



Works with rural and impoverished communities in Honduras as they seek to improve health and access to health care.

Happy Birthday, Missoula Medical Aid

25 Years deserves a story

At the end of October, 1998, Hurricane Mitch paused over Honduras and dropped as many as 50 inches of rain in a few days. Floods destroyed roads and bridges and neighborhoods. They wiped out entire crops. Eleven thousand people died, and hundreds of thousands lost their homes, their jobs, and their food supplies.

In Missoula, a group of nurses and their boss, Bill Woody, sat in the little house-turned-office of Nightingale Nursing, near the corner of Higgins and South. They read about Mitch in the newspaper. They wondered what they could do. They made some phone calls to organizations working in Honduras, like Save the Children, who said if they could bring a team of skilled volunteers and supplies, they could be put to work.

Within days, volunteers started arriving at the office carrying old suitcases filled with donated medical supplies. And within three weeks, on Thanksgiving Day, 1998, a team of 17 -- doctors, nurses, interpreters, a builder, and two journalists -- boarded a flight to Honduras.

In the following three months, Missoula Medical Aid would send three more teams, a total of 51 different volunteers, to help with disaster relief and

medical aid.

Then our mission began to turn from disaster relief, to building sustainable partnerships with Honduran organizations that could share our mission: *"To work with impoverished communities in Honduras as they seek to improve health and access to health care."*

Our work in Honduras now goes back a generation. We've sent well over 300 different volunteers. Thousands upon thousands of Hondurans have received general health care and surgeries, dental and eye care, health-care training, agricultural training and supplies, access to nutrition programs, and small business training and grants.

We've worked hard to make our efforts complementary to the ongoing labor of our Honduran partners. This means the effect of your financial help is magnified many times -- not only by the hundreds of MMA volunteer hours, but by the contributions and commitment of our Honduran partners.

Almost every time I go to Honduras -- and I've been on 44 of the 65 teams -- I run into somebody up high in the mountains on a dirt road who comes up to me and thanks us for helping their daughter, their son, their mother, their father, or their family. The health care, education, nutrition, farming, and business-development programs you have supported over the years have made a big difference in a lot of lives.

–David Cates, Executive Director, [Missoula Medical Aid](#)

Let's celebrate at the 25th anniversary at the [Legendary Missoula Medical Aid Salsa Ball](#) **on Dec. 9, 7 pm @ the ZACC.**

It's a dance. It's a reunion. It's a party. [Tickets are available HERE.](#) And if you can't come, feel free to go to our [WEBSITE](#) and contribute anything you can.

Yours,

David Cates, executive director, Missoula Medical Aid missoulamedicalaid.org

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OR SEND A CHECK TO: PO BOX 903, MISSOULA, MT 59806



TEAM 65, SEPTEMBER, 2023

The nine members of the Team 65 Rural Medical team, left to right, Chris Rost, PA; Leila Avery, pharmacist; Danny Heineman, pharmacy helper; Sara Heineman, NP; Doris Martinez, MMA Honduran Operations Manager; David Cates, MMA Executive Director; Mireya Ruiz, interpreter; Alejandra Muñoz Urquía, interpreter; and Martin Horn, MMA board member, and pharmacy helper. The team worked in five rural clinics alongside Honduran doctors, nurses, a dentist, and rural health promoters. They treated almost 700 patients.

We also leave behind money that helps our chronic and critically ill patients get follow-up care.



THE LA ESPERANZA LIONS CLUB DENTAL AND EYE CLINICS

In this three-way partnership, Missoula Medical Aid pays the part-time salary of a Honduran dentist and optometric technician, the government of Honduras pays for a dental intern, and the La Esperanza Lions Club manages and supplies a clinic that serves thousands of low-income patients every year.



RURAL GENERAL HEALTH BRIGADES

MMA rural health brigades do hundreds of basic health consultations a week. Our volunteers contribute their time and talents, and supply medicine and equipment, while Honduran rural health providers see patients alongside us, do health-education talks, give vaccinations, and provide clinical and logistical help.



HELPING FARMS AND BUSINESSES PROSPER

The story of The Pueblo Viejo producers is a typical one. They started with a corn mill bought with a grant from Missoula Medical Aid. The second year, with money they earned from the mill, they bought seed potatoes. The next year, MMA helped with fertilizer and a small pump for irrigation. After four years of growing and selling potatoes, the group bought a second corn mill. They distribute their profits to members, and put aside some for micro-loans.

We have helped dozens of groups like this one in Pueblo Viejo start, and grow, small businesses.



SPECIALISTS IN THE HOSPITAL

For more than twenty years, MMA has sent orthopedic operating teams to

They also help ensure follow-up care for our sickest patients.



PROVIDING MEDICINES

Every medical team we send to Honduras leaves behind basic medicines to be used in the rural health centers in the communities where our teams work.



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work in the La Esperanza public hospital. Our long-time volunteers--orthopedists, anesthesiologists, PA's, circulating nurses and surgical technicians--have formed strong working ties with the hospital staff, and with the thousands of people who have been treated with these often life-changing surgeries. The Hospital Dr. Enrique Aguilar Cerrato provides plenty of staff time, the operating room, the pre-op exams, ex-rays, tests, post-op care, and a lot of help with paperwork! Over the years we've also sent an ophthalmologist, an ENT, a radiologist, and a urologist--and dedicated, oft-returning, OB-Gyn's.

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