

MISSION OF HOPE, BOLIVIA

NEWSLETTER

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Surgery team #26 arrived at the Mission of Hope clinic in Santa Cruz on April 23rd to provide a **week of free surgeries!** These surgeries were **life-changing!** Here are a few of the stories.



Elizabeth after surgery

Elizabeth was 4 years old when she was playing with her cousins and fell off a ladder. She hit the ground with her face and broke her nose. She doesn't remember much about it except that her mom took her to the hospital. Her mom was poor and had no money for treatment, so the hospital workers only stopped the bleeding and sent her back home.

Elizabeth never knew her real father. He abandoned her mother when she was pregnant with Elizabeth. Elizabeth's mother earned very meager wages working as a cleaning lady in a public building.

Elizabeth came to the Mission of Hope clinic with a very pronounced crook on the top of her nose. She could only breathe from one side of her nose, and **she had been that way for 18 years!** When Elizabeth came for her checkup after the surgery and the bandage was removed, she looked in the mirror and could hardly believe her eyes! "Super!" was the first word out of her mouth. She explained that everyone was always looking at her nose and asking her what had happened to it. She is so very happy with her new nose and so very thankful for the team that came!

Daniel is the youngest of 6 children. His father left them when he was very young and his mother had to work, so he was raised by his older brothers and sisters. Daniel remembers having to fill holes in the street at a very young age to earn a few coins to buy bread and sugar. He also remembers that he was always hungry.

Daniel has had problems with his ear all of his life, but his mother did not have money to take him to a doctor. By the time he was 15 years old, he was having constant pain in his right ear but he did not have money to go to a doctor. After about **7 years of constant pain**, the ear started draining and he lost his hearing in that ear.

Finally, when Daniel was 24 years old, he heard about the Mission of Hope clinic, where everything is free. Daniel had a successful surgery to repair a large hole in his eardrum. After so many years, he is now pain free! He lives with an older brother, who is supporting him to study computers and accounting at the local university. They are both very grateful for the care Daniel received.

Ilaria lives in a small Quechua Indian community high up in the Andes Mountains about 3 hours from Sucre. She was raised by her mother's sister. One day, her aunt went into town and was hit by a car. The aunt died from her injuries, leaving Ilaria **an orphan at the age of 13**. Ilaria could not go to school. She had to work to support herself. About 3 years ago, she was outside and something bit her on the right ear lobe. Her ear lobe became swollen and a large cyst formed. As this cyst continued to increase in size, Ilaria became more and more concerned. Someone in her church told her about the Mission of Hope clinic in Sucre, where everything is free.



Ilaria after surgery

When Ilaria went to the Sucre clinic, it was her first time ever seeing a medical doctor. The clinic in Sucre contacted the clinic in Santa Cruz, and Ilaria was put on the list for surgery. She traveled 3 hours by car to Sucre. She then traveled 16 hours by bus through the Andes Mountains to get from Sucre to Santa Cruz. After a successful surgery to remove the cyst, Ilaria took her first plane ride, a 45 minute flight, made possible by the generous offerings of the surgery team that came!



Daniel after surgery



Diana comes home

Update on Diana's Story

Diana's story was featured in the December, 2015 newsletter. Diana and her mom flew back to Bolivia on January 9th following a **successful cochlear implant**. Family and friends were at the airport in Santa Cruz to welcome them home. Diana was so happy to see her Daddy (see photo at left) after being separated from him for more than two months while in Charleston, SC for her surgery.

Diana has been receiving speech therapy in Santa Cruz twice a week. When she visited the clinic in April, she was learning to talk, just like a normal toddler learns to talk. She could say, "Mama," "Papa," and "no, no." If you missed the December newsletter, you can request one by email or find it in the "archives" segment of our web site.



Santiago

Santiago's Story

Santiago is a 3 year old boy who came to the clinic with his mother. They live about 4 hours from Santa Cruz and heard about Mission of Hope through a church outreach. Like Diana, Santiago also had a profound hearing loss. After Diana's successful cochlear implant, she no longer needed the very specialized Siemens hearing aid we had purchased for her. So, we decided to try the hearing aid on Santiago. Mission of Hope sent them to the most advanced center for treatment of hearing loss in Santa Cruz, where they were able calibrate the hearing aid for Santiago.

During our week of ENT surgery with the US team, Santiago's mother brought him to the clinic to see if there was anything we could do to help. She was very discouraged because Santiago did not seem to be hearing anything and was not speaking at all. When he wanted something, he would just make little noises and point. Sonia, one of the team members, was translating for Santiago's mother. When his mother finished speaking, Sonia asked her if we could pray for Santiago. We laid hands on Santiago and prayed for God to give him the ability to speak.

After the prayer was finished, Sonia continued talking to the mother. Meanwhile, Santiago was making little noises and trying to get his mother's attention. Finally, he said very clearly, "Mommy, mira!" which in English means, "Mommy, look!" Sonia and the mother looked at each other. Sonia asked her, "Has he ever said this before?" The mother said, "No, never!" Then Sonia pointed outside and said, "afuera" and Santiago said, "afuera." Then Sonia pointed to herself and said, "amiga," which means "friend," and Santiago repeated it very clearly. His mom was shocked. She told Sonia that he had never spoken any of those words before. It was a **glorious answer to prayer!** The mom was in tears and without words!

A note from the Director

Many of you who are receiving this newsletter have been on teams that have gone to Bolivia and/or have heard the story of Mission of Hope. Many of you have seen the miracles first-hand. Others have heard stories of God moving "mountains," making a way where there seemed to be no way. It is time to write the stories! Please write to me by email and write down the stories you have heard or remember. It doesn't matter how big or small the story is...God is always in the details at Mission of Hope! I look forward to hearing from you! Blessings, Cindy Thacker ☺

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