

# Impact Statement

## 2016



*Delivering compassionate  
healthcare and the Gospel to the  
most needy in the developing world*





Dr. Michael Kloess - Mount Horeb, WI

## HELPING HANDS Medical Missions Impact Statement 2016

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Dr. Michael Brezinsky - Montrose, CO

Be a Missions Promoter  
and Share with Others





# A reflection on 20 years of medical missionary work.

December 2016

Dear Friends,

I can still remember our first mission in Mexico in 1996, it was just a pilot program and we only had 7 missionaries. The mission was a great success and thus began a 20 year journey of delivering compassionate healthcare and the Gospel to the neediest in the developing world.

Through the years we have had our ups and downs, but when you are ultimately working for the Lord, even the challenging times become blessings. I can remember a time when we had worked late into the night helping... or the time when we had torrential rains that impacted our ability to work in Santiago Texacuangos, El Salvador. But through it all I remain profoundly grateful for the opportunities that I have had to share my God given talents through the healthcare profession and most of all to share the truths of the Catholic Faith.

One of the most profound take-a-way from these past 20 years is that so much of the world's problems that I have seen first-hand is the lack in the dignity of the human person. So many governments just throw money at the "problem of the poor;" without taking the time to realize the root causes of their poverty. Many times this throwing money includes providing contraception and sterilization. Both of these have had devastating effects on women, families and children in the developing nations.

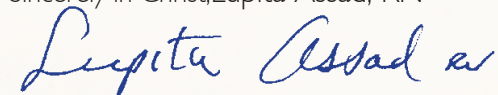
Human beings are made in the image and likeness of God, and thus need to be treated with the utmost dignity and thus I have made this my mission for the past 20 years. To show the poor that they are children of God. I have attempted to do this through the sharing of my faith as well as teaching Natural Family Planning and other dignified ways to build a culture of life amongst the poor and often forgotten.

I am most grateful for all of those who have had the courage to join me in this great cause! All the healthcare and non-healthcare professionals who after all their hard work at home, spend 7-10 days working even harder in service to their poor brothers and sisters. You have chosen to invest your time, talent and treasure in this most precious endeavor of serving the poor. You have created a legacy of love for those whom you lead, fellow missionaries, family members, friends, and of course those whom you have served.

I was recently asked what my plans were for the next 20 years for HHMM, and I replied they will be to continue to provide world class healthcare to the poorest of the poor; to continue to uphold and promote the dignity of every human being we meet from conception to natural death and to see a resurgence in cultures and countries where HHMM serves.

I thank all of you, too many to name here, for your sacrifice and love over these past 20 years and challenge you to keep encouraging your, families, friends and colleagues to attend a mission, who knows it may lead to a 20 year mission!

Sincerely in Christ, Lupita Assad, RN



**Foundress and International Missions Coordinator**





# Mission Highlights

## Grateful Missionaries

### Reflections for HHMM Missionaries Throughout the past 20 years

Interested in serving God by serving others, I signed up for the Helping Hands Medical Mission Guatemala trip in 2005 and volunteered my services as a dentist. The conditions were far from ideal and from what I was accustomed to, but I was impressed to find HHMM organized, dedicated, respectful to the locals and committed to achieve as much good as possible.

In addition to Guatemala, I also participated in El Salvador, Mexico, Ghana, and the Philippines totaling 17 missions thus far. The patient load sometimes makes for long and challenging days, but as always, the people's gratefulness were reward enough. Since 2011 I have had the privilege of being the mission director for the HHMM Philippines. The group continues to grow and improve every year as we persistently strive to better anticipate and address the needs of both patients and volunteers.

It has been over ten years since I first signed up with HHMM and my experiences have been more rewarding than I imagined. The feeling of fulfillment that stems from being able to help the needy is unmatched. I am grateful to HHMM for providing me, and countless others, the opportunity to serve God and help make our world a better place.

Eddie Jimenez, DDS

Home: Strongsville, OH

Years serving with HHMM: 12





## Reflections on 17 years of Medical Mission Experiences

I signed up for my first Helping Hands Medical Mission in 1998 after hearing Lupita Assad speak at the Youth and Family Encounter in Indianapolis. Not only did I sign up, I signed up my wife (a nurse) and our teenage daughter as well.

I have attended 17 medical missions with Helping Hands: 2 to Mexico and 15 to El Salvador. The experiences began as an opportunity for our family to share time together as we provided care to the people of the third world and grew in our Catholic faith. I can confidently say that with every mission experience, our family returned home with a renewed appreciation of the gifts and blessings that God had given us. Our lives were touched by those who we served, people who may have been poor in the eyes of the world but rich in the eyes of God. Our daughter would go on to become a Diplomate in the US Foreign Service, and I believe that the medical mission experiences had a profound effect on her choosing this career.

Every mission team is unique, and the Holy Spirit seems to know what we will need each year. However, no matter how well you plan, there will always be challenges and surprises that test a team's faith, will, and creativity: floods, earthquakes, lost supplies, patients coming to you on the verge of death, personal stories of unbelievable pain and suffering. And yet, He always seemed to give us answers to those prayers when we could not find the way.

The memories that stand out to me as most special are the faith filled, gracious people of El Salvador; the incredible team of El Salvador Regnum Christi members that support us (I call them my family in El Salvador), the great priests that have led our teams over the years, and finally, the experience of seeing team members grow in faith and friendship over the course of the mission experience.

I will end with one of my favorite sayings from the people of El Salvador: Todo esta en las manos de Dios!

