

BLESSINGS
INTERNATIONAL

MEDICINES
FOR **MISSIONS**



The Newsletter of Blessings International

September 2018



To Guatemala with Love

COMPASSION AND SUPPORT
IN THE AFTERMATH OF
VOLCÁN DE FUEGO

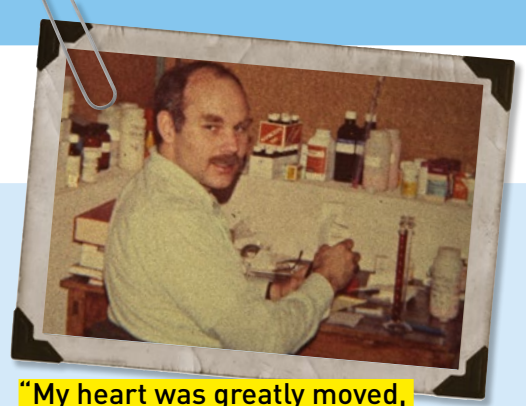
Healing the Hurting | Building Healthy Communities | Transforming Lives



GUATEMALA

Over 37 years ago, Harold Harder, PhD, Founder and former President of Blessings International said, “Yes” to an invitation to be part of a medical mission team to Monrovia, Guatemala. While he was there ministering to the Maum Indian Pueblo people, and serving as pharmacist in the clinic, he said, “Yes” again. This time Dr. Harder was responding to God’s call, asking him to begin a ministry that could facilitate the procurement of medicine for medical mission teams. In 1981 this ministry became formally recognized as a nonprofit organization known as BLESSINGS INTERNATIONAL.

A seed was planted, it was watered by faith and obedience, and a lasting bond with Guatemala was formed. Although Blessings has provided medicine for over 139 different countries in the last five years, Guatemala remains in the “Top Three” with \$629,639 worth of medicine distributed this fiscal year alone to treat 589,550 patients. Just think, it all began over 37 years ago when Dr. Harder wrote his first letter “To Guatemala with Love,” using medicine instead of words.



“My heart was greatly moved, first by a deep compassion for the great health needs of these people, and second, by the difficulties medical missionaries face in securing adequate supplies of essential drugs on a minimal budget.”

Harold Harder, PhD



Above: Disaster-relief medical team walking in ash from the eruption of Volcan de Fuego. Ash covered houses and farmland remain destroyed by the eruption.

Below: The Berry family

On June 3, 2018 a series of volcanic explosions and pyroclastic flows from Volcan de Fuego erupted, sending a cloud of burning gas and boiling ash over nearby communities, killing an untold amount, and forcing countless other evacuated people into crowded churches and shelters.

Blessings’ employee, Laura Berry, and her family were among hundreds of those responding to this disaster. They made the difficult decision to follow through with a trip planned before this disaster, and took the whole Berry Family, as part of the International Medical Relief team to Alotenango, Guatemala.

“I was a bit anxious, as we had a medical mission trip planned prior to the eruptions to serve in Alotenango, 8.5 km from Volcan de Fuego. I realized we wouldn’t be participating in a typical medical mission trip, but rather we had the honor to be the hands and feet of Jesus during heartache and loss.”

Laura Berry, Director of Business Development, with Christopher Berry, MD, Nina Berry and Noah Berry

Laura shares, “As we gathered each day to head out into the community, we were fully aware that the medical needs close to Volcan de Fuego would be challenging and would require thoughtfulness as many of the patients endured the loss of life, home, and in many cases their livelihood. As our disaster relief team saw patients, each one seemed to have a connection and a story related to the shocking eruption. One lady that came to the make shift clinic,





Left: Make shift clinic located south of Volcan de Fuego. Hundreds of people lined up for care.

Above: Christopher Berry, MD was excited to use his Spanish to communicate directly to his patients without a translator.

wept as she recounted the loss of her family and home. Another patient lost his farm, the only means of providing income for his family. We saw young widows and encountered children who once had families but were now orphans. While medical treatment was necessary, dispensing love and comfort was a privilege we did not take lightly.

As I reflect on our trip, I am grateful for Blessings International and the ability to provide life-saving medicines that were scarce in country after the eruption. Medicines such as topical antibiotics for burns or vital inhalers for respiratory issues caused by poor air quality as a result of the eruption were now available for our disaster relief teams. We are so thankful for our generous donors

and partners that allow us to respond in times of crisis and disaster. We are grateful for the medical teams continuing to serve post eruption and long term in country. The seed for Blessings International was planted in Guatemala and we thank God for His provision and faithfulness that we can continue to serve there after 37 years."

