



May 25, 2007

Dear Friends of MACLA,

It has been a busy year for MACLA focusing on providing the best medical care for our patients and expanding our programs to give them free reconstructive plastic surgery. In Santo Domingo this February we operated on 217 patients, provided medical care and consultations for another 850 patients. Most patients had cleft lip and palate problems, facial and hand deformities and a myriad of significant contractures and problems from burns. This is also the second year we have taken care of hypospadias patients. If you could spend just one day at our clinics and walk through our operating room theaters, you would be humbled and moved as to what our patients suffer and what good care you have provided in backing our medical teams. The hardships our patients endure just to get to our clinics and then to finally be treated, boggle the mind and keeps us thankful and appreciative of our own spoiled American ways.

The last week of our surgical mission the schedule was completely full with no time left to help any others. With two days left, young four month old Ranier Antonio Pinala whose mother was weak, sweating and sobbing, had traveled by foot, burro, bus and car for two days, desperate to have her boy's cleft lip and palate repaired. She begged us to help him. Ranier was surprisingly plump and healthy as his small family and hillside community in the far reaches of the island sacrificed their food and money just to get him to the clinic in this healthy state. We just couldn't turn them away. Two days after his surgery, repairing his cleft lip and nasal deformity, we sent him back to his village well with his mother sobbing for joy.

Handsome Eduardo Montoya a 10 year old Dominican boy came to the clinic this February 7 years post repair of his cleft lip and palate. He and his mother were elated that he didn't need any further surgery at this time. His photos are in our picture collage.

Young Stalin Migulina, 4 years old and not a communist, was involved in a house fire from a garage explosion and had burns over 75% of his body. Through some primitive adequate care in a far away hospital in the Dominican Republic he survived. He was sent to us the last week for repair of his severe burn scar contractures that have pulled and malformed all of his extremities one month after his injuries. We took him to the operating room but just couldn't get an IV in because of his malnutrition and dehydration. As we took him out of the operating room and were ready to tell his mother that we couldn't do anything, but we would desperately try to help her, waiting in our clinic was Sister Babs (Beatrice Barry, founder of the Inn of the Good Samaritan) who we have worked with for the last 20 years. She knew of a local surgeon that had helped some of our patients in the past and phoned him immediately. What a miracle! The next day we transferred Stalin to that surgeon's hospital where they fattened him up, took care of the nonhealing burn wounds and readied him for major surgery. Sister Babs helped us send Stalin to the Shriner's Hospital in Boston for all of his grafting and extensive reconstructive surgery. He has had several surgeries, is now doing great and will be back in his country sometime this summer. We'll see him again next February.

Through our local Cerner Corporation First Hand Foundation, we were able to help one of Sister Babs' patients, Freddy Montero, in treating his huge facial hemangioma (blood vessel tumor) at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. It is impossible to take care of this type of problem in the Dominican Republic and there are only a few specialty areas in the United States that can help. So Freddy is in Philadelphia getting treated by their experts thanks to our contacts with Cerner's First Hand Foundation. We are thankful for their generosity.

MACLA's future includes a return this summer to LaPaz, Bolivia to continue our reconstructive surgery program. Dr Towles team will be working at the Military Hospital which should be safe. We are resuming our reconstructive ear surgical program in Santo Domingo this September adding myringotomies and inner ear surgery through experts from Chicago University. A hypospadias clinic at the Children's Hospital in Santo Domingo is being set up with the help of an international urological group. We continue to have a plethora of needy patients.

Without you and your generous gifts, none of this would be possible. Please continue to support MACLA—our patients' problems seem overwhelming to them, but you continue to make their dreams reality for a normal life. Thanks for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Thomas E. Geraghty, M.D.

PS: In our December's newsletter we might dwell a bit on some of our medical and Peace Corps volunteer's who give up their time, vacations, funds and energy to be our medical troops on the ground making MACLA's programs effective and efficient. You'd be proud to know them.