

# MISSION OF HOPE, BOLIVIA

## NEWSLETTER

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### Surgery Team #30

On Friday, April 27, 2018, a team of 33 doctors, nurses, translators, and non-medical volunteers left family and jobs to go to the Mission of Hope clinic in Santa Cruz, Bolivia to provide a week of life-changing ENT surgeries. Here are some of the many patient stories...



**Eva**, 5 yrs. old, is one of five children. Her family is extremely poor. Eva's tonsils were so large that she had trouble swallowing food and breathing when lying down. After surgery to remove her tonsils, Eva is now eating and drinking and sleeping without any problems. She is happy and ready to go back to school!



**Yan Carla**, 10 yrs. old, suffered with ear infections for 8 years. Her parents took her to many doctors, who tried various treatments, but the painful infections continued. So, they traveled 4 hours to the Mission of Hope clinic. After surgery to repair a hole in her eardrum, Yan's ear is healing and the pain is gone!



**Mario**, 45 yrs. old, came to the clinic hearing nothing from his left ear and very little from his right ear. He had been like this since childhood! After surgery, he was hearing the traffic outside for the first time in 40 years! When he got home, he could hear water dripping from a faucet! He was so excited!!



**Pedro**, 37 yrs. old, was addicted to alcohol and lived on the street for years. He got into a fight and his nose was broken. He has had trouble breathing ever since. He entered a Christian rehab program and gave his life to Jesus. Now he is in full time ministry and breathing well after a successful surgery!



**Alejandro before surgery**

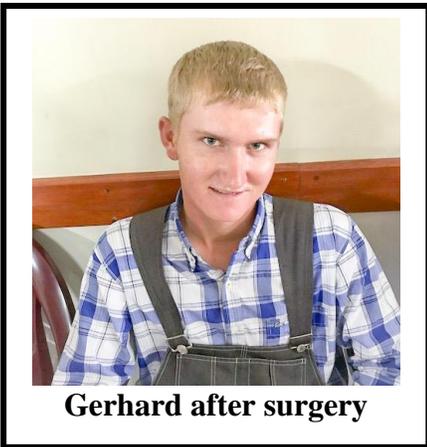
### **Alejandro's Story**

**Alejandro**, 2 years old, is very small for his age. When he was 8 months old, he started breathing through his mouth. His mother thought his nose must be stopped up, so she took him to a doctor. The doctor told her it was just a common cold and not to worry. He said that everything was normal. He gave her some medicines and Alejandro seemed to get better.

In the months that followed, there were more doctors' visits and more treatments. Then there were several frightening episodes of waking up and finding Alejandro gasping for air, unable to breathe. X-rays revealed that his adenoids were very enlarged and blocking his airway. **Surgery was urgently needed!**

**Alejandro's parents did not have money for surgery.** His father had left a good job two years before to pastor a church. His salary at the church was minimal, and he did not have any insurance. His mother had also left her job to stay at home and care for her two young children. So they were desperately trying to figure out how they could come up with the money to pay for this urgently needed surgery. Then **someone at their church told them about Mission of Hope, where everything is free!**

Alejandro had surgery to remove his tonsils and adenoids, and **he is now breathing easily.** He no longer snores at night and no longer breathes through his mouth. His parents are so very grateful for the team that came and for the care they received and for the love of Christ they saw in every person there!



**Gerhard after surgery**

### **Gerhard's Story**

Gerhard lives with his mom, dad, and 5 brothers and sisters in a Mennonite colony 7 hours away from Santa Cruz. One morning in 2012, he woke up and could not hear anything from his right ear. He was 9 years old at the time. His parents took him to a doctor, who said the ear looked fine. In 2013, the same thing happened to his other ear.

Gerhard's parents took him to a specialist in Santa Cruz, who told them that nothing could be done to help Gerhard. **He needed a surgery that is not done in Bolivia.** They went to a second specialist in Santa Cruz who told them the same thing. That night, they stayed in Santa Cruz at a local hotel because it was too late to go home. As they chatted with some of the folks staying at the hotel, **someone told them**

**about Mission of Hope.** Gerhard and his father did not even have the address of Mission of Hope, but when they mentioned the name to their taxi driver, he knew where to take them!

At Mission of Hope, Gerhard was put on the list for surgery. He had **severe otosclerosis** and needed a surgery to replace the tiny stapes bone in the middle ear. When the 2015 Mission of Hope surgery team came, Gerhard had the stapes prosthesis implanted in his right ear. His hearing did improve right after the surgery, but over time he lost hearing again.

When Gerhard came back for a second surgery in 2017, the team attempted a stapes implant on the left ear, but the surgery failed. The bone was so hardened that the surgeon could not penetrate the bone with the instruments he had available. Gerhard was visibly discouraged.

This year he came back again saying we were his only hope. **He could not hear anything at all!** He said it felt like somebody had stopped up both ears with their fingers. Gerhard was the first ear surgery of the week. **The entire team was praying!** Gerhard had a successful surgery and **is now hearing out of the operated ear!** We even saw **him smile for the first time!**

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