

MISSION OF HOPE, BOLIVIA

NEWSLETTER

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Mission of Hope was so blessed by the **two teams** that visited Bolivia this spring! The first team provided a **week of free ear, nose, and throat surgeries**. The second team worked on the new medical **clinic that we are building** in Sucre, Bolivia.

The volunteer US surgery team arrived in Bolivia on March 21, 2009. During the week that followed, **70 patients** received a **life-changing surgery!** It was **an amazing week** of constructing ears for children born without ears, removing tonsils that had caused frequent and painful infections, removing nasal obstructions to restore breathing, and patching holes in eardrums to end years of chronic infections.

Throughout the year, the Bolivian doctors who work in our free medical clinic in Santa Cruz are on the lookout for patients who can benefit from the US surgery teams who come. During this week of surgery, the medical clinic was closed and the entire Bolivian staff worked together with the US team to provide the help and support they needed. It was **a wonderful experience for both patients and staff!**



Susana & Ana enjoy coloring together as they wait their turn for tonsil surgery.



Leticia, hearing for the first time, is thrilled with her solar-powered hearing aid!



Daniel, 7 years old, lives in a very poor Ayoré Indian village with his grandmother. He was born with a hole in the roof of his mouth. After surgery, Daniel spoke his first clear words and was able to eat and drink without problems for the first time in his life!



Jose, 14 years old, was born with only one ear. He lives with his parents in Cochabamba, Bolivia. He rode on the bus for 12 hours to each screening appointment. Using cartilage from his rib and tissue from his inner thigh, doctors were able to form an outer ear for him!



Susana

Susana's Story

Susana is a 47-year-old lady who lives with her husband and 6 children in a Mennonite community about 6 hours by train from Santa Cruz. When Susana first came to the Mission of Hope clinic in the spring of 2008, she was very discouraged. She had been **deaf in both ears for more than 16 years**. She had been to many doctors, but **no one could help her**. When friends and family would come to visit, her children would have to talk for her because she was not able to hear any of the conversation. This was all **very embarrassing** for Susana.

When the ENT surgery team came to Bolivia in March of 2008, **Susana received her first ear surgery**. A tiny, prosthetic stapes bone was implanted into her inner ear. One morning soon after the surgery, Susana realized that she could hear the traffic on the street outside of her window! She was so excited!

When Susana came back to the Mission of Hope clinic for a follow-up hearing test, she was found to have **normal hearing in the operated ear!** This year, when Susana came to have surgery on the other ear, she was a different person! **Her whole life has changed!** She is much more confident and smiles easily. She no longer needs her children to speak for her. She is so thankful for everything that has been done for her at Mission of Hope. News about Susana has spread throughout the Mennonite community. She is known as **“the woman who was deaf, but now can hear!”**

Sucre Clinic Update

On April 11, 2009, a **team of volunteers** arrived in Sucre to continue the work on our **new medical clinic**. Sucre is located in the Andes Mountains of Bolivia at an altitude of approximately 9,000 feet above sea level. The clinic is situated on the outskirts of the city in a **large community of Quechua** Indian people. During the week that the team was there, they worked hard painting the inside of the clinic and laying the floor tiles. They also had the opportunity to visit some of the families who will benefit from this clinic.

The first family they visited was a family of five...mother, father, and 3 children. The father is an alcoholic. The oldest child is a **10-year-old boy**. He is **not able to go to school**. He has to work to support his mother and 2 younger sisters. He works all day sanding caskets. He **earns about \$1.50/day**, which has to buy food for the whole family. There is **no money for medicine or medical care** if anyone gets sick.

They also visited a family of eight...a mother and her 7 children...The **oldest child works** as a mason **to support his mother and 7 brothers and sisters**. He earns about \$10/day, which feeds the whole family. Again, there is **no money for medicine or medical care**. The free medical clinic that we are building will be a huge blessing to the many families in this **very poor community**.



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