

# *Solidarity Bridge*

The Chicago Catholic Missions  
Medical ✿ Enterprise ✿ Education

Medical & Enterprise Missions to Cochabamba, Bolivia  
February 25<sup>th</sup> to March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2005

## **On our 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> missions we:**

- **saw 351 patients at a rural clinic and school, a nursing home, and Hospital Cuschieri**
- **performed 43 surgeries**
- **delivered 15 large boxes of medications, surgical supplies and equipment valued at \$126,100**
- **supported K'anchay, the cooperative who supplies our fair trade clothing, in setting up their new workshop**

On this our fourth journey to Cochabamba, we included both a Medical and an Enterprise Mission group. Cochabamba is a city set in a valley of the Andes Mountains at about 8400 feet above sea level. The mission groups worked very hard in their time there.

Our team had 20 people, including two enterprise missionaries. The medical team brought two general surgeons, two anesthesiologists, a cardiologist, an internist, a pediatrician and an emergency room physician. The nursing staff headed by Kate Scott had two surgical nurses and four other nurses. We had two interpreters and our pastoral team of three made up the remainder of the team. Overall, the team was wonderful and worked well together.

## **MEDICAL MISSION**

**Surgeries:** In just five and a half surgery days, our medical team successfully performed 43 surgeries. Patients ranged in age from 14 to 80 years old. All were pre-screened by social services and found to be unable to afford their much-needed surgeries. If the mission had not come, they would still be suffering.

18 of the surgeries were hernia repairs. Many patients stated that they had lived with these hernias for over 10 years, causing serious health problems and preventing many from working. One of our surgeons said that he had “never seen anything like these in the United States”.

13 of the surgeries were laparoscopic gall bladder surgeries. We had previously performed the first laparoscopic surgeries ever done at the Cuschieri hospital on our last trip in 2004. Beyond eliminating a very painful condition for these patients, the laparoscopic surgery allows them to recover and return to work quickly. Normally in Bolivia, these patients would have had an open gall bladder surgery (if they had the money to pay for it) and that recovery is at least 6 weeks, making their financial situations even worse.

Because our general surgeons for this trip were both endocrinology specialists, they were able to perform four delicate thyroid surgeries. Drs. Snyder and Lee worked together on these cases in order to provide the finest of care. All patients are recovering well.

Two of the most challenging surgeries for our physicians came as emergency cases. One patient appeared at the emergency room of the hospital, complaining of severe pain. The hospital physicians recognized that he had some type of bowel obstruction and recommended emergency surgery. The patient refused the surgery at first because he could not afford it. Providentially, our mission was on site to perform the surgery at no charge. Diagnosed with a perforated ilium, the patient would have died had we not been there to do the surgery that day.

The other emergency case came from our outpatient clinic. A female patient came to see our internal medicine doctor, Dr. Watson, for a slight cough. During the exam, he discovered a large lump in her left breast. Our mission team then facilitated a mammogram for the patient that showed she had an advanced stage of cancer and needed immediate surgery. Our surgeons performed a mastectomy two days later. The Bolivian oncology surgeon who was present in the surgery offered to take over her case and follow-up treatment.

**Outpatient Clinics:** Our clinical team consisted of a cardiologist, pediatrician, internal medicine specialist, and emergency room physician. Most of the patients arrived to the Hospital Cuschieri, having learned about our mission from the archbishop's office who publicized our arrival in poor parishes. Two of our physicians also went to the *countryside* and saw students in a rural school. Our emergency physician, Dr. Klobucnik, even returned for a second day to be able to see more children. Dr. Watson and his wife Rita Watson, a nurse, also went to see patients at Asilo Buen Pastor, a nursing home for the elderly who have been abandoned by their families.

Not only did the physicians diagnose a wide variety of illnesses that were treated with free medicines that the mission brought with them, they also diagnosed and hospitalized five different patients that needed immediate medical care. Our doctors found patients with advanced breast cancer, hyperplastic prostate, meningitis, and acute tuberculosis and even one child with an acute case of bronchial asthma. All were hospitalized and treated, paid for by the mission.

**Education:** In addition to the teaching that happens in the interactions with the hospital personnel in the operating room, Dr. George Lederhaas, one of our anesthesiologists, provided a series of lectures on pediatric anesthesia and pain management to the Bolivian Anesthesiology Association. His lectures, over two evenings, were attended by over 45 physicians. Dr. Robert Klobucnik, an emergency room physician, engaged the Hospital Cuschieri staff in a process of assessing and developing their emergency room procedures and equipment.

**Donated Materials:** We delivered a great quantity of donated antibiotics, analgesics, anesthesia supplies, drugs and other surgical supplies. The value of these was over \$50,000. Through our new Heart Surgery Project we delivered donations of 26 leads and 19 pacemakers to our partners in Santa Cruz and Cochabamba at a value of \$66,100. In addition, over \$10,000 in donated cardiac surgical supplies went to Hospital Belga. The total donated materials totaled \$126,100.

## **ENTERPRISE MISSION**

Enterprise missionaries Bruce Leech and Isaac Goff and Solidarity Bridge staff, Juan Hinojosa, executive director, and Maria Elena Lozano, our coordinator in Bolivia, met with several of the co-operatives in Bolivia to review their organizations and market potential. We also worked on moving forward with becoming an official non-profit in Bolivia. This will greatly facilitate our operations there.

Though we met with several of the cooperatives with whom we work, K'anchay has become our primary supplier. The enterprise team met with them to discuss setting up a new workshop location and the purchasing of new sewing equipment. Solidarity Bridge agreed to loan them the \$12,185 for these start-up costs. We also interviewed potential candidates for an administrator and accountant for K'anchay. K'anchay will be fulfilling our orders for Solidarity Bridge Clothing, our fair trade uniform project for Chicago Catholic schools, and for Dharma Trading, Co., Mr. Goff's mail order business. Other potential markets for K'anchay clothing would be logo shirts for business or for other charities and uniforms for schools outside Chicago.

## **SUMMARY**

Overall it was a very good trip and we accomplished a lot. The medical mission ran smoothly and was praised by the Hospital Cuschieri for their kind treatment of the patients as well as their team work with their Bolivian counterparts. The Enterprise mission made many advances in helping K'anchay to move to a new level of efficiency and productivity.

## **SPRING 2005 TEAM MEMBERS**

Mr. Steven	Encinas	Surgical nurse
Mr. Isaac	Goff	Enterprise missionary
Ms. Rene	Goff	Translator
Fr. Donald	Headley	Pastoral team
Dr. Juan	Hinojosa	Coordinating team
Dr. Robert	Klobucnik	Emergency room physician
Dr. George	Lederhaas	Anesthesiologist
Dr. Theresa	Lee	Surgeon
Mr. Bruce	Leech	Enterprise missionary
Dr. Daniel	Lum	Pediatrician
Ms. Mary Agnes	Murphy	Medical mission team leader
Ms. Jennifer	Peterlin	Nurse
Ms. Ellen	Powell	Nurse
Ms. Beatriz	Ramirez	Nurse
Ms. Kate	Scott	Nursing coordinator and surgical nurse
Dr. Sam	Snyder	Surgeon
Dr. Nancy	Streitmatter	Cardiologist
Dr. John	Watson	Internist
Ms. Rita	Watson	Nurse
Dr. Daniel	Yousif	Anesthesiologist

Mission Expenses

Airline costs	\$19,755.19
Living expense	\$6,092.32
Participant materials	\$728.02
Shipping	\$532.23
Patient care	\$6,894.22
Administrative	<u>\$3,400.00</u>
	\$37,401.98