Surgical teams are a GO once again!

Due to an unstable political climate, Esperança has been unable to send volunteer surgeons into Nicaragua for almost two years. In that time, the need for quality, specialized surgical care never faltered. Thankfully, that time is over.

We’re excited to report that, not only are our surgeons safe to return, they already have!

Thanks to the support of friends like you, we were able to send an exploratory team in late January. Made up of Esperança staff, board members, and medical volunteers, the group journeyed to a hospital in La Dalia to evaluate any safety concerns surrounding the travel of international volunteers to Nicaragua.

Esperança board member and general surgeon Dr. Continued on page 2
Feuerstein and two of his colleagues integrated with local medical professionals to form one cohesive surgical team. Over the course of the week, the team performed 79 general and gynecological surgeries – significantly more than they expected!

Following this successful mission and an outstanding overall site evaluation, Esperança plans to reinstate surgical missions with international volunteers in Nicaragua for the time being, with a few limitations. We’ve been advised to veer away from sending larger teams of ten or more for the near future. Teams travelling to Nicaragua must also be able to procure all their own supplies. Due to shortages, volunteer teams cannot count on the hospitals providing most surgical supplies and some medications.

“Following this successful mission and site evaluation, Esperança plans to reinstate surgical missions with international volunteers in Nicaragua,” said Anna Ortiz, International Program Director.

Do you have medical expertise? Are you ready to help change lives? Come join us on the front lines and sign up for one of our upcoming surgical missions today! We’re excited to once again change frowns into beautiful smiles for children born with cleft palate, give mobility back to burn victims, restore sight to those with cataracts and more!

Currently, the most needed specialties in Nicaragua are: General, General Pediatrics, Gynecology, Hand, Neurosurgery, Orthopedic, Plastics, Varicose Veins, and Varicose Ulcers.

Let’s get back to work, bringing hope to those who need it most in Nicaragua. If you’re ready to scrub up and join us, call 602-252-7772 for more information and sign up today!

All Esperança surgical missions have been suspended until June 30th in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. A program re-evaluation will take place at that time.
Disaster Averted

Families are saved from starvation, thanks to your support

Every October in Mozambique, countless families eagerly watch the skies. They’re looking – praying – for the rain that signals the start of the agricultural season. For many families, the tiny green shoots of maize, peanuts and black-eyed peas that will soon sprout account for all the food they will have to survive the following year.

The season started out well this past October. There was a good amount of rain and everyone looked forward to a great harvest. But the rain didn’t last long enough. Instead, December brought scorching heat and the typical heavy rains in January never came, devastating the efforts of 17 families in the Gaza Province.

Thankfully, Esperança’s demonstration field used to teach subsistence farming techniques produced 200 kg of maize, pumpkin leaves and black-eyed peas – enough to keep the families fed during this time of drought. These demonstration plots saved hundreds from a time of severe crisis.

Thank you for the support that brings hope and saves lives!

Escaping the disaster

Seventeen families lost all crops due to unprecedented weather conditions. Luckily, Esperança had a back-up plan!
Imelda is a survivor. Now, she has her dignity back.

Imelda is a vibrant, cheerful senior. Other than using a walker to get around Casa Pedro Ruiz Senior Center, you would guess that she is a healthy elderly woman.

But in reality, Imelda is a survivor – a survivor of both ovarian and skin cancer. Most recently, she is a survivor of a hernia-caused bowel obstruction. Though a surgery would have been, at one time, relatively simple, the risk now is too high. Not to mention, the procedure is expensive. And Imelda does not have insurance.

This leads to the most difficult part of Imelda’s condition... procuring ostomy bags. To prevent infection, these bags are made for one-time usage. The thought of reusing these bags is a nightmare to most doctors. But Imelda is a survivor. She does what she must. She thoroughly cleans bags after each use, or when supplies are even scarcer, she resorts to using a grocery bag.

Thankfully, Esperança learned of her condition before infection or depression took over Imelda’s life completely.

Through your support of our Medical Supply Donation Program, ostomy supplies were set aside for Imelda.

She was overcome with emotion on our first visit, and now looks forward to seeing Esperança with more supplies every few months. Because the need is great, and there are more survivors just like Imelda at Casa Pedro Ruiz (and other senior centers around the Valley), Esperança will continue providing donated supplies just like these to those who need them.

“It’s about bringing consistency and stability to people’s lives so that they can focus on what’s important. Nobody should have to question their dignity,” says Ramon Gallardo, our Gift In-Kind Coordinator.

Thank you for giving survivors like Imelda hope and dignity! You can learn more about donating medical supplies on our website: www.esperansa.org.

Imelda, center, happily displays some of the desperately needed supplies that your support provided.