

MEXICO MEDICAL MISSIONS



DISPATCHES FROM THE MISSION FIELD Dr. Michael Berkeley

A young Tarahumara woman born with clubfeet sings while walking on feet that are no longer crooked. A teenager who fears amputation from a horrible gunshot wound to his forearm smiles when he sees his wound healed and his fingers start to move again. A mother receives her child after surgery and smiles as she sees him for the first time without a cleft lip. An elderly Tarahumara smiles as the patches are removed from his eyes and he sees for the first time in many years. A formerly illiterate woman smiles when she realizes that she can read a Bible story in her own native language. A whole community smiles while receiving food after a bad harvest.

Smiles don't come easily to the Tarahumara. Their lives are difficult – and made even more difficult by their animist beliefs. Superficially this means that they are concerned with appeasing spirits but, on a deeper level, animism reinforces a fatalist mindset; and fatalism breeds hopelessness. A Tarahumara might think, "The world is against me, the spirits are capricious, and the Big Creator God is distant and doesn't care about me."

There is a verse in the Bible that contradicts everything that a Tarahumara has believed throughout his or her life:

"For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope." (Jeremiah 29:11).

These words of comfort were written by the prophet Jeremiah to the Israelites who were driven out of their homeland and into exile by the Babylonian empire. The Tarahumara were also sent into exile by the Spanish Conquistadors who drove them out of their homeland in the fertile plains of Chihuahua and into a hard-scrabble existence in the rugged Sierra Madre mountains.

We tell them of a Creator God that has not abandoned them. He is not far off nor is he capricious. He loves the Tarahumara people and wishes them blessings, not curses.

And more and more we see smiles on the faces of these precious people.

Thanks for your prayers and support

-Mike Berkeley



Dr. Mike and Maci Berkeley

CATARACT SURGERY

In May we conducted another cataract surgery outreach. Dr. John Odette and Dr. Jonathan Shader joined us and were able to perform over 45 surgeries. Alcon, the large eye surgery company, provided tens of thousands of dollars' worth of intra-ocular lenses and other supplies. UIM Aviation pilots Brent Dodd and Aaron Varela flew in dozens of patients from remote communities.

The entire hospital staff - everyone from nurses to cooks, worked tirelessly to care for the hundreds of people that showed up seeking eye care. Pastor Jacob and Chaplain Abram shared the Gospel to the crowds outside the hospital. And when it was all over, we gave thanks to God for His provision and protection.

The next eye surgery outreach is this November. Thanks to our loyal supporters who donated the funds to buy a new operating microscope which will make this upcoming outreach possible.



WE DID IT!

In 2015, Mexico Medical Missions had served the Tarahumara people for fifteen years. God had assembled a remarkable team of talented and dedicated persons, and we were very thankful for His provision and protection. As we looked to the future, we realized that our main facility, Hospital Misión Tarahumara, needed upgrades after fifteen years of hard use. We embarked on a ten-year program called “**Vision 2025**” and asked you, our supporters, to help us in this endeavor.

Now, as 2025 approaches, virtually all our goals have been met. Everything from anesthesia machines to aircraft has been upgraded. More housing for our burgeoning staff was built. The new solar system has allowed us to “cut the failing Mexican grid, and us with free power. The Health

UPDATE

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cord” from the Mexican electrical now provides and reliable Community Evangelism

program expanded into more villages, and our new mobile clinic brings healthcare to remote communities.

The literacy and Bible translation work has grown. Over 20,000 MP3 players loaded with Tarahumara Christian music and Bible lessons have been distributed, and we continue with the goal of putting one in every Tarahumara household.

Next year we will be celebrating our 25th anniversary. This is certainly a milestone, and we are pondering our next steps. What will the next ten years bring? What should our goals be? Certainly, our main goal will continue to be providing Healing and Hope for the Tarahumara people. To make this mission sustainable we need to continue developing strategic partnerships on both sides of the border. Mexico has a growing philanthropy base which views our work as a “good investment.” And more American individuals, organizations and foundations recognize that we are excellent stewards of the resources they send us.

So this will be the last Vision 2025 update. A heartfelt **THANKS** to all of you that made this amazing achievement possible. **BUT THE BEST IS YET TO BE!**



A POOR HARVEST FOR THE TARAHUMARA

Last year the rains came too late and too little. The corn and bean harvest was severely affected and by winter we started to see the signs of malnourishment, especially in the children. The Tarahumara are subsistence farmers, usually growing enough to feed their families with little or no surplus. Our agricultural missionary, Andrew Bornman and Community Health Evangelism director Jacob Sotelo are working to help the Tarahumara diversify and improve their crop yields; but this is a long term project and doesn't address the immediate food needs. Fortunately, we were able to distribute over twenty tons of food to some of the hardest hit communities.



TARAHUMARA SUBSISTANCE FARMING



30 FAMILIES RECEIVING FOOD

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DOCTORS WITH BORDERS

We have all heard of the organization “Doctors Without Borders” which sends medical teams to all parts of the planet. But at Hospital Misión Tarahumara we have established “Doctors WITH Borders” which includes all the skilled Mexican physicians from Chihuahua who have faithfully donated their time and talents to help us provide health and healing to the Tarahumara people of the Sierra Madre.

These doctors don't have the time or resources to travel to far flung parts of the world to help out. But the poorest people group in Mexico is only 200 miles away in the Sierra Madre Mountains.

Every month, anesthesiologist Javier Martinez-Pelayo, orthopaedic surgeons Roy Reyes and Ivan Hernandez and plastic surgeon Eric Sanchez along with support staff travel to Samachique for an intense weekend surgical outreach. They travel via a government supplied van and driver.

Being an ageing orthopaedic surgeon, I'm always looking for help. In the course of a normal month, I do all the “easy” surgeries and leave the hard stuff for the young guys. Also, as our staff travels through the remote villages of the Sierra Madre, we are always looking for cleft palates, burns and other deformities that the plastic surgeon can fix. In preparation for these monthly “brigadas” we start moving the patients to the hospital. They often come from very isolated villages that require we fly them in in one of our aircraft. Patients who live in more accessible villages would be brought in by 4WD vehicles.

And on Saturday morning we begin working on a dozen or so patients, with orthopaedic surgery going on in one operating room and plastic surgery in the other. It's an intense two days, and it is a special time for these visiting doctors and nurses from Chihuahua. As anesthesiologist Dr. Martinez Pelayo says, “This work is good for my soul.”



Doctors With Borders is a strategic long term partnership. Chihuahua is a modern city with some very good doctors, and Hospital Misión Tarahumara is as well-equipped as any hospital in the region. I can't take credit for this idea – it was the brainchild of Dr. Raul Favela, professor of plastic surgery at the University of Chihuahua, who told me years ago that his students needed to “learn how to serve.” We continue to look for other doctors willing to share their skills. It's a mutually beneficial arrangement – the Tarahumara get medical care and the docs get something “good for their souls.”

