

A SIGHT TO SEE ONE WORLD SURGERY'S FIRST SURGICAL FELLOW

For most of us, the day begins when we open our eyes. But for Dr. Ponce's patients, the gift of sight requires a visit to his operating room.

Dr. Jorge Ponce is One World Surgery's first medical fellow, an ophthalmologist who now provides care 4 days a week at the Holy Family Surgery Center (HFSC). One World Surgery has provided ophthalmological care for years, but before Dr. Ponce's fellowship, patients with vision problems could only receive care during medical missions that included visiting ophthalmologists. Now, thanks to our partnership with EVP Eyecare, a premier eye care company in the US, and ACE Global, an international nonprofit that trains ophthalmologists, this fellowship ensures eye care takes place year-round.

Under the mentorship of Dr. Merlin Antúnez, Medical Director of HFSC, Dr. Anthony Evangelista of EVP, Dr. Kevin Barber of ACE Global, and other US ophthalmologists, Dr. Ponce provides needed care while simultaneously developing his surgical skills. And this care is needed; ophthalmological treatment, specifically to remove cataracts, is scarce in Honduras.

According to Dr. Ponce: "This work is important because it implies restoring eyesight to patients. Sight restoration impacts people at many levels: economic, social, and even spiritual. People are transformed by a simple procedure that can help them feel like [they are] coming back to life, and that to me is priceless."

This fellowship meets today's needs while also creating a future where Honduran patients can continue to receive the ophthalmological care they need locally. It's quite a sight to see. ■



BUILDING CENTERS TO BUILDING CARE PLANS: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC UPDATES

It was a moment of celebration as the volunteers from the first medical mission in the Dominican Republic since the start of the pandemic walked through our bustling construction site.

Walking alongside them were Caitlin Zulla, CEO of Surgical Care Affiliates and OWS Board Director, as well as Dr. Patrick Conway and Dr. Aric Coffman, Optum executives, who also worked side-by-side with the volunteers in clinic.

After months of delay due to COVID-19, medical missions resumed and the construction site reopened, progressing quickly. **The primary care center and visitor center are scheduled to open later this year, with the surgical center to be completed by early 2022.** Just as construction has progressed, so have our fundraising efforts: we are thrilled to share that we have raised sufficient funding to complete construction. Our focus now is to equip the facilities and ensure long-term sustainability, resulting in greater impact to every patient who walks through our doors.

However, our medical mission volunteers are not waiting for the site's completion to provide needed care. During one week alone, volunteers attended to over 500 patients! Each day, they set up a clinic in a different community center, bringing care directly to those who need it. Many of our patients are Haitian immigrants with limited access to healthcare locally, making the volunteers' and local team's work vital.

There are still spots open to volunteer for medical missions in the Dominican Republic and Honduras, with thousands of patients on the waiting list for care.

Visit www.oneworldsurgery.org/medical-mission/ to sign up to change lives. ■

STAFF SPOTLIGHT: SANTIAGO RAMON DE LA CRUZ, HEALTH PROMOTER



For many of our patients in the Dominican Republic, ongoing care is a necessity. Charged with helping a wide range of patients with chronic disease, **Ramon de la Cruz, a One World Surgery health promoter** and community leader of a nearby batey, ensures OWS physician Dr. Jhomairy Miller can provide them with the best treatment possible. Each week, Ramon navigates the bateys and barrios on his motorbike to meet with patients identified as needing additional care during medical missions and to provide health education to the communities.

Once Dr. Miller thoroughly evaluates a patient, Ramon delivers medication, listens to the patients' concerns, and follows up on health conditions, such as checking blood pressure or blood sugar level. His work allows for the essential continuity of care that these patients need.

The result of this partnership between health promoters and physicians is powerful, as it helps build trust and communication with patients and ensures high-quality care. Dr. Miller reflected on a benefitting patient: "Ramon and I initially visited a patient to treat her high blood pressure. It took the team visiting her 4 times and building trust before the patient revealed that she had a uterine prolapse. Together, we were able to find a hospital to provide her surgery. **We then worked together to provide post-operative care and our patient is now completely healed.**"

Ramon's work means that communities not only receive care, but their voices are heard, which can make all the difference. ■

PATIENT STORY: ANGELICA LIDENY SANCHEZ



Each day, the pain in Angelica's spine became more unbearable. From her work as a cleaner to just standing up, each task was a challenge, and she knew it was time to seek help. Angelica went to the public hospital for injections, but found no relief. The physicians advised an MRI, but she didn't have the resources to obtain one.

Then a friend at church recommended she contact One World Surgery's Holy Family Surgery Center. Angelica didn't hesitate to reach out and visited for the first time in January 2020. This time, when told she needed an MRI, the One World Surgery team made it happen and Angelica was recommended for surgery. Then COVID-19 struck, canceling the 2020 spine medical mission.

In April 2021, Angelica received a call. The NuVasive spine medical mission would arrive in a few weeks. She was reassessed and approved for surgery. Three weeks later, Angelica received the surgery she had now waited years for to end the excruciating pain. While there is still more recovery that awaits, Angelica was surprised at how well she felt after the surgery. She left HFSC filled with hope, knowing that a new future awaits her and her family. ■

Golf & Global Gala SAVE THE DATE!

YOU ARE INVITED!

Join us for our
GIVING ON THE GREEN
golf outing, **August 26**,
Cantigny Golf, Wheaton, IL
and our
GLOBAL GALA,
Minneapolis, MN,
September 17.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

contact our new
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