

The cover features a central white banner with the organization's name and logo. Above the banner is a large circular image of a snow-capped mountain. Below the banner is a circular image of surgeons in an operating room. The entire design is framed by thin blue and orange circular lines.

ANNUAL
REPORT
2015

HEALING &
EMPOWERING IN
LATIN AMERICA



SOLIDARITY BRIDGE

BRIDGING
TRANSFORMATION

VISION

We **transform lives** by promoting solidarity and justice through experiences of **service and healing**. We believe that saving a life and alleviating suffering can **sustain** families and **strengthen** communities.

MISSION

In a spirit of **mutuality**, we build a **healthier future** for the people of Bolivia and Paraguay through domestic and international partnerships. We **train and equip** their medical communities, **empowering them** to provide high-complexity surgery and other health care for those living in poverty.

** Patient names have been changed throughout this report.*



Through solidarity, our vision becomes reality

Service and healing ► **lives transformed** ► **families sustained!**

Teenage sisters Ana and Alba* live alone in Cochabamba, working to send money to their elderly parents in their village. During the 2015 Multi-Specialty Mission Trip, Ana received desperately needed surgery that repaired her intestinal tract after a long illness, and renewed hope for her entire family.

A Note from our Executive Director

Bridging Transformation! Our 2015 activities provided significant opportunities for individual and systemic transformation. After many years in the making, we formalized a new pediatric open heart surgery partnership with a public hospital. And in our neurosurgery program, broad collaboration among diverse actors elevated training to a whole new level. In this report, you'll see how these and other efforts continue to expand access to high-complexity surgeries, giving life to many more underserved patients.

We also expanded our efforts to be a bridge for spiritual transformation among our U.S.-based community. Our first-ever missioner retreat gave team members the opportunity to further plumb the depths of their mission experience.

God invites us, through the many activities of Solidarity Bridge, to partake in the transformational elements of mission. As donors, missioners, medical partners, board, staff and volunteers, we experience firsthand how our generous giving primes us for receiving new graces, and moves our lives toward wholeness. Thank you for helping us transform lives on both sides of our bridge!

- Ann Rhomberg









Effective May 1, 2016, Solidarity Bridge Founder Juan Lorenzo Hinojosa, PhD, has retired from the Solidarity Bridge board and staff. He will continue to serve in Bolivia on the Puente de Solidaridad Board of Directors.



"We bridge transformation through our own becoming and being persons who connect, engage, dialogue and act."

- Juan Lorenzo Hinojosa

2015 Accomplishments

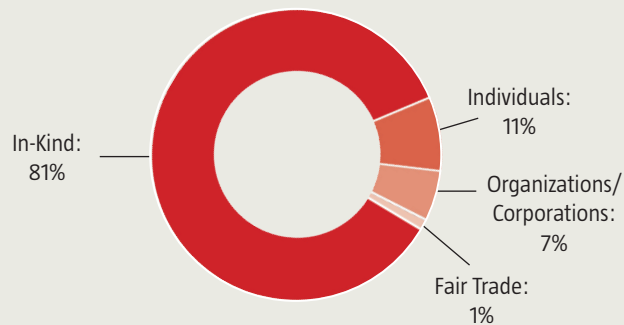
	2015	1999 TO 2015
 Patients	990	61,959
 Total Surgeries	405	5,184
 Medical Supplies Donated	\$3,191,197	\$36,073,243
 Medical Time Donated	\$1,160,341*	\$10,371,454
 Number of Missioners	62	401**
 Number of Mission Trips	5	74

* \$375,191 in time was donated by US missioners in 2015, while Bolivian partners donated another \$785,150 in time through our year-round programs.

** Many loyal missioners return year after year. Over the past 16 years, 401 individuals have filled 867 slots on 74 mission trips.

REVENUE: \$ 4,926,128

\$ 3,967,783 In-Kind | \$ 958,345 Cash



EXPENSES: \$ 4,540,580

\$ 3,592,484 In-Kind | \$ 948,096 Cash



NET ASSETS: \$ 1,065,422

\$ 750,300 In-Kind | \$ 315,122 Cash

Where we serve

Solidarity Bridge, based in Evanston, Illinois, works primarily in Bolivia. Bolivia is the poorest country in South America, with an annual per capita income of less than US \$6,000. The country has made strides in recent years to expand healthcare services particularly in primary care, but surgical services remain inaccessible for the vast majority of the population. Our focus is on building and reinforcing local capacity to help fill that need.



All of our work is directed and managed in close partnership with our Bolivian counterparts at Puente de Solidaridad, with offices located in Cochabamba and Santa Cruz, Bolivia. Patients travel from throughout Bolivia to receive surgical care through our mission trips and year-round surgical programs based at a growing number of partner hospitals. The map at left indicates our primary work sites in 2015. We also maintain contact with partners in Paraguay, where we are currently assessing needs for future collaborations.

