

MISSION OF HOPE, BOLIVIA

NEWSLETTER

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Jose Luis after surgery

Jose Luis

When Jose Luis was born, his parents lived in a very rural area where there were no roads or buses. His father, Ruperto, worked in the fields harvesting crops, when he was able to find work. Ruperto spent most of what he earned to support his alcohol addiction, so **there was never enough money for food and basic necessities.**

Jose Luis was born at home. His mother, Lucia, noticed right away that **something was wrong.** Something was bulging between his eyes and on top of his nose, and he was bleeding from his eye. There was **no way to take him to a doctor** because it was during the

rainy season and the river was too dangerous to cross on foot. One month later, Lucia was able to cross the river, carrying her baby, and walk 5 hours to the nearest medical clinic. The doctor there did a quick exam, prescribed some eye drops, and sent her on her way.

Lucia began the long walk home very discouraged. During the 8 years that followed, she despaired for her son. Jose tried to go to school, but the other children made fun of him and called him “monster.” After months of name-calling, Jose quit school to stay home with his mother.

In hopes of finding help, Lucia and Jose rode many hours in the back of a truck to see another doctor, who told them that **Jose needed a surgery.** The doctor said they needed to go to a large city. For Lucia, a mother who could barely feed her children, money for travel was not even a possibility. More discouraged than ever, Lucia was comforted by her friends, who told her that God would help her.

In February of 2008, a nurse named Maria, who worked in the Mission of Hope clinic, came to Jose’s village to show the “Jesus” film. Jose went by himself to see the movie, and Maria befriended him. She walked home with him and met Lucia, as well as Jose’s younger sister, Marioli, who had been born with the same problem. Maria told Lucia about the Mission of Hope clinic, where everything is free, and also told her about a surgery team that was coming from the US for a week of free surgeries.

In March of 2008, Jose and Marioli came to the Mission of Hope clinic to be screened for surgery. Marioli was able to have surgery the with the US team, but Jose’s condition was too advanced. Doctors on the team said **he would need to come to the US** to have his surgery. Until this screening, Lucia had no idea that **this “bulge” between Jose’s eyes was part of his brain** and that the only thing protecting it was skin. Part of the skull bone was missing, creating **a potentially fatal situation.**

On October 15, 2009, Jose Luis entered Sentara Norfolk General Hospital in Norfolk, VA, where Dr. Joseph Han, an ENT surgeon, Dr. Vijay Singh, a neurosurgeon, and Dr. Eric Dobratz, a facial plastic surgeon, performed the very delicate 8 hour surgery to reconstruct Jose’s skull and nose. All of the physicians involved in Jose’s excellent care donated their services. The hospital donated the entire cost of the surgery, and American Airlines donated round-trip air travel.

Lucia is so happy that Jose Luis can now live a normal life. Jose Luis, who is now 14 years old, is anxious to go to school and learn how to read and write. **They are both very grateful to everyone who has supported Mission of Hope to make this possible!**



Jose Luis with his mom, Lucia



Sarahi

Sarahi

Sarahi was one our first patients when we opened our free clinic in Santa Cruz, Bolivia in July of 2002. Sarahi was born with **spina bifida and hydrocephalus**, and a shunt was placed into her brain at birth to drain the excess fluid that would accumulate.

In November of 2002, Sarahi came to the US for a revision of that shunt. She was 5 years old and had been having severe headaches for more than a year. During the weeks that followed, Sarahi had several successful surgeries at Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center, a private Catholic hospital in Baton Rouge, LA.

On July 2, 2009, Sarahi returned to Baton Rouge. She had outgrown the shunt and was having severe headaches again. Doctors in Bolivia were not willing to perform the lifesaving brain surgery that she needed. Once again, the hospital welcomed Sarahi with open arms. Within one week of Sarahi’s arrival, her pediatric surgeon, Dr. Robert Upp, and her neurosurgeon, Dr. Allen Joseph, had replaced the shunt, and she was free of headaches! **God used this amazing team of doctors and health care professionals to not only save Sarahi’s life, but also to greatly improve the quality of her life.**

In Bolivia, the schools do not make provision for children with special needs. Sarahi had no bowel or bladder control. She wore diapers to school. When it was time to go outside and play, she would sit all alone against the wall and watch the other kids having fun. She longed to have friends, but she had none.

In Baton Rouge, an entire community of physicians, physical therapists, nurses, pastors, and friends embraced Sarahi, and she began to feel **“normal” for the first time in her life!** She began interacting with others, playing games, and even learning English! She amazed everyone by gaining some bladder and bowel control and getting **out of diapers for the first time in her life!** Her doctors are very encouraged by this, and they now believe it is possible for Sarahi to gain full control with time and training! In Sarahi’s own words, her life has been **“forever changed!”**

Luis Miguel

Luis Miguel is one of 7 children. When he was born, the **doctors did not give his mother any hope that he would live.** He had a heart condition that would be very expensive to correct, and the family had no money.

Luis Miguel has a condition known as Tetralogy of Fallot, which means that **he has a hole in his heart** between the right and left ventricles. The surgery to repair Luis Miguel’s heart can be done at an excellent hospital in Bolivia for approximately \$7,000. If you would like to give a gift for Luis Miguel’s surgery, please write “heart surgery” on the memo line of your check.



Luis Miguel

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Mission of Hope, Bolivia is a
501c3 tax-exempt organization.

The \$100,000 matching gift challenge is now in effect. An anonymous donor will double every dollar we receive between now and December 31, 2009. This money will be used to operate **our free medical clinic in Santa Cruz** during the year 2010. Mission of Hope, Bolivia is a **debt-free** organization, and approximately 98% of all donations go directly to Bolivia.

As we end the year 2009, we want to **thank you so much** for your prayers and financial support, which enable us to serve the poor in Bolivia. **Together, we are making a huge difference, and lives are being saved! To God Be the Glory!!**