Many others also responded to the disaster in Guatemala and the ongoing disaster needs in places such as Puerto Rico, including long-time friends and customers, Rick Harper of Health Talents International, and Victor Cruz, One to the Other Ministries.

"Health Talents International, with the aid of Blessings International, will fill more than 200,000 prescriptions in 2018. To say you are a valued ministry partner is an understatement. Following the eruption of Fuego, you not only honored a request to fill an emergency order, you generously gifted a sizable portion of the order. Within five business days, our order was filled and five days later, it was in Guatemala. Your compassion for those who are lost and hurting is only matched by your passion for service and love for our Lord."

Rick Harper, Executive Director of Health Talents International



Above: "OTTOM was honored to be able to go to Puerto Rico and touch lives and Impact communities in the name of the ONE, who we serve, and the ONE who sends us...Jesus!"

Victor Cruz, President of OTTOM, with Dr. Wayne Smith, Founder of OTTOM, who said in anticipation of his recent home-going, "Every sermon I ever preached will become true when I see the face of Jesus."



Right: Rick Harper, Executive Director of Health Talents International (left) & Kyle FitzGerald, Warehouse Manager of Blessings International.

BLESSINGS EMERGENCY DISASTER RELIEF FUND

Staying ready to meet the urgent needs presented by disaster remains paramount to Blessings International. Under the leadership of Barry Ewy, PharmD, JD, MHA, CEO of Blessings since 2013, our Emergency Disaster Relief program has grown. We are able to gift more medicine to more teams due to the segregation of all donations received and our practice to use them entirely for gifts of free medicine. For example, 100% of donations made to the Emergency Disaster Relief Fund are used exclusively for the purpose of putting free medicine into the hands of those medical professionals responding to critical and long term needs following disasters. At the time of this publication, \$36,665.67 in free medicine has been given from the EDR Fund this fiscal year.



Will you help us to stay ready? Your donation to the Emergency Disaster Relief Fund is needed to help ensure that Blessings is fully equipped with proper medicines, vitamins, and supplies to give away whenever and wherever the next disaster may strike.



THANK YOU!

To all who helped us STOP A KILLER by donating to our Malaria Medicine Fund. \$28,000 in free antimalaria medicine has been given away this fiscal year, impacting 17,400 people, in 51 countries. In many cases this medicine truly saved lives.

One very special life we know of, is a little boy in Togo, Africa, pictured above. His mother brought him to a clinic run by Medical Missions International unresponsive, with a high fever and dehydrated. She held his hand to say, "Goodbye." That is when Madeleine Allard came into the clinic with antimalaria medicine she had received from Blessings International. Thanks to you, "Goodbye" was not necessary as this little boy was revived and ultimately cured after taking antimalaria medicine!

"Thank you for donating Arthemeter tablets to our ministry for Togo, Africa. It is indeed a gift of life. We serve people living in the bush and malaria is quite rampant in this area. People are extremely poor and it is not uncommon for them to "pay" for such medicine with a few yams. Thank you for loving our patients and for this gift!"

Madeleine Allard, RN, BN, CWS
Director Medical Mission International



"We've seen medical mission teams respond to both man made and natural disasters in many areas of the world over the past five years. It has been an absolute blessing to be able to supply and equip teams with free medicine and medical supplies in their response. This has only been because of the generosity of those who have chosen to partner with us to heal the hurting."

Barry Ewy, PharmD, JD, MHA
CEO Blessings International

HOW TO GIVE

Your gift of **\$50** will provide desperately needed medicines and supplies to treat **230** Emergency Disaster Relief patients



GIVE BY MAIL

Use enclosed donation card and envelope



GIVE ONLINE

Click "Donate" at www.blessing.org



GIVE BY SECURE MOBILE APP

Text "MEDAID" to 41444

Every Gift Makes a Difference!

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Guidestar has awarded Blessings their highest rating of Platinum to reflect our level of accountability and transparency. We rank in the top 2% of all rated charities.

Blessings has been accredited by Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability since 1981.

Federal employees can donate through the Combined Federal Campaign #11864. State and local government employees can look for us in their Charity Guide under the Neighbor to Nation federation.



Learn more at www.blessing.org