

MISSION OF HOPE, BOLIVIA NEWSLETTER

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On October 16, 2010, **Surgery Team #15** arrived at the Mission of Hope hospital in Santa Cruz, Bolivia to provide a **week of free gynecology and general surgeries**. The team of 33 doctors, nurses, and helpers came from Oregon, California, Florida, Georgia, Virginia, New York, and Canada. The 63 patients who received these life-changing surgeries were so very appreciative! Most of them had suffered with their problem for years because they did not have the money to pay for surgery in a public hospital.



Maria, 9 years old, is in 4th grade and loves to play basketball with her 2 brothers. She has been in pain for 3 years from bilateral hernias. Now she is pain free and ready to play ball!



Carmen, 49 years old, is a single mom with 8 children and 14 grandchildren. She was in serious pain and unable to eat until doctors removed 346 gallstones during surgery!



Amalia, 45 years old, is a single mom with 6 children. She was having difficulty breathing and swallowing food because of a large thyroid nodule that had been growing for years. Surgery was not an option for Amalia until she came to the Mission of Hope clinic.



Lucio, 56 years old, is married and has 9 children. He works in the fields with a machete clearing farmland. He has had a hernia for 40 years! To get to the Mission of Hope clinic, Lucio had to walk 4 hours to the nearest bus stop and then ride a bus for 2 hours. He was so happy to have surgery!



Maria's Story

Maria and her husband came to Bolivia as **missionaries from Brazil** to pastor a small rural church about 2 ½ hours from Santa Cruz. The Bolivian community where they live is dependent on the harvest of sugar cane, which happens twice a year. During their time living in Bolivia, Maria and her husband have depended on the support of the church, which is a church of very poor people.

About 2 years ago, Maria began having a lot of very heavy bleeding. People in the church contributed money so that she could see a doctor. The doctor prescribed a pill to control the bleeding, which worked well for a while. Then the bleeding started again,

heavier than before. Maria was soon **confined to bed** because she was **so weak** from the heavy blood loss. **She felt like she was dying.** Then, someone from the church told Maria about the Mission of Hope clinic. She and her husband came by night and were in line by 4:30 a.m. to get into the clinic. Maria was so very weak and dizzy that she could hardly walk. She was severely anemic and an ultrasound test showed a uterine mass. Maria began treatment for her anemia and was put on the list for surgery.

Two months later, the US surgery team arrived and Maria was one of the patients selected for surgery. Maria had an **abdominal hysterectomy** and a good recovery. She is getting stronger every day. She is **very thankful** to God, to the team, and to Mission of Hope for the **excellent care** that she received.

Mission of Hope has been very blessed by many wonderful teams that have come to Bolivia. The following is part of a Christmas letter we received last year from a member of our Bolivian staff:

It was the last day of work before Christmas vacation and we used the staff daily devotional in the morning to remember those who made an impression in our hearts. We remembered those grandmothers who came with huge hernias and did not know how they could quit working for a few days and still feed their families. We remembered those grandmothers with fingernails eaten by the Clorox and soap, due to many years of doing laundry by hand to support children and grandchildren.

We remembered Aguinda with the copper T in her bladder. She wouldn't be alive if she did not come to the Mission. We remembered the prostitute who made that kind of living because she had 2 kids to feed, who was walking by the Mission one day and saw the sign that says "Mission of Hope" and she said to herself, "Hope, that is what I need." She came in, gave her heart to the Lord, and now she works as a secretary at the Justice Department. We remembered Gary Cueto who was in intensive care at a private clinic and they were disconnecting the life support system because his unwed mother did not have any money to pay. She came to the Mission. God intervened through the Mission. The whole bill was written off at the private clinic and he was restored to complete health.

We remembered many other patients, but we also remembered all of you who came and gave your love to those who hurt and did not have hope of getting better...all of you who left behind obligations, families, sick parents, problems at home, financial burdens and many other things that required your care. You came and worked hard and passed the love of God to other hearts. And you did it without seeking anything for yourselves. We thank God for your lives and for your sacrifices.

The \$100,000 matching gift challenge is in effect until December 31st. This money will be used to operate our free medical clinic in Santa Cruz, Bolivia during the year 2011. As we end the year 2010, we want to thank you for your prayers and financial support and thank you for partnering with us to serve the poor in Bolivia. Together, we are making a huge difference!

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