



December 19, 2006

Friends of MACLA,

As this year closes I am again moved by how much you and our medical teams have answered the call for help from our third world patients. Our patients have gone through a vast array of human suffering and you have heartily shouldered their burdens making them normal and easing their pains.

We are embarking on MACLA's 23rd year having provided free reconstructive plastic surgery and continued general medical care on the poor of the Dominican Republic and Bolivia. To date we have operated on almost 6,000 patients and provided various medical needs to another 15,000 or more. Most of our surgical patients are children with cleft lips and palate, facial deformities, hand reconstructive problems and debilitating burns. This November we added another subspecialty plastic surgical procedure providing ear reconstruction.

Ear reconstruction is a time consuming operation where the patients have congenital or traumatic deformities of the ears, many with no remnants of an ear at all. Through rib cartilage grafts and several operative stages, an ear can be made whole again.

Pictured is young 8 year old Hugo that our University of Chicago and Kansas City teams operated on in November who had most of the basic elements of an ear, but it was crumpled and malformed. Because other children were making fun of his deformity, his mother was considering taking him out of his meager school. After just one operation and his bandage still attached three days postop, he has a normal appearance and is thankful. We will have more ear reconstruction photos in the spring after our other staged operations are completed.

We also had a generous donation of much needed pain medications this November that helped many patients in the cancer hospital in Santo Domingo to suffer less and die with some dignity. They had little or no relief without these medicines.

We're on the move here at MACLA planning our huge surgical/medical mission in February to Santo Domingo and will return there in November for more ears. Bolivia is finally more stable and our team will be attacking La Paz in late spring.

You have helped us change lives and make dramatic improvements in healthcare for those patients with little hope and no means. Please continue supporting these programs as your generosity makes a heck of a difference.

Thanks and blessed holidays.

Sincerely,

Thomas E. Geraghty, M.D.

PS: Terry Liggett, a great supporter of MACLA, a lay volunteer and our good friend passed away this September after a year long battle with lung cancer. His wife of 41 years, Maj-Britt Liggett, essentially runs the MACLA organization as our most staunch volunteer. Please keep them in your prayers. We miss Terry a lot.