General Surgery Program

Hospital Locations:
**Cochabamba, Punata,
Santa Cruz, Tiquipaya**

Surgeries: **143**

Mission Trips: **2**
Feb 27 - Mar 8 to Cochabamba
Mar 8-15 to Santa Cruz

Mobile Laparoscopic Surgery
Campaigns: **3**
Apr 7-10 & Aug 24-Sep 3
to Punata
Dec 3-5 to Santa Cruz

"I felt extremely honored and humbled to have met David and his family and to know that we were able to help this young man in a way that will have a positive impact on him for the rest of his life."

*- Stephanie, P.A.,
first-time missionary*

After enduring years of grueling but unsuccessful treatments for esophageal stricture, David, 16, was given the opportunity to be a normal teenager through surgery performed during the General Surgery Mission Trip to Cochabamba.

Our General Surgery Program continues to expand its reach.

Mission trips take U.S. medical teams to work alongside Bolivian peers. Annual trips to Cochabamba progressively expand surgical capabilities in central Bolivia's most important public hospitals.

A second 2015 general surgery mission trip explored expansion of the program to *Hospital San Juan de Dios* in Santa Cruz. This public hospital serves the most complex surgical needs of the low-income population from throughout eastern Bolivia.

Mobile Surgery Campaigns, headed by our Bolivian partner surgeons, are an essential part of year-round programs managed by our colleagues at *Puente de Solidaridad*. In 2015, a third mobile surgery campaign to the central-Bolivian town of Punata concluded by equipping the hospital with its own laparoscopic tower and supplies, empowering the hospital to put into practice the training received. In December, the mobile unit also traveled to *Clínica Buena Salud* on the outskirts of Santa Cruz.

Missioner Dr. Maged Khouzam reviews films with Bolivian surgeon Dr. Boris Urna in preparation for surgery at San Juan de Dios Hospital in Santa Cruz.

Bolivian social worker Marizol Mamani interviews a patient during a routine home visit that ensures that our resources are channeled to those in greatest need.



Mission surgeon Dr. Malcolm Billimoria (left) has mentored young Bolivian surgeon Dr. Vania Lozada (right) for over half a decade. Dr. Lozada is now one of the few surgeons in Bolivia's public healthcare system performing such high-complexity surgeries as the Whipple procedure for pancreatic cancer.



Heart Surgery Program

Gumercinda, 62, is a mother of seven. The family crafts sandals out of leather scraps and old tires to sell in the local market.

Most of our pacemaker patients, like Gumercinda at left, suffer from Chagas, a vector-borne disease endemic to Bolivia. Roughly 30% of those infected with Chagas develop heart disease.

PACEMAKER

Locations:

Cochabamba & Santa Cruz

Implants:
161

In 2015, our Bolivian partner cardiologists implanted pacemakers and defibrillators for 78 women and 83 men from throughout Bolivia.

Teodora, 45, has four daughters, including two teenagers still at home.



Average patient age in 2015 = 59.

This is a reflection of the devastation of Chagas disease, whose victims are often struck in the prime of their lives.

Average in the US = 75.



Juan was 26, unemployed, and soon to be a father. He found work hauling bricks at a construction site. After fainting several times on the job, Juan was diagnosed with a heart condition. A pacemaker saved Juan's life and his ability to sustain his family.

Ivan, 76, received a second implant through our program. Permanent follow-up of each patient is an integral part of the program.



Access multiplies for pediatric heart surgery

Until 2015, surgery for those born with congenital heart defects was only performed in Bolivia at a few private hospitals, where costs were high and beds were few. Thanks to diverse partnerships woven over years and across continents, a public hospital in Bolivia initiated its first pediatric heart surgeries.

OPEN HEART

Locations:
**Cochabamba
& Santa Cruz**

Surgeries:
28

Thanks to many, more children will thrive!

Some of the champions, partners, donors and supporters of this effort include:

- The State Government of Santa Cruz, the Santa Cruz Ministry of Health, and the leadership and staff of the *Hospital Municipal de Niños "Mario Ortíz Suárez"*
- Solidarity Bridge Board Member Dr. Daniel Lum
- Renowned Bolivian heart surgeons and long-time partners Dr. Carlos Brockmann and Dr. Arturo Barrientos, who shared their expertise
- Isaac and Renee Goff, for their loyal and generous financial support
- Juan Lorenzo Hinojosa, for shepherding this effort from its conception

And many more!

Teresa keeps close watch over her only child, a six-month-old daughter, while she recovers from surgery to close a hole in her heart.

