

MISSION OF HOPE, BOLIVIA NEWSLETTER

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Maria's Story



Maria after her miracle surgery

Maria Rosario is a 48-year-old lady who **suffered for 25 years with ear problems**. She went to many different doctors in Santa Cruz. One doctor performed an operation, which resulted in her being deaf in the operated ear. Meanwhile, she was gradually losing her hearing in the other ear. She did not have money to do anything more, but she never stopped praying that God would restore her hearing.

One day, a friend at work told Maria that **a team of US surgeons was coming to Mission of Hope to perform free ear surgeries**. Dr. Charlie Gross, who came ahead of the team, examined Maria and said she needed a stapedectomy (removal of the stapes bone and insertion of a stapes implant). We had no way to obtain a stapes implant, and we had not

thought to send any with the team. But, unbeknownst to us, before leaving the US, one member of the team received an unsolicited donation of stapes implants, which he brought with him to Bolivia!

Maria's surgeon, Dr. Bill Gross, **encountered many serious problems during her surgery**. First of all, the microscope was problematic. The focal length was too short to accommodate the instruments that he had, and he was unable to adjust it. Secondly, he encountered a stapedia artery in the way. Normally, this artery forms in the womb and disappears before birth. To cauterize this artery is very risky because it is next to the facial nerve and can result in paralysis of the face. At this point, based on his medical training, he should have aborted the surgery, but instead, he chose to pray. He also asked everyone else in the room to pray. After a time of prayer, he felt his hands become steady and an inner peace about proceeding with the surgery.

He then encountered a stapes bone so severely thick and hard that he needed a drill to remove it, but all he had was a probe. As he inserted the probe, it entered the bone without any resistance and removed the exact piece of bone that needed to come out. The implant was then inserted. Dr. Bill Gross is convinced that **God did the surgery!** He says it was a surgery that he, by himself, could not have done.

Maria no longer needs her hearing aid. Dr. Gross operated on one ear, but Maria is hearing out of both ears! **Her hearing is now completely normal! Praise the Lord!!**

Aganetha's Story

Aganetha is 5 years old and comes from a very large Mennonite family. Her family lives in the countryside, several hours by bus from Santa Cruz. When Aganetha came for surgery, she **could not hear or speak**. Both of her eardrums were calcified. After successful surgeries in both ears, Aganetha is **now able to hear and speak!** In fact, her parents say that now she just wants to talk all the time!



Aganetha after double ear surgery



Ricardo after his tonsillectomy

Ricardo's Story

Ricardo is a 5-year-old boy who has had **problems with his tonsils since birth**. His mother took him to many different doctors and tried many different medicines, but **nothing seemed to help**. By the time Ricardo was 3 years old, she had exhausted her financial resources and could not afford the treatments the doctors prescribed. She prayed and asked God to help her son, who was very sick and in pain from the constant infections.

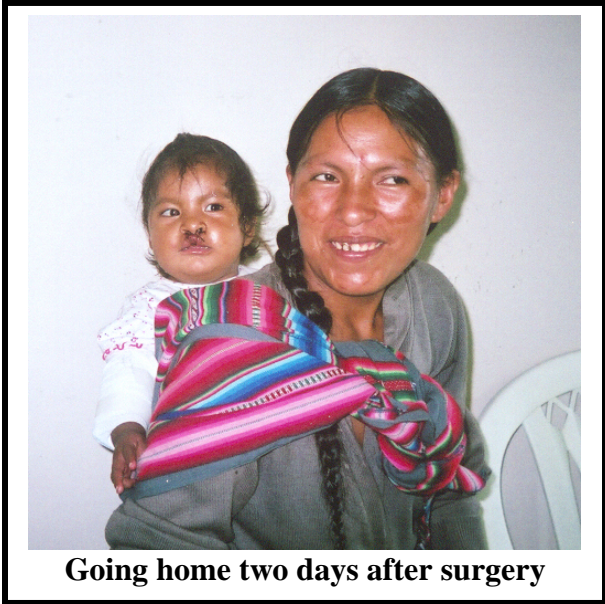
Then one day, a friend told her that **a team of doctors was coming from the US** to the Mission of Hope hospital and that they would be doing **free operations**, including tonsillectomies. Ricardo had a successful surgery and is **now healthy and pain-free**.

Magdalena's Story

Magdalena is a 2-year-old girl who was **born with a cleft lip**. Her mother is 25 years old and has other young children. Her husband died and left her without any means of support. She earns about \$3 a week baking bread for a leper hospital.

Magdalena and her mother live several hours away from Santa Cruz. A doctor who works with World Vision referred them to Mission of Hope and paid their transportation to and from Santa Cruz.

Magdalena had a life-changing surgery. Her lip was successfully repaired and when it has completely healed, she will no longer look different than other children.



Going home two days after surgery

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We are very thankful for the surgery team that came and gave of their gifts and talents to serve the poor. The team completed **more than 70 surgeries free of charge**, and most of the patients were children.

Patients came from all over Bolivia to receive these surgeries, including some who traveled 10-12 hours by bus from Cochabamba and Beni (the jungle). For many of these patients, the surgeries were completely life changing. **Together, with your support, we are making a difference!** For more pictures and stories, please visit our web site (address in box on left).