

# YOU saved lives on the frontline in Peru



## Healing and Hope

### MISSION DOCTORS ASSOCIATION

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Join us in-person and online

July 2021

The global pandemic due to SARS-CoV-2 had significant impact in all parts of the world, especially in the locations already vulnerable and lacking in resources; the exact places where Mission Doctors Association serve.

One of those locations is in the remote Peruvian Amazon in the town of Santa Clotilde on the Napo River.

The partnership with the Vicariate Apostolico San José de Amazonas allows MDA to work with the Centro de Salud Santa Clotilde, the head of the Napo health network. The network includes the hospital in Santa Clotilde along with 13 outlying health posts along the river, which provides care to roughly 25,000 people in over 100 small communities.

At the end of 2019, the hospital was in need of new motors. One for the hospital ambulance boat to transport patients and the other was the motor for the hospital generator. The generator needed repairs after breaking down in October 2019 with the backup generator also malfunctioning in February 2020.

Timing is everything, by the grace of God; donations sent to Peru from MDA to assist in the response to the COVID pandemic, the Centro de Salud was able to purchase a new 60-horse power motor to help transport patients and the John Deer generator was repaired in March of 2020.

At the beginning of 2020, Zoom meetings between prior missionaries (continued on page 2)

# THE LITTLE MOTORS THAT COULD



*You kept the Victoria II's engine running!  
The boat has been vital, providing an ambulance and transporting essential supplies up and down the Napo River.*

(continued from page 1) and the current administration on the ground were held trying to make decisions on how to best approach the looming pandemic. Dr. Andrew Schectman with his wife and kids spent a year sabbatical from his Family Practice job in California working in Santa Clotilde in 2017 and was already experienced in treating COVID patients, as California was an early US hotspot.

His main recommendation was oxygen; find a way to make sure the hospital has oxygen. This seemingly small and simple recommendation proved to be invaluable in saving lives on the river. Donations for COVID helped purchase several oxygen concentrators, which were still available early in 2020, and they were shipped up river. These oxygen concentrators require electricity to run which made the generator that much more important.

*In addition to the motors, MDA funding helped support the COVID response team and the trips to communities as well as the work of the biologist who was in charge of the epidemiology and public health monitoring and reporting...*

*On behalf of the administration, staff and most importantly the people living on the Napo River, THANK YOU!*



*You supported the COVID response team at Santa Clotilde and provided for additional community outreach, educating the community and preventing new infections.*

These little motors, much like the staff along the Napo River, worked tirelessly. The 60-horse power outboard motor was installed and functional in February 2020, one month prior to the national emergency, which prohibited any commercial transport. Once travel was prohibited, the health network was in essence cut off from the city and supplies.

The hospital ambulance became vital for transportation and shipping needs along the Napo River. This boat worked day in and day out to transport sick patients from the outlying health posts to the hospital in Santa Clotilde, as well as sick patients that needed to be taken 5 hours by boat to the Amazon River to meet the ambulance boat for the 1-hour trip into the regional hospital. The ambulance named Victoria II also served to transport medicines and supplies to the outposts, COVID

testing supplies and PPE as well as the Rapid Response Covid team which went to communities to train fellow healthcare workers and educate the communities. The current administrator Gabriella Filonowicz, who is a lay missionary from Poland, comments that, “the boat motor gave us the possibility to mobilize

our teams and immediately respond to our needs...this boat helped save many lives.” The boat motor was not the only motor responsible for saving lives. The John Deere generator worked over time after it’s repair to allow for the oxygen concentrators to assist COVID patients in respiratory distress.

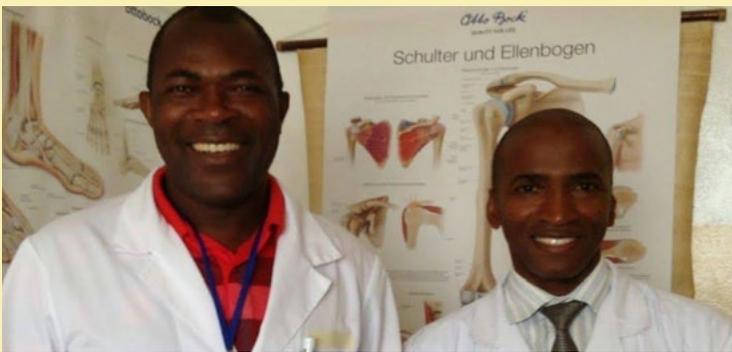
Normally in Santa Clotilde, there is limited electricity with the town generator providing power for about 10 hours per day. (7am-10am and 6pm-11pm) The hospital generators normally are used when there is an emergency, but with many patients needing oxygen, the generator had to work many more hours than at normal times.

