Little Juanito will be walking tall, thanks to you!

Like so many first-time mothers, Jennifer worked hard to achieve the perfect pregnancy. She was careful to follow her doctor’s direction to the letter, she was there for every checkup, and breathed a small sigh of relief at every ultrasound as she watched her baby grow.

But it was evident when her son Juanito was born that something was wrong.

She didn’t understand. Everything was perfect up to that point; none of the ultrasounds showed cause for concern.

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Dr. Sachs, one of Esperança’s most dedicated volunteer surgeons, with little Juanito and his mother before a successful surgery.
But still, her boy was born with a condition known as club foot, where the sole of one foot is curved inward to face the other. It’s a condition that occurs in 1 out of 1,000 births worldwide and the cause is still unknown.

Jennifer was happy that her son was healthy, but didn’t know what to do about his foot. She didn’t have the money to pay for medical treatment.

Over the next nine months, she and her sister took Juanito to every hospital they could find with a free clinic, hoping one would be able to cure her son. Again and again, doctors would place casts on his foot in hopes of correcting the condition over time, but each time the casts came off Jennifer was disappointed.

Jennifer was beginning to lose hope that her son would ever be able to walk properly. But then, she heard about an orthopedic mission coming to Ecuador provided by an organization called Esperança. Thanks to your support, Jennifer found a new reason to hope!

Esperança volunteer surgeon, Dr. Sachs, evaluated little 9-month-old Juanito and approved him for surgery. One-and-a-half hours later, Juanito’s club foot was corrected.

For Jennifer, the search was finally over; her son was healed! Juanito will be in a cast for the next 6 weeks, but when the cast comes off this time, it will be the last time.

Hope like this only happens because of the partnership of friends like you who make it possible.

As we begin a new year, we want to thank each and every one of you who give stories like little Juanito’s a happy ending – especially the members of Dr. Sachs’ ACBL bridge club, who go out of their way each year to help send him around the world and perform miracles for mothers like Jennifer.

Scan the code with your mobile device to view a video of Dr. Sachs and his team on a mission.

Jennifer and her sister took Juanito to every free clinic they could find with no success, until they found HOPE in Esperança’s orthopedic mission.
Filomena is a mother of five, living in Maciene, Mozambique. She’s had issues with her family and personal hygiene as long as she can remember. In fact, her untidiness was such a major topic of conversation in the community, our health activists heard of her situation and scheduled a visit to see if they could help.

After several visits, Belinha Conjo, one of Esperança’s activists who is HIV+ herself, recognized some familiar signs. She noticed Filomena was losing weight and her complexion looked unhealthy. It took a bit of convincing from Belinha, butFilomena finally relented to taking an HIV test.

**The result came back positive.**

The news was devastating, but now that she knows, she can take the next steps in managing the disorder.

Thanks to your support, Esperança’s activists ensure that she’s receiving regular medication to dramatically slow the progress of the disease and alleviate the symptoms. She’s very grateful to have discovered the truth before it was too late – for her and for the sake of her children.

“I beg that this project keeps going,” says Filomena, “to help others who might not know before it is too late! That could be their death. And if they are single parents like me, what would happen to their children?”

Thank you for the support that allows Esperança to educate and beat this condition for hundreds of others just like Filomena.
A Nutrition Mystery in Mozambique

How you helped save the life of Gilda’s son

Gilda’s only son, almost two years old, was failing to progress. He was feeble, unable to walk, and had little appetite, very unlike normal children his age. Eventually he lost so much weight that Gilda had no choice but to take him to the hospital.

“I was unsure…I did not know what to do,” says Gilda. “My son would not eat. And at the hospital I was told he was malnourished.”

Fortunately, at the hospital, Gilda came into contact with one of Esperança’s Health Activists. She invited Gilda to come to a health activity group to meet other women in her situation.

“The day I went, the group was learning how to make soup to feed their children. My child would not eat, at the beginning. But slowly, he began accepting food and now he is mobile, he plays, and he can walk!”

The surprising thing is, it wasn’t the food that was the issue. On visiting Gilda’s home, our activists found unsanitary conditions conducive to the real culprit – diarrhea, the second leading cause of death in children under 5 years old.

Simple healthy habits, like washing hands before preparing food, are something that Gilda has never heard before. But as the home visits continue, new personal hygiene habits are introduced. It’s your support that allowed us to look beneath the surface and help keep this family safe.

The important thing is, Gilda’s son has been saved and is currently thriving!

What’s more, his mother is slowly acquiring healthy practices that will continue to keep them both safe! Thank you for the partnership that puts families back on the road to health.

After learning about the importance of proper personal hygiene, Gilda and her son are now healthy and thriving, thanks to your support!