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Dear friends,

2016 was a truly amazing year of growth for Surgeons of Hope. Our program of surgical/training missions brought many life-saving cardiac surgeries to the children of Latin America. February brought our first mission to Costa Rica, an impressive success that not only advanced our triple-phase work in that country, but also heightened our presence in Central America. In Nicaragua, the local medical team is now performing four surgeries per week on their own. Since its opening just three years ago, our new Pediatric Heart Center of Nicaragua has come a long way. In addition to teams from the US, we've brought teams from all over the world, including Spain, Portugal, Belgium, France, and Colombia. Over 16,000 children have been screened, of whom more than 400 have been operated on. The positive impact on those children's families is significant at so many levels, but the common denominator is Surgeons of Hope.

A surgical team from the Gregorio Marañón hospital in Madrid came for a second consecutive year to our Heart Center in Managua and, in collegial exchange, several Nicaraguan doctors attended training seminars in Madrid. This promising partnership will ensure the sustainability of the heart center into the future.

The challenges continue, However. Our medical teams have dealt with many hurdles. Problems include aging equipment (ventilators in ICU), urgent waiting lists of patients, new program in Costa Rica, limited financial resources in the target locations, lack of catheterization and people trained in that specialty, and sometimes even the lack of or low supply of essential medicines.

Despite all of these limitations and more, our teams went above and beyond to save hundreds of children and to train local heart specialists. To illustrate, something remarkable happened in March. During the week of a mission, a blue baby was born at the local children's hospital in Managua. A blue baby will only live for a day or two. This baby was not on the scheduled list for surgery, but his desperate family hand-carried him across the parking lot to the Heart Center. When our team learned of this newborn in trouble, they prioritized him and saved his life. It took 15 hours of surgery that day to operate on the two children who were scheduled and this additional baby. If Surgeons of Hope had not been there, the outcome would have been sadly different.

Thanks to support from new friends from Costa Rica and Nicaragua, our 2016 Gala at the Pierre Hotel was a tremendous success. A few months later, our event at the UN headquarters in September was an inspiring night! Thanks to the interest of major media outlets including Univision, we raised our public profile and greatly increased our donor base. And thanks to an extremely generous bequest, we are now in a stronger financial situation than ever. Through the generosity of all of these supporters, we have raised close to one million dollars in 2016, which is a milestone record for us!

We have gained momentum thanks to your support, saving more children this year than in any prior year. Thanks to your generosity, we expect that number to grow in the coming year. We are deeply grateful for your spirit, dedication, and commitment to Surgeons of Hope. We are excited and ready for what the future will bring, with your help!



## Missions throughout 2015 and 2016

