



Revitalized and Ready: Surgeons of Hope Returns to Full Operations

In 2022, Surgeons of Hope resumed missions after a three-year pandemic hiatus, successfully organizing two surgical missions and one training exchange. SOH also recruited a new Mission and Operations Director who began in March 2022 and immediately set to work organizing missions and reenergizing volunteers and partners.

Mexico

In July 2022, Surgeons of Hope embarked on a critical mission to Mexico, specifically to the Hospital Infantil de México Federico Gómez (HIMFG) to conduct an assessment. The hospital's rich history and dedicated staff were an inspiration to the team, making it a privilege to be invited. The mission was headed by the renowned Dr. Antonio Cabrera, with Dr. Eric Griffiths and Emilee Glenn from Utah as part of the assessment team. Richard Duron and Carolina Churchill, representatives from SOH, were also present for the assessment.

During the mission, the team conducted an extensive evaluation of the hospital's pediatric cardiac program, meeting with various medical teams, including administration, cardiology, intensive care, surgery, and neonatal personnel. One of the primary objectives of the mission was to assess the hospital's ability to implement an ECMO program.

The mission proved to be especially significant as the visiting surgeon was asked to scrub into a life-saving surgery to correct a Tetralogy of Fallot. Congenital heart disease (CHD) is the second leading cause of death among children under five years of age in Mexico, with a higher incidence rate of 8-12 per 1,000 live births compared to the global average of 6-8 per 1,000 live births. Despite several competent pediatric cardiac programs in Mexico, those programs are not sufficient to accommodate all children with CHD, leaving a long list of children awaiting these life-saving interventions.



Paraguay



In December 2022, SoH completed our first surgical mission after the pandemic. Led by Dr. Dominique Metras, a team of medical professionals from France arrived in Paraguay on December 11, to perform corrective surgeries for congenital heart defects on nine children at the Hospital Pediátrico "Niños de Acosta Ñu" in San Lorenzo.



The team of two surgeons, a cardiologist, an anesthesiologist, a perfusionist, and three ICU nurses, worked closely with the hospital's cardiology team to ensure the success of the surgeries. The two Surgeons of Hope representatives who accompanied the team shared administrative expertise with their in-country partners, including representatives from the Ministry of Health.

For the nine children and their families, SOH surgeries brought a new sense of hope and joy during the holiday season. Pictured below, all nine children are thriving.



Fernando, 10 yrs



Virgilio, 1 yr



Maria Angelica, 2 yrs



Alan, 2 yrs



Samara, 1 yr



Maria Ines, 2 yrs



Eliam, 1 yr



Nidia, 10 mos



Lucca, 11 mos

Paraguayan Nurses Receive Specialized Training in Spain

The training of four nurses from Hospital Pediátrico Niños de Acosta Ñu in Paraguay was a success. They were able to acquire best practices and knowledge in post-operative care for children who undergo open heart surgery during their one-month exchange training at the Hospital General Universitario Gregorio Marañón.

Specialized care for children who have undergone heart surgery is extremely important. Children need to be monitored closely in the intensive care unit (ICU) for several days or even weeks. During this time, they may require mechanical ventilation, medications to support their heart function and blood pressure, and careful monitoring of their fluid and electrolyte balance. By providing expert critical care during this period, the medical team can help reduce the risk of complications and improve the child's chances of a successful recovery. Access to specialized cardiac critical care for children following heart surgery is a paramount need.

In addition to the hands-on critical care training, the nurses met with a representative from Menudos Corazones, a non-profit organization based in Madrid, that provides a variety of resources, including peer support, educational materials, and advocacy initiatives to families with children who have congenital heart defects. The staff at Menudos Corazones provided the nurses with crucial resources for families in Paraguay to understand how to care for their children once they return home.

When they returned home, the nurses shared the knowledge with their peers and proved to be essential resources during the SOH surgical mission in December, thanks to the valuable insights they gained during their training. We extend our gratitude to Edwards LifeSciences for their support and to the hospital team for hosting our nurses.

We are dedicated and steadfast in our commitment.

With the assistance of our supporters, we were able to reactivate our missions and training programs in 2022. Our focus in 2023 will be in Costa Rica and Paraguay where we will conduct 5-7 Surgical & Training missions.

To remain in touch with us in 2023, visit our website to read our latest news at www.surgeonsofhope.org.

