Zimmer Biomet: Ana’s Answer to Prayer

In April 2018, Ana Real Lux received her second Zimmer Biomet knee replacement in Antigua. When Ana was 12, her legs began to twist. Some sort of syndrome, it seems. At 32, she could barely walk. From Totonicapán, in the highlands of Guatemala, she came to the Obras hospital, alone. Her family did not believe that the surgery was possible, and if it were, they feared she would not survive it. But that did not stop Ana, and she had her first knee replacement in February. Her second in April. Ana stands about 4’6”, but there is an energy and a joy in her that literally emanates from her small frame.

In April 2018, Zimmer Biomet and Faith In Practice signed a partnership agreement in Antigua. In this first-of-its-kind agreement, Zimmer Biomet, an international leading manufacturer of orthopedic medical devices, committed to donating to Faith In Practice a full inventory of knee implants, replenishable every six months, together with the instrumentation necessary to perform these surgeries.

The Agreement was signed in the operating room suite breakroom near where Ana was recovering from her surgery, mere feet from the operating rooms where Faith In Practice surgeons were performing knee implant surgeries for patients just like Ana.

While Zimmer Biomet has always been generous in its efforts to provide care to those with no access to care in the developing world, this agreement marks a significant change. Standard practice has been for individuals to make specific requests for specific patients, bringing to Guatemala only those implants for the scheduled surgeries for that week. In contrast, a full inventory will be available to all of our implant surgeons, providing them with a greater choice in determining what is best for each patient. A full inventory will significantly reduce the incidence of an implant not being available for any patient, and a full inventory will streamline the process, reduce downtime, and maximize the number of patients who will receive care. It will also encourage more surgeons to serve, allowing us to leverage and expand our orthopedic care to those in Guatemala who otherwise would have no access.

At the partnership agreement signing, Zimmer Biomet’s Adam Griner spoke of Faith In Practice’s commitment to continuity of care and follow-up as a defining factor in Zimmer Biomet’s decision to partner with Faith In Practice. He also spoke of how Faith In Practice’s program will assist Zimmer Biomet to leverage its impact and achieve its goal of serving those in need throughout the world. Having worked with Adam and his team for months, it was clear on the day of the signing that this was not an agreement between corporations, but rather between those whose respect for each other and whose commitment to a common purpose transcended words on a page. A commitment and a common purpose to serve patients like Ana, side by side.

After the signing, we visited Ana. She shared with us why she fought so hard to find help. She said there were many people in Guatemala who were sick and poor. If she could walk, she said, she could better help them. Ana is poor.

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The Spirit blows where it chooses. We hear it, but do not know from where it comes. The Spirit, surprising. True. We hear it in Ana’s song. In the scratch of a pen. In someone in a warehouse saying, “What if we send one of our experts to consult with you?” We hear it when Dominga says, “I was no longer alone. I am not alone.”

She stood leaning on her walker, but then said she could walk on her own. She proceeded to walk unaided to her hospital room, with confidence. As we watched her, we knew that we had been in the presence of one who labors under an easy yoke, whose burden is light. We knew that she, with her contagious joy and strength, would fulfill her promise. We knew she would spend the rest of her life serving others. And we knew ourselves blessed.

Very poor. And, yet her motivation is to serve those less fortunate than she. And Ana sings. When asked about her favorite song, she tilted her head, and with shining eyes she began to sing quietly. Then her voice began to soar. “My only motive to live is you, my Lord. My only truth is in you. You are my light and my salvation. There is no one like you.”

We can plan, strategize, analyze. We can map organizational targets. And we should, and do. But, the work is truly not of our hands. It simply is not. The right people come at the right time.

In the right way. They too, listening, following, the movement of the Spirit. We listen to them speak of how the Spirit moved in them, how it lead them to us. And, together, we sit in wonder for the sheer miracle of it.

Throughout these pages, I believe you will hear it, too. The ways in which the Spirit is bringing us together, moving us, weaving us into something greater than ourselves. That is how we feel about Ana, Zimmer Biomet, Providence St. Joseph, and Dominga. That is how we feel about you. Gifts from God, called to serve our brothers and sisters together in ways we never could have imagined for ourselves or accomplished on our own.

I hope as you read these pages that you will sense it. The wonder of it. The Spirit blowing through this mission, and through you. Then, now, always.

