

Thanksgiving Appeal

CONCERN  AMERICA
Transforming need into self-sufficiency since 1972

Warm greetings,

During this season, we reflect on the many things we are thankful for, especially you, our global Concern America community. We are reminded each day of the compassion in humanity, the good shining through, and the willingness to help a stranger, all reflected in our supporters and the community members with whom Concern works.

Throughout the year, your incredible generosity allowed us to succeed and overcome challenges, enabling us to fully fund and even expand our community-led programs. Health promoter practitioners provided life-saving care to patients, clean water was brought into homes and schools, and education and income opportunities strengthened communities. On page two, you will read a recent story of a patient in Guatemala as just one example of the transformative work taking place in regions where no other care exists.

The effects of this work go much further, sparking new leadership, building trust, and strengthening communities to meet the needs that arise. This year, through your support, communities purchased oxygen tanks and concentrators to address cases of COVID in people's homes, and they organized to provide emergency food and medicines to families displaced by violence and extreme weather events.

We are also grateful for the many ways we celebrated together this year, from the Walk Out of Poverty to the Annual Auction, and we are looking forward to the year to come, as Concern America will turn 50! We are excitedly planning a year's worth of celebrations, including an outdoor anniversary event on June 18, 2022 here in Orange County. Be sure to mark your calendars so that we can gather together to look back over these past 50 years and dream together for the next 50 to come!

As we begin planning the multiple health courses, water filter workshops, and leadership training for the coming year, we ask you to consider a year-end gift. Though there are still limited vaccinations in the regions where we work, we are hopeful that, among other activities, we can initiate new health promoter practitioner training cohorts in Mexico, Guatemala, and Colombia, as well as make possible more than 1,000 clean water filters for families.

Your donation ensures the continued health, education, and economic opportunities for more than 255,000 people served by health promoter practitioners, water system builders, teachers, and cooperative business members from their own communities.

With gratitude and peace,



John Straw
Executive Director



The room sounded like a beautiful orchestra

The following story comes from the most recent report from Concern America field team member Julia Kim, RN, who has lived and worked with the Guatemala program since 2013. We are continually amazed and humbled by the level of skill of the health promoter practitioners and the incredible care they provide on a daily basis in challenging situations. Note that this story details a skin graft procedure that might be uncomfortable for some to read.

Even before the pandemic, we treated many challenging cases that resulted from inadequate care in the hospitals. The inadequate care left patients in worse conditions than before seeking treatment and cost them a lot of financial burdens. It ranged from wrong diagnosis, treatment, premature discharge, surgery mistakes, post-op complications, and malpractice. During the last two years, we are seeing more patients due to the hospitals being overwhelmed and short staffed due to COVID.

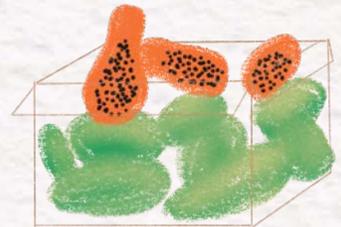
In June, we saw a young guy who lives three hours away from the hospital who needed a skin graft after a motorcycle accident. He fell off a motorcycle and scraped the skin off his right upper thigh (12 cm x 18 cm). When he went to the hospital, they scraped more skin off to make a granulated bed. Then they told him the complete skin graft operation would cost him Q70,000 (approx. \$9,250). He came to our clinic, referred by his uncle, who has been in our care for his hypertension for many years.

The team got right to work like a colony of ants. They used the pinch skin graft method. It's a simple procedure that doesn't require any special instruments but a needle to lift the skin (~ 5 mm, size of the rubber eraser on pencils), blade to cut the skin, forceps to place the skin to the granulated tissue skin bed gently, lots of gauzes, Vaseline, and elastic bandage with weights (to prevent tissue overgrowth). It does require a lot of teamwork and care.

The team immediately got together and designated roles. Manuel, who has done this procedure on three other patients before, took the role of "pinching" the healthy skin from his left upper thigh. Macaria was in charge of taking the pinched skin and carefully placing it on the granulated skin bed. Werner cleaned the blood from the area Manuel was working on. Silvestre passed the sterile equipment. Leonilda was the floater, opening gauzes, adjusting lights, and answering the promoter's phone for other consults. The room "sounded" like a beautiful orchestra.



The first 72 hours are vital for the graft to attach. Hence, immobilization of the affected leg and maintaining constant moisture are essential. The team thought it was best for the patient and his father to stay for five days following the procedure, and the patient and his father went to the already prepared room in the casa. They were in direct and continuous care for one week. Then every three days, every week, every two weeks, then after three months since the procedure the skin is now covered with the graft. The cost of the procedure for the patient was Q87 (approx. \$12). As a show of gratitude, the patient and his uncle sent us a big box of delicious papayas.



Our Upcoming Events

April 9, 2022

25th Annual Walk Out of Poverty

June 18, 2022

50th Anniversary Celebration

October 22, 2022

15th Annual Grow a Global Heart Auction

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