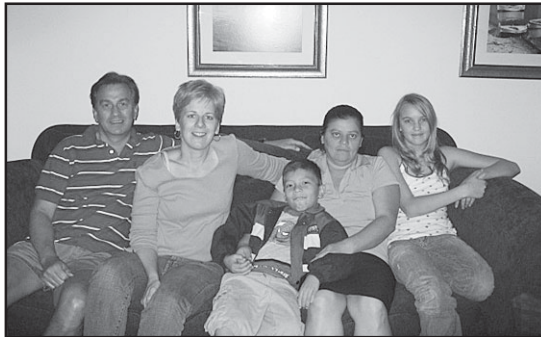




Cardiac Mission to El Salvador: Children Receive Health-Restoring Surgery

In our last newsletter, we reported on a cardiology team led by Dr. Steve Yabek that traveled to El Salvador in October 2006 to screen candidates for cardiac surgery in the United States. After examining 61 children, 45 were considered eligible to travel to the U.S. Of those 45, six were selected to travel to Albuquerque and two will go to California. The national office of HTC will undertake to help the remaining children.

We are now delighted to report that the first of those children, Oscar Hernandez, 7, successfully underwent surgery on May 2 to repair a hole in his heart between the ventricles-the two big chambers of the heart-and his aortic valve. After a three-hour operation at Presbyterian Hospital, Dr. Carl Lagerstrom, who performed the surgery, was able to tell Oscar's mother, Yasmin, that her son's heart had been repaired. "I've waited and prayed for this moment for seven years," Yasmin replied through an interpreter, thrilled that her son came



Charles and Libby Bombach with their daughter Claire and Oscar and Yasmin

through the procedure so well.

During their stay in Albuquerque, Oscar and Yasmin are the guests of Libby and Charles Bombach, who report that Oscar loves pizza, is quick to smile, and has shown himself to be a bit of a prankster! He also has really enjoyed riding in an old golf cart belonging to the Bombachs.

As we go to press, 16-year-old Edith Alvarado and her mother, Leticia, are expected to arrive from El Salvador on May 21. Edith also is scheduled to undergo cardiac surgery. During the Alvarados' stay in Albuquerque, Susan Tingey and her

husband, Jeff Garvin, will be welcoming them into their home.

Best wishes to Oscar for his continued recovery and to Edith on her upcoming surgery. And many thanks to our dedicated host families, Libby and Charles Bombach and Susan Tingey and Jeff Garvin, who have truly given the gift of health to these young people.



Fatima Beltran

Fatima Beltran and Manuel Juarez are undergoing treatment at Sutter Memorial Hospital in Sacramento. Dr. Richard Mainwaring performed cardiac surgery on the two children on May 31.

Podiatry Mission to Guatemala

"Everyone was so appreciative of everything [we] did for them!" exclaimed RN David Silva, who accompanied an HTC-SW podiatry team to Guatemala City in January 2007. Dr. Rolando Cadena led the medical team from New Mexico that included a nurse and a technician. Dr. Cadena was joined by Dr. Kenneth Lopez, a podiatrist from San Francisco in addition to Drs.

Vicki Anton-Athens and Larry Fallat, both podiatrists; Drs. Kris Krannit and Kent Cramer, residents; and RN Julie Rickle-all from Michigan. Dr. Pierce Cornelius, an anesthesiologist from Arizona, and his wife, Wilene, an RN, were also members of this team. HTC-SW Executive Director Rita Lavin traveled with the group as well. All those people plus 19 pieces of luggage containing medical supplies

and toys-quite a delegation to help heal the children!

The team worked out of San Sebastian Hospital, which is located in an older part of Guatemala City, where all the buildings are constructed right up to the sidewalk, and the sidewalks run right along the streets. Although the facility is small and a bit run down, it was adequate

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Follow-up Yields Results

Often an intense health intervention—such as a single surgical procedure—is sufficient to cure a child. In other cases, the healing process takes place over a long period and requires consistent follow-up. Such is the case with Jesus Teran, a six-year-old boy from a small village outside Milagro, Ecuador.