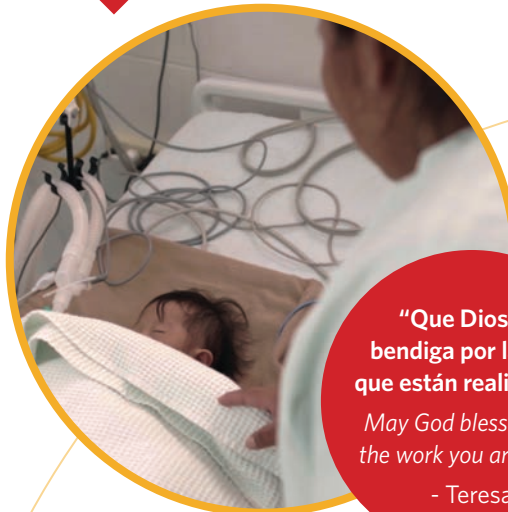
"Que Dios los bendiga por la obra que están realizando."

May God bless you for the work you are doing.

- Teresa



This historic photo shows Bolivian partner Dr. Roberto Pacheco repairing a patent ductus arteriosus during the first surgery performed through the new partnership in Santa Cruz.





Neurosurgery Program


Hospital Locations:
**Santa Cruz, Tarija,
Cochabamba**

Surgeries: **60**

Mission Trips: **2**
**Mar 13-21 to Tarija
& Santa Cruz**
Oct 6-9 to Tarija

Neurosurgery Program expands to Tarija

Patients in **southern Bolivia** are benefitting from **upgraded neurosurgery training and equipment** in the region's most important public hospital. Diverse spinal procedures, transnasal pituitary surgery, and surgery for a newborn with spina bifida were performed in 2015. Donated instruments and materials are helping local surgeons continue to better serve the community year-round.



Missioner Dr. John Weaver and Bolivian partner Dr. Marco Fernandez teamed up in October for a particularly complex 7-hour spinal fusion surgery at Tarija's San Juan de Dios Hospital.

Neurosurgeons in action

Years of work building connections and leveraging resources to advance neurosurgery in Bolivia generated innovative training and mentorship opportunities in 2015. These actions positively impact the lives of patients by improving quality and opening access.

CORPORATE SUPPORTERS IN SOLIDARITY

A prestigious team of five **Global Innovation Fellows** from **Medtronic Corporation** donated expertise for a three-week visioning process with Bolivian neurosurgeons in March in Santa Cruz with a view to professional development, equipping and expansion of neurosurgery in Bolivia.

Industry sponsors **Atlas Medical, Globus Medical, Medtronic, and Stryker Corporation** provided state-of-the-art instruments and simulation devices to allow Neurosurgery Boot Camp participants to practice at hands-on work stations.



Seven titanium screws and other highly specialized implantable materials carried by the March 2015 Neurosurgery Mission Team to Santa Cruz were used to repair 18-year-old Yolanda's fractured spine. The surgery also restored smiles to Yolanda and her mother!

Neurosurgery Boot Camp

October 12-13, Santa Cruz

Solidarity Bridge and Puente de Solidaridad, in collaboration with the Bolivian Society for Neurosurgery, the Foundation for International Education in Neurological Surgery (FIENS), and the University of Massachusetts Medical School, led Latin America's first-ever *Fundamentals of Neurosurgery Boot Camp*. 21 neurosurgery residents from Bolivia, Chile, Peru, Ecuador and Argentina participated in lectures by prominent surgeons, case analyses, and hands-on work stations.



Some of the topics covered in the Boot Camp work stations included: cranial drilling, lumbar puncture, pediatric shunts, ventriculostomy, traction and skull positioning, craniotomy, skull plating, and spinal fusion.

Multi-Specialty Mission Trip

First-time missioner
Dr. Alvaro Encinas served
**114 patients in the family
practice clinic.**

Location:
Cochabamba

Mission Trip:
Sept 23 - Oct 4

Patients Served:
661

The 2015 **Multi-Specialty Mission Trip** was hosted by Univalle Hospital, a private teaching hospital located in a low-income neighborhood on the southwest edge of Cochabamba. Patients were evaluated and treated in five specialties: cardiology, dermatology, family practice, gynecology, and general surgery. On-site partnering of missioners with Bolivian peers provided vital learning opportunities. Medical students and interns also observed in the clinics and in the operating rooms.

Mission team physicians delivered evening lectures on the following topics at the Univalle medical school:

- Surgical management of abnormal uterine bleeding
- Echocardiography in diagnosis of cardiac pathologies
- Rational use of antibiotics
- Laparoscopic bariatric surgery
- Use of biologics in dermatology



The **dermatology team**, including PA Missy Koopmann (above), **examined and treated 358 patients**. Dermatology consultations are inaccessible for most Bolivians, while high altitudes and harsh living and working conditions expose many to skin injury and disease.



