any complications**.

Ricky and his parents stayed in Cochabamba for a total of one month, including the pre-operative evaluation and testing, the actual surgery and recovery, and the time of post-operative observation. Mission of Hope helped Ricky's parents to function in this city, since they had never traveled so far away from their community and had never lived outside of the Ayoré culture. This entire experience had a tremendous impact on their lives. Ricky's father made a decision not to drink anymore and to be a better father. He showed great love and care toward Ricky during this time, which is very unusual for men from the Ayoré community. **Mission of Hope paid for all of the family's living and travel expenses and all of the expenses related to Ricky's medical care and surgery.**

It is because of your prayers and faithful support that we are able to provide these special, life-saving surgeries for patients like Ricky and Silvia. Together, **we are making a huge difference** in the lives of the Bolivian people, who come to our free medical clinic in Santa Cruz from all over Bolivia! To date, **more than 100,000 patients have been seen!** Meanwhile, construction continues on the **new clinic** that we are building **to serve the Quechua Indian people of Sucre**. Approximately \$20,000 is needed to complete the inside work, which includes electrical, plumbing, plastering, and painting.

An independent audit of our finances for the year 2007 showed that **more than 98% went directly into our program in Bolivia!** The **\$100,000 matching gift challenge** is now in effect, which doubles every dollar we receive, and continues until December 31, 2008. Thank you for partnering with us to serve the poor, as we are used by God to heal the sick and share the hope that we have in Christ.

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Construction of medical clinic in Sucre