Peter Danis, M.D.

Home: St. Louis, MO

Years serving with HHMM: 17





## By the numbers

### Annual mission stats

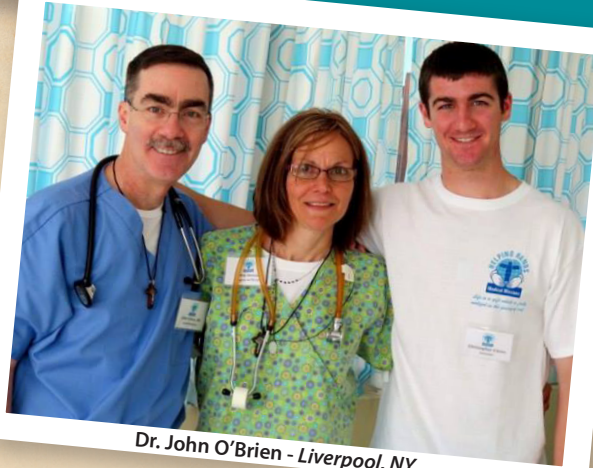
9 missions

234 missionaries

15,279 patients

1,340 dental patients

182 surgeries



Dr. John O'Brien - Liverpool, NY

### 20 year mission stats

138 missions

3,844 missionaries

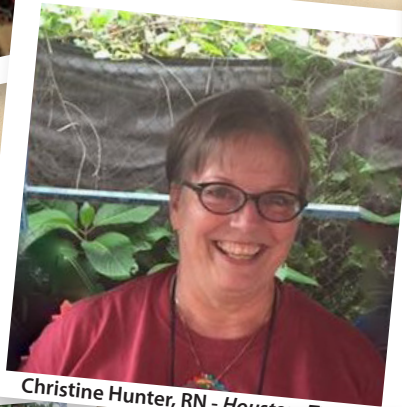
218,650 patients

17,223 dental patients

3,534 surgeries



Dr. Stephen Donahue - Midlothian, TX



Christine Hunter, RN - Houston, TX



Dr. Erik Meidl - New London, MO



Dr. Sonia Soriano - Laredo, TX



Dr. Matthew Harrison - Mount Pleasant, NC



**HELPING HANDS** Medical Missions (**HHMM**) was formally established in 1996 after 3 years of developing a program for a Catholic medical mission. The idea originated in Dallas in 1991 when a priest recognized the need for Catholic medical professionals to provide health care services for the poor in rural areas of developing countries. In Holy Week of 1996 a pilot group of medical missionaries from various areas of the U.S. joined the youth missions in Michoacán, Mexico. The mission was a success with a small group (7) of medical personnel. In the fall of 1996, the first mission under the name of **HELPING HANDS** Medical Missions took place in Cotija, Mexico, with 30 participants: doctors, nurses and volunteers serving more than 500 patients and providing 91 surgeries in 5 days.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Since 1996, **HHMM** has hosted medical missions in Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, Brazil, Philippines, Ghana (West Africa), Venezuela and Dominican Republic and has served more than 218,600 patients. Each mission is 9-12 days long. 9-10 missions are scheduled yearly. Each mission group is comprised of approximately 15-60 participants, who volunteer their time, service, and medical supplies. Included in this group is the mission chaplain, who accompany the team as spiritual support. The mission site varies depending on the needs of certain communities and requests for help by local authorities and local clergy. The sites are visited yearly.

**HELPING HANDS** medical missionaries are doctors, nurses, and volunteers who come from all areas of the United States and Canada to join the host team. Participants pay their own round trip airfare, mission fee (food, housing, ground transport, and overhead) and bring supplies and medicines. Missionaries work in small clinics, hospitals, schools and churches located in rural towns where they provide free medical care for thousands of patients in need of medical attention. Services include surgeries, dental work, eye care, consultations, distribution of medications and reading glasses, follow-up of surgical patients, house calls and Natural Family Planning instruction. The participants also take part in the mission's spiritual program. This aspect of the mission includes daily prayer, mass, meditation, discussions on the teachings of the Catholic Church, and sharing the faith with the people of the town through home visits. Equipment, supplies and medications are collected year-round from various companies, hospitals and individuals in the U.S. **HHMM** is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. All donations are tax deductible as permitted by law. Your participation could be time spent on a mission, spreading the word among your medical community, prayer or a monetary donation.

## MISSION STATEMENT

Helping Hands Medical Missions is a non-profit organization providing humanitarian aid in rural areas of developing countries, offering its volunteers a transforming experience, the opportunity to share their faith while selflessly serving the needs of others.



# HELPING HANDS Medical Missions

## Mission Schedule 2017

LOCATION	DATE
Philippines: Tanauan-Batangas	February 16-25, 2017
El Salvador: Ateos	March 17-25, 2017
México, Chiapas: San Cristóbal	May 26 - June 3, 2017
Africa, Ghana: Butre	June 16-25, 2017
Costa Rica: San José	June 30 - July 8, 2017
El Salvador:	
•San Salvador	October 20-28, 2017
•Santiago Texacuangos	October 27 - November 4, 2017
Guatemala: Santa María de Jesús	November 10-18, 2017
México, Chiapas: Copainalá	November 10-18, 2017

## Contact Information

If would you like additional information on dates and locations please contact:  
 Gloria Madrigal, **National Secretary 972-253-1800**  
 or visit us at **[www.hhmm.org](http://www.hhmm.org)**



**HELPING HANDS Medical Missions**

P.O. Box 171088, Irving, TX 75017  
 972-253-1800