Jesus was born with “prune belly” syndrome, a rare congenital anomaly that primarily affects the urinary tract and kidneys. He was first seen in Ecuador as an infant by a physician traveling with an HTC team. Doctors in his native country were unable to assist Jesus, but after hearing about his case Dr. Mike Richey arranged for surgery at Shriners Hospital in Houston about a year later.

Jesus was two when he arrived in Houston for the first time. At that point, he was so weakened by his syndrome and its accompanying chronic infections that doctors initially feared he would not survive the long, complicated operation.

But this plucky boy responded well to the care he received at Shriners, and doctors felt confident enough in his progress that they decided to go ahead with the eight-hour surgery. Jesus also received antibiotic therapy to combat his infection. He eventually went home to his family in Ecuador, but he has returned to Houston several times for additional treatment.

During his latest visit in February 2007, Jesus underwent tests at Shriners, and doctors made changes in his medications. After a month’s stay in Houston, Jesus traveled back to his village.

A Long-Term Commitment

A special part of Jesus’ story is his host family. Melanie and Tom Lux have welcomed Jesus into their home during each



**Jesus Teran with Erica Hanover,
Surgical Services, Shriners Hospital**

of his visits to Houston and keep in touch regularly with his mother. Melanie reports that she and Tom have been able to make arrangements while Jesus is with them for him to attend a school that can accommodate his medical needs. He has done well academically and this year received a certificate of excellence as the best student in his class!

And there is more evidence of how this little boy is thriving: When Jesus first arrived in Houston as a two-year-old, he was at less than the fifth percentile in terms of height and weight. Today, he is at the 50th percentile.

Many thanks to Melanie, Tom, and their two children, Alex and Ben, and to all the doctors and staff at Shriners who continue to help this child lead a better, healthier life.

Providing follow-up care is an important part of the healing process and a key aspect of HTC’s efforts. In the case of Jesus Teran, it has been critical. Your contributions are essential—please help us to help other children like Jesus. Thank you.

Did You Know . . .

. . . That HTC-SW contributed funds to send a container of medical supplies and equipment to Ethiopia? The supplies will be used by the Ethiopia Pediatric Cardiac Center, located in the capital of Addis Ababa. This new facility, which is nearing completion, has been built by the Children’s Heart Fund of Ethiopia (CHFE), a charitable, non-government group committed to healing children with heart diseases. CHFE is dedicated to providing care to children throughout Ethiopia, where the incidence of pediatric heart disease is alarmingly high.

Thanks to donors like you, HTC-SW continues to provide support to children’s health programs where there is need. Your generosity helps us to help children around the corner, around the world.

The Best Present of All!

How many times have you complained “I’ve got too much stuff!” Or maybe it’s a friend or neighbor telling you that they’ve just rented a self-storage unit to handle the overflow from their garage. In fact, revenues for the self-storage industry top \$22.6 billion annually, according to the Self Storage Association, trade industry group. That’s a lot of stuff!

Drowning in Our Possessions

If you are suffocating from clutter, here’s a solution. The next time your birthday or a holiday rolls around, instead of the usual present—do you really need one more tie or pair of gloves?—ask your family and friends to make a donation in your name to Healing the Children. That’s what Yale-New Haven ICU RN Kathy McKiernan asked for this past Christmas. “I really didn’t need one more thing,” Kathy explains. “I would much rather someone put their money to better use by donating to an organization like HTC-SW. I’ve seen first hand how such groups can make a difference so, in lieu of a gift, I requested that my sister give to HTC, which she did. What better way to express the true meaning of Christmas than to help a child to health?”

Thank you, Kathy, for thinking of HTC-SW. For those of you who are reluctant to ask for a donation instead of a gift, remember that your request makes it easy for the giver, and it sure beats adding to the clutter!



