



SOLIDARITY BRIDGE

Healing & Empowering in Latin America

PACEMAKER MISSION TRIP 2011

ASUNCION, PARAGUAY

APRIL 8TH – 17TH

INAUGURAL MISSION

This was our first mission trip to Asuncion, a beautiful city that is the largest of Paraguay with about 600,000 people. It sits on the banks of the Paraguay River, a large river that leads to the ocean next to Argentina. This is the route the Conquistadores took in their entry to the eastern part of Bolivia.

A total of about 30% of the 6,000,000 overall population of Paraguay live in Greater Asuncion. This mission marks the beginning of Solidarity Bridge's mission activity in a country other than Bolivia.



Dr. Javier Galeano and his team doing a pacemaker surgery at the public hospital.

All of the operations went well and our program is on its way. Dr. Galeano operated a total of 8 people, with one being an ablation done in a Catherization Lab. I am struck by the professionalism and skill of the Paraguayan medical professionals.

In a different model than that of Bolivia, Solidarity Bridge is working in Paraguay with an inter-institutional partnership made up of Catholic

Charities of Asuncion, a government agency called DIBEN (Beneficence and Social Aid Directorate) and the major teaching public hospital, called Hospital de Clinicas. The persons in the photo to the right include Dr. Galeano in the center, on the functionaries from both Catholic Charities and DIBEN to the left, with myself and two Paraguayan helpers next to me.

We delivered a total of \$483,500 made up of pacemakers, leads, surgical materials and two pacemaker programming machines. Our sister organization in Bolivia donated a great quantity of materials as well.



One of our Patients In Paraguay and a visit with the Archbishop – as told by Juan Lorenzo Hinojosa

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Bernardina Romero with Dr. Javier Galeano

One of the great joys of being on mission is to sit and talk to the patients and hear their stories. They are very grateful to be heard and they appreciate so much the opportunity to share. We always give the patient or their family a cross that has been prayed over for God's blessing. When appropriate, we pray with them. Yesterday, I had the privilege to pray for Archbishop Eustaquio Cuquejo, the bishop of Asuncion. He was in the hospital suffering from Dengue Fever – I gave him one of our

crosses, which he took and kissed and was very appreciative of our visit.

One of the patients that we got to know was Bernardina Romero. Bernardina, a 50 year old wife and mother, lives with her husband and five children in a squatter's village in an insubstantial house. Her husband sells miscellaneous articles on the roads and does subsistence farming. A brother of hers with mental problems also lives with the family. The money that comes into the household barely covers their immediate household living needs. In a mix of Guarani (the native language) and Spanish she related how they live about 70 miles away from the capital, Asuncion, where she has come to receive a pacemaker – a 4 hour journey for her and some of her family that accompanied her. She relates: "I was no longer able to work – totally depleted and without strength. You have been able to return life to me. I now have joy and give deep thanks to those who made it possible."



Juan Lorenzo, Bernardina Romero, and her son