Fear Turns to Hope
Your support gave Raquel a new lease on life

The political situation in Nicaragua has made it difficult, if not impossible, to send Esperança’s volunteer surgeons as we have in the past. That being said, the need has not diminished. Countless lives still depend on the surgical intervention we offer for procedures they would never have access to on their own. Despite the difficulties, Esperança could not give up on these people.

The good news is, we recently found a way to continue to bring surgical hope to the people of Nicaragua – all without crossing a border.

Meet Dr. Hurtado.

Dr. Hurtado is a Nicaraguan surgeon, one of many who are partnering with Esperança as part of our new in-country surgical program. Instead of surgeons traveling to Nicaragua from the US, these native surgeons have agreed to volunteer their time to provide free surgical procedures through Esperança’s surgical mission coordination – completely circumventing the difficult political climate!

It’s a good thing, too. For Doña Raquel Ramírez Orozco, a 39-year-old mother of five in Nicaragua, this solution came just in time.

Raquel began noticing a strange bulge forming in her abdomen. She ignored it at first, hoping it would go away on its own. Instead, it continued to grow – so much so that it was soon hard to hide.

“I was scared to go out on the street because I thought they would laugh at me – that at my age I was pregnant!” Says Raquel.

Eventually, the mass started to put pressure...Continued on page 2
Fear Turns to Hope

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on her other organs, causing a host of issues, including pelvic pain and difficulty walking. The situation had become serious and Raquel wasn’t sure what to do.

“I postponed going to the doctor because I thought it was nothing serious. Now, I was afraid.”

But thanks to Esperança’s new program and friends like you, that fear soon turned into hope. She heard an Esperança sponsored advertisement on the radio for a surgical mission offering free evaluations. It was perfect! Raquel immediately made travel arrangements from her village.

When Raquel arrived, she was evaluated by Dr. Hurtado. An ultrasound revealed the mass to be a myoma, a uterine tumor that consists partly of muscle tissue. It was the largest myoma Dr. Hurtado had ever seen. In fact, to compensate for its size, Raquel’s uterus had expanded to that of your average six-and-a-half-month pregnant woman!

First thing the next morning, Raquel was admitted into surgery. Three hours later, an eight-pound tumor was removed from her body! There were no complications and Raquel left the operating room in good spirits.

“I felt weak, but now I feel very good, and happy to have gotten rid of that uncomfortable weight,” she laughs. “I am very grateful! I want to take this opportunity to thank all those involved in these brigades. I hope they can continue to help more people who need them in these places. God bless you all!”

Thanks to the support of friends like you, Raquel’s surgery was one of the 90 performed over the four days of our second-ever in-country surgical mission. It was a complete success!

“Through the launch of surgical missions in Nicaragua implemented by Nicaraguan surgeons, Esperança is achieving a level of sustainability we’ve continuously aimed for,” shares International Program Director Anna Ortiz.

In Nicaragua, these local surgeons who have worked with Esperança’s volunteers in the past have adopted the mission spirit and taken it upon themselves to continue this work. The fact that Esperança can continue to support Nicaraguans during these difficult times with local physicians is the epitome of sustainability.

Thank you for the partnership that makes life-saving missions and collaborations like these possible!
A New Way to Walk in Ecuador
How you helped release Sulay from 22 years of disability

Sulay Camaton was born in Guayaquil, Ecuador with a club foot, a condition where an infant’s foot is formed inward, sometimes so severely that the sole of the foot faces sideways or even upward. Tragically, her parents couldn’t afford the surgery to correct their daughter’s condition.

When Sulay was nine years old, her mother heard about a free orthopedic surgical mission passing Manta, a city four hours away. Hoping for a cure, she got her daughter seen by a doctor. Unfortunately, she found out that Sulay had passed into the age range where it wasn’t wise to operate until her foot finished developing.

Discouraged, but not defeated, her parents scrimped and saved so that they could afford the operation when the time came. But it wasn’t to be.

An economic crash in Ecuador greatly diminished the family’s income, to the point where they needed those savings just to survive. Now 22 years old, it was beginning to look like Sulay would never walk or run normally.

But then Esperança (hope) came to Ecuador.

This year, for the first time ever, Esperança launched a surgical mission to Ecuador. The local hospital set up a social media campaign to get the word out. Sulay’s mother couldn’t believe her eyes when she checked Facebook – a free orthopedic surgical mission was coming to the León Becerra Hospital in their town!

After an evaluation by Esperança’s volunteer surgeon, Dr. Pedro Castillo, Sulay’s surgery was scheduled.

“I am truly grateful for the opportunity they gave my daughter and for the excellent care from all the doctors who were attentive at all times,” says Sulay’s mother. “It’s a miracle!”

Sulay’s surgery was a success! On June 17th, the cast came off and, thanks to friends like you, Sulay was able to experience normal mobility for the first time in her life.

Together we changed the lives of 25 others like Sulay on this Esperança’s trip to Ecuador and, with your support, we’re looking forward to many more! Thank you for your partnership!
Hugo Rolando Vega, a 52 year old farmer in Tarija, Bolivia, was growing just enough food to keep his family from starving – but not enough to move forward. He lived in constant fear of one poor harvest.

“I grew potatoes, corn, some leafy vegetables and had a couple of animals. The income for my family was very little and our diet was not the best,” admits Hugo.

Thanks to your support of Esperança, Hugo’s family is no longer stuck on the edge of starvation. It all changed when he began participating in our Rural Family Farm Microenterprise Project, which aims to improve the economic security of rural families.

“With the project, my family not only has a more varied diet with better nutritional value, we’re getting valuable advice on how to introduce new crops to improve our profits,” says Hugo with a big smile.

By giving a hand up instead of a hand out, you’ve helped change this community for generations to come. Last year alone, your support helped Esperança change the future for 147 families just like Hugo’s.

Thanks to our Rural Family Farm Microenterprise Project in Bolivia, Hugo Vega’s crops now thrive, providing food and income for his family.

“Much has been given to each of us, and I’m certain that it is given so that we may share it.”
— Father Luke Tupper, M.D. Founder of Esperança

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