With gratitude and in wonder,

Rev. Linda L. McCarty
President and CEO
Three large warehouses, supplies stacked to the ceiling. Trunks filled with medicines shrink-wrapped, ready to head to the villages, columns of wheelchairs. Representing care to thousands. Representing hundreds of U.S. medical professionals who will use the supplies and medicines to bring healing. Representing a major shift in Faith In Practice operations.

With growth and deepening sophistication, we have continued to provide more and more support to our expanding teams. This year, we will add the inventory of Zimmer Biomet implants and instrumentation. In 2018 alone, our Guatemalan staff will receive and process 10 full containers.

With this progression comes the need for improved infrastructure upon which to build greater efficiencies and further increase effectiveness. Our commitment remains to get the right product to the right volunteer, at exactly the time when he or she needs it. Moving product to minimize waste, streamlining process, increasing technology, tightening security. The vision is grand, the opportunity great. But we know we cannot do it alone. Nor need we.

For the past six years, Providence St. Joseph Health, a large health system that crosses seven states, has been a steadfast partner. In furtherance of its mission statement, “As expressions of God’s healing love, witnessed through the ministry of Jesus, we are steadfast in serving all, especially those who are poor and vulnerable,” Providence St. Joseph has consistently responded to our challenges and opportunities with time, treasure, and talent.

In January, Hector Boirie, Senior VP/Chief Resource Officer, John Knutsen, VP/Chief Services Officer, and Laura Rodriguez, Manager for Partner Relations of Medical Supply Recovery, visited our operations in Guatemala. These energized, compassionate individuals are excited to help us take our operations to the next level.

Providence St. Joseph has offered its considerable expertise to help us further our sophistication in warehouse management and supply chain. In July, their experts will travel to Guatemala to consult with us as we embark upon this next chapter. We are so very grateful to Providence St. Joseph for this opportunity.

“Faith In Practice Is My Family”

“I was single from 1996 until 2008,” she said. I knew Dominga’s story. Her father’s refusal to allow her to go to school. Her loving husband, and his support as she went to primary school as an adult. His death. Her struggle. But I thought she had not remarried, so I asked her for details. “You know my husband was murdered in 1996, right?” she responded. “Yes, but what happened in 2008?” I asked. I was unprepared for her answer.

“I found Faith In Practice in 2008. I have not been single since then. Faith In Practice is my family.”

For 10 years, Dominga Garcia has been accompanying patients from El Petén, one of the most remote and poorest parts of Guatemala, to receive their surgeries. Many of her patients live in areas where there are no roads or transportation. They must walk or ride a horse to get to the road to then begin their journey, oftentimes more than 20 hours from leaving their homes to arrive to the Obras or Hilario Galindo hospitals. Dominga, who lives in very difficult circumstances herself, is by their side encouraging them throughout. When at the hospitals, she is their guide and support. She is their family, even as she considers Faith In Practice hers.

One of the greatest joys of this mission is knowing our Guatemalan volunteers. Knowing Dominga. Her commitment, her sacrifice, her joy. Knowing her truly as a sister. As family.

Dominga is one of 1,000 Guatemalan volunteers who join 1,200 U.S. volunteers in caring for 25,000 patients annually.
Celebrating this year’s honorees
Dr. Gene and Mrs. Kathy Huebner
Mr. Ken and Mrs. Donna Wine

Special thanks to Gala Co-chairs
Dr. Robert and Mrs. Elizabeth Morrow
Mrs. Mary Favre

“The source of humility is the habit of realizing the presence of God.”
- William Temple

Register at www.faithinpractice.org/gala

A Network of Care

Faith In Practice Village Medical Teams bring general medical care to remote areas of Guatemala, where they also identify surgical candidates.

Village Teams also offer specialized care, including wheelchair clinics, cervical cancer screening, pediatric treatment, and dental care.

Guatemalan volunteers identify patients for Village Teams, invite suitable candidates to clinics, and accompany patients to and from scheduled surgeries.

Surgery Teams operate in one of our two partner hospitals, in which we have invested funds to ensure a safe environment for teams and patients.

Our health-related educational programs include training for local comadronas (midwives) to prevent common childbirth and pregnancy complications.

Our programs provide integrated care in the context of short-term medical mission. Your support allows us to send more than 40 medical and surgical teams annually, providing comprehensive care to patients from every region of Guatemala.