Mother and daughter helped by HTC

(Continued from Page 1)

**On the Way to Health**

for the task at hand.

San Sebastian, however, is a maternity and pediatric hospital and therefore does not have the necessary instruments for podiatry surgery so each of the physicians brought his or her own. Dr. Cadena even brought along an autoclave as the hospital had just a single very large unit that could run only at night because of the building's electrical capacity.

During four days of surgery, about 44 children, ranging in age from 18 months to 18 years underwent operations for a variety of foot deformities, including club feet. In fact, the residents from the Michigan team, who were traveling to Guatemala for the first time, were amazed at the variety of foot deformities-including conditions rarely encountered in the United States.

The Bravest of the Brave

HTC-SW Executive Director Rita Lavin, commenting on the courage shown by the children who were facing new and often strange procedures and people, reported that they are "all so darn brave. One little girl-she couldn't have been any more than two or three years old had to wait for some time in the hallway with her mom. We gave her some crayons and paper and she just smiled the whole time-never a complaint or a whimper. She even gave me a kiss! I'll never forget her."

Another young girl arrived for

screening accompanied by her father on the second day of surgery. Dressed in native garb, she was barefoot except that thick bandages covered portions of her feet below her ankles-the only part of her feet that she could walk on. "There was no room anywhere for her to sit-every spot was taken," Rita explained, "so we had to place her in the

**Waiting Patiently**

recovery room, where she got a very close up look at those children just coming out of surgery. But again, she never complained or showed any fear. She just quietly played with a bear that we gave her and smiled the entire time she was there. Fortunately, we were able to help her."

Smoothing the Way

Thanks to donations of stuffed animals, toy cars-brought by RN Wilene

Cornelius from Arizona-and coloring materials, HTC staffers were able to play Santa Claus. Such gifts are very helpful in comforting the children and making them feel at home. Because of a grant from the Swett Foundation, HTC also was able to give each family 120 quetzales-about \$15-to help defray some of their travel and lodging expenses. Many of the families, who are very poor, travel long distances to bring their children for screening, and this assistance was gratefully-often tearfully-received.

Surprise gifts were the fleece blankets purchased on the spot by Sam Silva, David's brother. The children coming out of surgery are usually cold, and when the hospital ran out of blankets, Sam just opened his wallet and arranged for a delivery of 30 blankets, which the kids were then allowed to keep. For families who have very little, such gestures mean a great deal, and the recipients were not hesitant to express their feelings.

Many people helped to make this trip a success. Thank you! To all the medical personnel who traveled to Guatemala, our deepest thanks for donating your time and talents to help children in need.

**What a Cutie!**

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Thank you...

...To the Del Norte Rotary Foundation of Albuquerque for its generous donation in support of HTC-SW's Hardship Relief Program, which helps to meet the health needs of local children.

...To Libby and Charles Bombach for hosting Oscar Hernandez and his mother, Yasmin ...To Susan Tingey and Jeff Garvin for taking Edith Alvarado and her mother, Leticia, into their home.

...To all the volunteer host families and friends who have agreed to make a home, provide transportation, and offer comfort to our visitors from El Salvador.

...To American Airlines for donating airline tickets for the children traveling to the United States for medical treatment.

...To all the medical personnel who have helped Oscar and Edith including-

- Staff members of Presbyterian Hospital who have been involved in the children's care and who have helped make this program possible.
- Dentists Dr. Joe Meckler and Dr. Robert Giannini.
- Pediatricians Dr. Tom Rothfeld and Dr. Bebe Han.
- Surgeon Dr. Cark Lagerstrom.
- Cardiologist Dr. Steve Yabek.
- Tri-Core Reference Labs for donating lab services.
- Anesthesia Associates for donating anesthesia services.
- Radiology Associates for donating radiology services.

Thank you all for giving the gift of health to children around the corner, around the world.



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