



# SOLIDARITY BRIDGE

Healing & Empowering in Latin America

## REPORT

### Medical Mission Trip Neurosurgery Program

October 7th – 15th, 2011: Santa Cruz and Cochabamba, Bolivia

#### U.S. Participants:

Dr. Richard Moser - Professor of Surgery (Division of Neurosurgery), University of Massachusetts Medical School and Director of the Center for Translational Research in Neurosurgical Oncology

Dr. Roberta Glick – Professor Department of Neurosurgery, Rush Medical College, neurosurgeon at Mount Sinai Hospital.

#### Bolivia Participants:

Dr. Fernando Capobianco – Chief of neurosurgery Hospital San Juan de Dios and Head of the Santa Cruz Society of Neurosurgery.

Dr. Juan Carlos Otazo – neurosurgeon, Hospital San Juan de Dios

Dr. Walter Rueda – neurosurgeon, Hospital San Juan de Dios and Hospital del Niño

Dr. Juan Moreno – neurosurgeon, Hospital San Juan de Dios

Dr. Guider Salas – Head of the Santa Cruz Medical Association, neurosurgeon Hospital San Juan de Dios, Clinica Foianini and Caja Petrolera.

Dr. Edgar Carrasco – neurosurgeon, Hospital San Juan de Dios

Dr. Karin Aponte (resident) – neurosurgeon, Hospital San Juan de Dios

Dr. Ivan Flores – neurosurgeon, Hospital Viedma



We have just returned from our neurosurgery mission trip. How extraordinary the skill and knowledge involved in this type of surgery! How blessed we are to have wonderful surgeons willing to give of themselves!

Clinging to Dr. Moser's hand, one patient said it best: *"You have not only healed my head, but also my heart. May God continue to heal through your hands. Know that I feel especially called to do good because of my new lease on life."*

Our two neurosurgeons, Dr. Richard Moser (head of our Neurosurgery Program) and Dr. Roberta Glick, performed difficult surgeries and, perhaps more importantly, provided both teaching and encouragement to their local colleagues. The Bolivian neurosurgeons, many well trained and skilled, labor under very difficult conditions, lacking some basic instrumentation and equipment.



Dr. Moser and Dr. Glick operated with the local neurosurgeons in both Santa Cruz and Cochabamba, performing 5 very complicated surgeries, each lasting many hours. In Santa Cruz, the goal was to give a course in performing pituitary tumor surgery endoscopically through the nose, the most direct and safest approach to the skull base. The endoscope provides images of the operative field on the monitor which the surgeon looks at while manipulating small, delicate instruments to remove the pituitary gland tumor. Dr. Moser did 3 cases showing how this surgery is done. In addition he gave a two part course describing the surgery and Dr. Glick gave a presentation as part of the course.



In Cochabamba we decided to pilot an epilepsy treatment program in close collaboration with Dr. Ivan Flores. We had already brought to Bolivia two sophisticated EEG machines which will be used in this program. We plan to provide diagnosis, medication and in a few cases, surgery. We will also expand our spinal surgery resource (very expensive back instrumentation and implantables) by moving beyond the public hospitals and working with private facilities.

Our two other cases also involved difficult tumor removals. The patients and their families were extremely grateful, as were the local neurosurgeons who received valuable training by participating in the operations. On our last night, the Bolivian neurosurgeons gave a dinner in honor of Dr. Moser and Dr. Glick and made them honorary members of the Santa Cruz Neurosurgery Society.