



Beyond Our Comfort Zone: Healing Others, Healing Ourselves

International Medical Missions (IMM)



Drs. Ibrahim Daoud (right) and Clayton Frenzel, Dominican Republic.



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- Kathy Aries, RN



The core values of service and leadership are exemplified by the Saint Francis medical missions. Saint Francis sponsors teams that travel to Ecuador, Bolivia and the Dominican Republic to provide much-needed medical treatment. The mission trips are organized by Saint Francis staff and have been led by Dr. Ibrahim Daoud for the past 10 years. Dr. Michael Bourque recently began to lead a second team which returned from the Dominican Republic where a group of 50 missionaries,

including surgeons, pediatricians, nurses, and a dentist, treated over 400 patients. “The need is just so overwhelming, it just kind of boggles your mind when you see how many people are waiting in line for help,” noted Dr. Bourque. Staff volunteers pay for their own transportation and donate their time, resources and skills to help those in need. They go for many reasons but one thing is certain – those who receive their services benefit greatly from the effort.

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International Medical Missions



The medical mission team brings thousands of pounds of medical equipment and collaborates with Medical Ministry International, who supplies operating room beds and anesthesia machines. Services include surgery, child birth, treatment of infections, preventive care and whenever possible, dentistry. The mission experience involves personnel from several departments: clinical, store room, engineering and administration – all assisting in the organization and preparation necessary to extend the reach of Saint Francis' mission.

Kathy Aries, RN, a Labor and Delivery nurse at Saint Francis, has become passionate about medical missions. She explained her commitment by saying, "As we grow older, we have to find something to become passionate about. It just keeps us involved in life, and it keeps us connected to humanity. I have found mine. I hope to continue until I can't any more." Mrs. Aries is inspired by the people she meets. She told the story of a woman who had a fibroid tumor that weighed over 15 pounds. After the surgery she went home with just Motrin, despite a surgical incision that spanned her entire abdomen. The next day she was out on the street selling plantains. Mrs. Aries went on, "It amazes me how strong and happy they are with the little they have in life. And how grateful they are for what we can offer."

The work is definitely challenging. "It's difficult," Dr. Bourque acknowledged, "it's the hardest thing I've ever done, because you are responsible for so many things,

the logistics, the people on the trip and the patients you serve. All this in conditions that are hard to imagine." The satisfaction that staff get by helping those in need is deeply fulfilling. "Nothing external will satisfy you as what you experience internally in your mind. Finding some way to give of yourself to others makes you a much happier person" noted Kathy Aries.

The Medical Missions Program at Saint Francis is guided by the statement, "See the World, Make a Difference, Change Your Life." "It's been incredible," Dr. Bourque shared. "It's made me happier, a better person, a better father, a better obstetrician. Just about in every way it has brought me inner peace to see what we can bring. And now I want to share this with as many people as I can." Dr. Bourque put it best when he said, "If you are more interested in the smile on the other person's face, rather than on your own, life is easy."



Ambulance transfer of post-op patient.

missions

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