In Peru, 1,200 kilometers from Cusco and high in the Andes mountains, lies a harsh, yet beautiful land. It is a place where the earth and sky meet – where llamas and alpacas graze among the clouds, constantly trimming the green stubble that carpets the rocky terrain. At elevations upward of 12,000 feet above the timber line, the biting wind whips around the cliffs and chills to the bone.

The approximately 2,500 individuals who live at this high elevation comprise the Q’eros Nation. Life is hard here for the Q’eros, and not just because of the environment.

Three quarters live in poverty. Half of those survive on as little as $46 per family per month. The money they earn comes from selling the few crops that grow at such a high altitude, and the wool from the llamas and alpacas they raise.

Their homes reflect limited funds and consist mostly of the scarce raw materials they have access to such as stone, dirt, sticks. Some have an additional sheet-metal roof. Most often, the walls and the ceiling do not meet, leaving gaps and exposing families to the harsh climate conditions.

Of all the adversities the Q’eros have had to overcome to survive in the Andes, few would suspect that home would be an issue. But this is the most pressing problem for the Q’eros – their houses are killing them.

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Building Hope and a Future

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The gaps in the roof, and the dirt construction, mixed with poorly ventilated cooking fires, are the reason that respiratory illnesses are so common. In fact, broncho-pulmonary illnesses are the primary cause of infant mortality and morbidity in the region. It's become such an issue that it has reduced the average lifespan of the Q'reos to a mere 60 years.

The good news is, together we're making a difference.

Family by family, your support of Esperança is bringing hope to the Q'reos Nation – by replacing huts made of stone and grass with safe, well-constructed homes. Through our indigenous partner organization CADEP, as well as contributions from Kahtcola for the People, The Antioch Foundation and individual donors, we are currently constructing new ecologically-friendly, acclimatized homes to provide safe living conditions for approximately 120 Q'reos people.

These homes are designed to include solar electricity, water and septic systems, greenhouses, indoor bathrooms to maintain personal hygiene, and skylights to increase light and heat. Not only will these families find protection from the elements, but inside, their children will be healthier than ever before.

Thanks to the greenhouses, families will have the ability to grow nutritious vegetables indoors where they can thrive and be protected from the cold, harsh winds. Hearty veggies like broccoli, which are common to us, will provide vitamins and nutrition they have never experienced before. Not only will their families grow stronger, but these "exotic" veggies fetch a premium price at market – improving their economic stability as well.

Solar electricity, indoor bathrooms and skylights are some of the features of safe homes being built by Esperança through your support and the help of partner organizations.

As with all of Esperança's projects, local community members donate their labor and materials.

It's truly a sight to behold! Thank you for the support that makes these homes possible! Together, we're doing more than protecting families, we are saving lives of their children – giving the Q'reos the chance to progress past "surviving" to thriving!
**Fifth Time’s a Charm!**

*How you helped give Elisamar a reason to smile*

Meet Elisamar, a beautiful 23-month-old girl from Rancho Grande—a small town outside of Matagalpa, Nicaragua. It’s about four hours from where we sent our most recent surgical mission in April, headed by the veteran Dr. Retson.

This mission would mark the fifth journey for Elisamar’s mother. She brought her daughter to be evaluated by Esperança’s teams on four separate occasions, but each time, surgery had to be postponed due to respiratory infections.

Elisamar was born with a birth defect known as cleft palate, where the tissue that makes up the roof of the mouth fails to completely form during pregnancy. It can lead to ear infections, speech and hearing problems, as well as social stigma later on in life.

When we saw her most recently, Elisamar was experiencing discomfort chewing and ingesting food. She was evaluated by Dr. Retson and his team, who decided to perform the initial repair. **We are happy to report the surgery was successful! Elisamar had no pre- or post-op complications.**

Elisamar’s mother is profoundly grateful for the attention and follow up her daughter received during this long process. After four attempts to qualify, she was in tears when her daughter was healthy enough for surgery!

This isn’t the last we will see of Elisamar. Through Esperança’s in-country partner, AVODEC, we will continue to follow up on the surgery to make sure everything heals properly.

**Thank you for the support that changed Elisamar’s life!**
Celebrating Moms!

Honoring hard-working women on their special day

Family is the cornerstone of Mexican culture, but there is no doubt that mom is at the center. Without a doubt one of the most important celebrations is May 10th, Mother’s Day in Mexico.

On this day, traffic goes crazy, restaurants are filled, flower shops are sold out, and every mariachi band has been booked! For 364 days a year, mothers are dedicated to taking care of and providing for their families, and May 10th is a day for their families to return the favor... and they deliver in a big way!

This year, Esperança had the opportunity to celebrate the mothers in our Phoenix community who would not have had the means to be pampered the way moms traditionally would. Months and months of preparation led up to a morning full of food, flowers, and laughter for 100 ladies who have participated in Esperança’s health programs.

With support from sponsors like SPEAR Education and United Healthcare, Esperança made sure that these caretakers did not miss out on a tradition that makes them feel truly special.

Esperança recently honored mothers in the Phoenix area with a day of food, flowers and pampering. These hard-working caretakers participate in Esperança’s health programs.

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