



*As you did it to
one of the least
of my brethren,
you did it to me*

Healing and Hope

MISSION DOCTORS ASSOCIATION



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*The following words from Matthew 25:40 have been finding their way into my mind and heart lately: “Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of my brethren, you did it to me.” St. Teresa of Calcutta once was asked about the origin of her spirituality and mission; she responded by tapping each finger of the person’s hand while saying, “You. Did. It. To. Me.” I have frequently reflected on these words during my time here in times of joy and sadness, success and failure, hope and despair, and endurance and impatience. **Though I often fall short of this command, there isn’t an emotion or circumstance in which I cannot turn to this Truth and not be motivated to choose love.***

We asked Mission Doctor, Zach Gastelum to reflect on his first couple of months of his three-year mission at Santa Clotilde, Health Center in Peru.

*The most notable observation during my short time here in Santa Clotilde is witnessing the incredible work ethic of all of the hospital workers and volunteers... From hospital administrators constantly advocating for necessary resources for the community with the Peruvian Ministry of Health, to maintenance workers continually repairing the hospital grounds, and from dentists performing routine teeth cleanings for day-worker patients until ten in the evening and brigades traveling to remote community health posts for weeks at a time to serve the most vulnerable... Their attitude is truly inspirational and a humbling reminder for me when I am feeling overwhelmed. **Our work is the greatest challenge and also the greatest blessing. It is often physically and emotionally taxing on the body and mind while at the same time, it is relationally fruitful and spiritually life-giving.***
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Your support makes the service of Mission Doctors, Lucy Goh, MD and Zach Gastelum, MD possible! You are providing the compassionate healing hands of Christ to indigenous people living in the Amazon.

Before we wrapped up our questions with Zach, we asked him what he'd like to say to supporters like you. *“Thank you for your continued prayers and support for me, for our hospital, and for the community we serve here in Santa Clotilde. Your support is a constant witness to our true and ultimate belonging as God’s children. I have seen first hand how your support has brought peace to the weary and anxious soul, the neglected and forgotten soul, the infirm and suffering soul, and the lost and transformed soul. St. Teresa of Calcutta beautifully encapsulates this reality, “If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other.” Your support is an integral and transforming agent of peace and unity in our broken and divided world. Please know that you are in my thoughts and prayers as well.”*

Your support provides continuing support, health and emergency evacuation insurance, and a stipend of \$150 a month. Your support is vital as Dr. Gastelum and Dr. Goh continue caring for patients at Santa Clotilde.



Keep doing it!

I had the opportunity to meet with long time Auxiliary member Marie Urrutia recently to thank her for her continued support as a member of our VitalCorps. Marie and her late husband Daniel have given generously to Mission Doctors, both their time and treasure. **Marie’s monthly donation helps ensure the support of doctors serving long term in Africa and Latin America continues!**

Marie said that she, like so many other women in the Auxiliary, first learned about MDA from the indomitable Rita Mason. Rita, having prepared to serve as a nurse long term with her husband Dr. Rick Mason, was unable to serve internationally due to health concerns. So, with unflinching determination, she turned her attention to ensuring MDA would have the support it needed to make other’s service possible, by inviting more and more people to become involved.

“In my family there are both doctors and pharmacists, and my uncle and his wife served three years in Nigeria.” I asked Marie what she wished people knew about MDA. “It is the good you do helping people who are sick.” **When I asked her what she hopes we will do in the future she said “Exactly what you are doing, keep doing it!” Marie said she wanted others to know that “Supporting MDA is something you will feel good about, I know I do every time I read about the good work being done!”**

Would you like to join Marie as a member of the VitalCorps? You can make a monthly gift of any size and your support will help ensure the future of the Mission of healing and hope.

More Doctors Ready to Serve

Bringing doctors together from around the country to learn what would be involved in serving for one – three months had been on hold since our last one in 2019 at Loyola Stritch Medical School in Chicago.

Doctors came from Hawaii, New Jersey, Virginia, Texas, Wisconsin, and even California! With presentations on the Theology of Mission, Staying Healthy Overseas, the Big Three (TB, Malaria, and HIV), site presentations on locations seeking Mission Doctors as well as Culture, those in attendance were already making plans to serve by breakfast on Sunday.

One of the first to head out will be Dr. Chad Kritzberger who will be serving for four months at Santa Clotilde Mission on the Napo River in the Amazon region of Peru beginning in June. Joining Dr. Lucy Goh and Dr. Zachary Gastelum, Dr. Kritzberger is a pediatrician who is looking forward to the opportunity. Chad wrote to our team, *“Thank you for all efforts to offer such an exceptional discernment weekend. Your generosity was evident in so many ways - the genuineness of the relationships you have formed with volunteers and donors and board members over the years, your interest in our genuine well-being and fruitfulness of our discernment, the myriad of details that it takes to organize a weekend as you did. I feel that I can speak for all of us attendees, that we felt privileged to participate and are truly grateful for your time, commitment, and efforts. The opportunity to personally meet and thank several board members whose heart is in this mission was the perfect way to end the weekend. Thank you once again for all you do.”*

Your support made this event and the service of these Mission Doctors possible. **Because of you, we are able to continue to recruit, train, send and support Catholic doctors, dentists, nurse practitioners and physician assistants in following Christ’s call to heal the sick.** These medical professionals provide life-saving medical care and training for local healthcare professionals. Without your continued support, none of this would be possible.



Br. John Keisler, OFM presenting the Theology of Mission to Retreat/Seminar attendees, sharing their unique call as healthcare professionals to serve internationally





The first baby was born safely at the brand-new St. Elizabeth's Maternity Center in Bwambo Village! The parents named the baby "Elizabeth", after the center!

We now have all of the medical equipment needed to provide safe and healthy deliveries! This is a huge breakthrough for the staff and patients at St. Luke's Hospital. We thank God for this incredible blessing and for all of you who helped to make St. Elizabeth's Maternity Center a reality!

Dr. Mark and Mrs. Molly Druffner have served in Tanzania every year for the past fourteen years with their children. With your support, their annual service has improved the care provided at Bwambo Clinic and supported the Parish and surrounding communities of the South Pare Mountains in Tanzania.

Upcoming Events

April 21-23, 2023

Discernment Weekend

Doctors and their spouses interested in long-term (3 year) service with MDA are invited to a Discernment Weekend at our Mission House. The weekend provides an opportunity to meet with the formation team, learn about current service sites, and discuss the joys and challenges of mission life. Contact our office for more information.

September 5, 2023

Informational Session and Q and A

Join us online on September 5th at 5 pm PT/8 pm ET for a brief Informational Session and Q and A about short-term service with Mission Doctors. Executive Director Elise Frederick and Program Coordinator Amie Garcia will be online to share information about our program and take your questions about service with MDA and our next Retreat/Seminar. Email Amie at agarcia@missiondoctors.org to reserve your spot!



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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