In addition to the motors, MDA funding helped support the COVID response team and the trips to communities as well as the work of the biologist who was in charge of the epidemiology and public health monitoring and reporting.

Your gifts to MDA make a difference and the much needed funding for the COVID response is a direct reminder of how we are to answer God’s call to serve and help the other. The sequence of events and needs met in 2020 during this very difficult year is an example of the small daily miracles occurring in God’s Kingdom. On behalf of the administration, staff and most importantly the people living on the Napo River, THANK YOU!

*This article was contributed by Mission Doctor, Brian Medernach, MD. Having served long-term with his wife, Dr. Antoinette Lullo, Dr. Medernach remains on the Board of Directors for Santa Clotilde. Both Brian and Antoinette return regularly to provide care at this rural hospital on the Napo River. The photos for this article were generously provided by Ginebra Peña Gimeno.*

## LOOK WHAT ELSE YOU DID!



**You ensured that Njinikom Hospital would have two doctors, despite the fact that it was impossible for MDA to send them.**

MDA was able to raise the funds for a year’s salary for a general physician from Cameroon and a Congolese Surgeon who had been working in Kenya, and YOU made this possible in less than three weeks.

For the Mission Doctors and their families who have served alongside the Franciscan Sisters at Njinikom, they know the selfless service of these dedicated women. Yet without these two doctors, the sisters were seriously concerned that critical services at the hospital would need to be closed.

**We are grateful for your partnership, but you will never hear the thanks of the thousands and thousands of patients cared for here in this rural hospital during a global pandemic.**

When we say this is a Partnership of Hope, it is our partners in mission, and you our partners at home, that make this Mission of Healing possible!

# SEND LOVE TO A NEW MOTHER AND CHILD

Mission Doctors Mark and Molly Druffner are ready to return to Bwambo Hospital in rural Tanzania, East Africa! They have their plane tickets, but need your help packing.

When they return in the fall, they hope to bring with them Midwife Kits that allow the new mothers to have something special, clean, and ready to dress and wrap their new precious gift from God.

You can help by making one of these simple midwife packets from home.

Midwife Kits in one-gallon storage bags:

New Receiving Blanket

New Infant Outfit

New Infant Hat

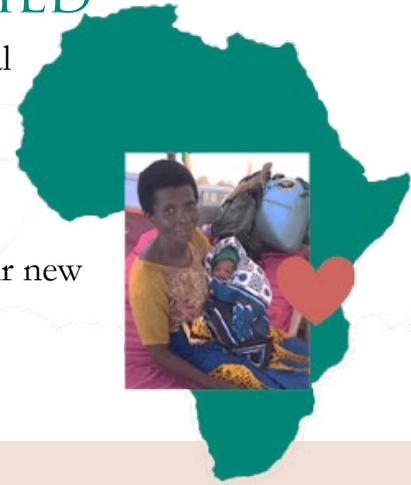
New Infant Socks or Booties

New Washcloth

OPTIONAL – include a note or prayer from you for the mother and this precious new life (Do not include personally identifying or contact information)

All items must be received by September 1, 2021.

If you have any questions, please contact Mission Doctors Association.



*A BIG thank you to Diane and Margaret, and all of the volunteers who got these midwife packs ready.*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **September 18, 2021: Introductory Webinar**

Join us for an online seminar to introduce you to the life-saving work of Mission Doctors and learn about our service programs. Executive Director, Elise Frederick, will be hosting the event and sharing the history of the organization and locations available to serve, once the travel bans have lifted. Veteran Mission Doctors will also share their experience and answer questions. Visit [www.MissionDoctors.org](http://www.MissionDoctors.org) for more information and to register for the webinar.

### **October 24, 2021:**

#### **Annual Mass for Health Care Professionals**

This year it is especially important to recognize the dedicated work of all Catholic Health Care Professionals. The Archdiocese of Los Angeles and Mission Doctors Association invites all Catholic medical professionals to join the celebration in person at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels or online. Visit [www.CatholicWM.org](http://www.CatholicWM.org) for more information and to RSVP.



## MISSION DOCTORS ASSOCIATION

Following Christ's call to heal the sick,  
Mission Doctors Association  
provides life-saving medical care for the poor  
and training for local healthcare professionals  
around the world.

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