▲ In addition to seeing **83 patients in the cardiology clinic**, missionary Dr. Mark Ottolin (right) performed **one pacemaker implant and four interventional cardiology procedures** alongside Bolivian colleague Dr. Juan Uriona (back to camera). Interpreter Gustavo Arreguín (center) bridged communication between the two cardiologists.

▲ Small mission teams also served patients at three remote sites, including the “Mi Salud Consultorio” clinic seen here.



▲ Gynecologists Dr. Carrie Giordano (back left), Dr. Katie Gualandri (front, second from left), and Dr. Bob LaPata (not shown) performed **13 gynecologic surgeries** alongside Bolivian peers. RN Rafiat Mustapha (back, second from right) and interpreter Mary McCann Sanchez (front right), along with the enthusiastic Univalle OR staff, rounded out the OR gyne team. In addition, **66 patients were served in the gynecology clinic**.

The **22 general surgeries** performed by Dr. Gay Garrett and Univalle partners brought relief and joy to long-suffering patients and their families! Procedures included hernia repairs, gall bladder extractions, and colon surgeries.

Gynecologic Surgery Program



Location:
Cochabamba
Surgeries:
13

A robust gynecology team formed part of the 2015 Multi-Specialty Mission Trip to Univalle Hospital in Cochabamba, as reported separately. With Bolivian colleagues, missionaries performed life-changing surgeries for such conditions as abnormal bleeding and uterine fibroids. This and other occasions throughout the year were seized to expand connections for the consolidation of this program to better serve the women of Bolivia.

Mission gynecologist Dr. Bob LaPata (right) observes his Bolivian peer, Dr. Edward de la Fuente. Another Bolivian gynecologist, Dr. Javier Quiroz (background), traveled to Cochabamba from Santa Cruz to receive training in conjunction with the Multi-Specialty Mission Trip.



◀ Mission gynecologist Dr. Katie Gualandri with a relieved patient at Univalle Hospital.



◀ Louisa, center, had undergone three emergency blood transfusions in recent months, but couldn't afford the surgery she needed to address the underlying problem. Four days after her successful surgery, Louisa and her husband returned to Univalle Hospital for a post-op check-up and to thank mission gynecologist Dr. Carrie Giordano.

Building bridges to nurture God's transforming call

At Solidarity Bridge, we recognize and celebrate the presence of the sacred in each moment.

Mission trips are infused with intentional moments to ground us in our broader mission.

The **Opening Ritual** gathers missioners and US and Bolivian staffs as one community.



Mission chaplains provide **pastoral support** to missioners, patients, and families.



St. Nicholas Parish of Evanston, in the name of the wider Church, sends forth mission teams at the **Commissioning Mass**.

2015 missioner retreat

Solidarity Bridge staff and past missioners enjoyed a beautiful weekend at Techny Towers Retreat Center to reflect and build on the mission experience.



"My mission experience is in me for life, but it gets buried in my busy life. The retreat gave me time to remember and feel Bolivia again."

- Retreat participant

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Brian Sakowski, RN
Kate Scott, NP
Kathy Seskiewicz, MD
Kristen Skoch, RN
Michael C. Smith, MD
Nancy Streitmatter, MD
Tim Van Natta, MD
Enrique Via-Reque, MD
John Weaver, MD
Daniel Yousif, MD

Solidarity Bridge Staff

Ann Rhomberg, Executive Director
Megan Kennedy-Farrell, Senior Director of Mission and Identity*
Mary McCann Sanchez, Senior Director of Programs
Jodi Grahl, Director of General Surgery, Gynecology and
Pacemaker Programs
Rachel Gunderson, Director of Development
Jayleen Stolzenburg, Director of Communications and Events*
Sofi Porter-Castro, Operations Coordinator
Martha Huffman, Bookkeeper*

Solidarity Bridge is also grateful for the efforts of the former staff members who contributed much to our 2015 activities: Kira Foken, Juan Lorenzo Hinojosa, Sarah Hinojosa, Mara O'Brien.

* Part time staff

Puente de Solidaridad Management Team

Patricia Vargas, Executive Director
María Inés Uriona, Medical Programs Coordinator
José Choque, Fair Trade and Medical Supplies Coordinator
Marcela Canedo, Public Relations Coordinator
Patricia Paz Estenssoro, Santa Cruz Administrator

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	Dan Yousif, MD



Some of the 2015 Multi-Specialty Mission Team!



Dharma Trading Company sells clothing made by artisans in Bolivian fair trade cooperatives and takes no profit from sales. The Goff family, Dharma Trading owners, generously supports our pediatric heart surgery efforts.

Greenola Style, founded by Jennifer Moran, a former Solidarity Bridge intern, is a fair trade fashion retailer/wholesaler working with Bolivian women artisans.

Puente de Solidaridad manages exports from Bolivian cooperatives to both Dharma Trading Company and Greenola.



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