Loaves and Fishes on a Bus

First, she was in general medicine, then, the wheelchair clinic. Next, the triage area. Sandra buzzed about, tracking her 25 patients who had been efficiently dispersed across various areas of the bustling clinic in Totonicapán. Sandra had convinced her town of Patzicia to provide a bus, so that she could bring patients the two hours across winding, mountainous roads to Toto. And now she was crisscrossing the clinics checking on them.

Sandra stopped long enough to share her story, her face beaming. Born with a degenerative hip defect, she was told that she should quit school, get a job, and start saving money. By the time she was in her thirties, they said, she would need a wheelchair. It would take her years to raise enough money to buy one, so she should start saving now. A hip replacement was inconceivable for this young girl living in the mountains. Over the years, Sandra watched her body betray her, little by little.

Two years ago, Sandra, then 32, was translating for her mother, who only speaks Kaqchikel, at a Faith In Practice traditional birth attendant course being taught near her village. There she learned that she might receive a new hip. A new life. Sandra received an appointment to Las Obras Hospital and one year

Stories of Guatemala

Our 2016-2017 teams touched countless lives and had their lives changed in the process. Visit our blogs to read stories about our volunteers and patients and see photos of our teams in action.

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Gala - "If We Love..."

Join us October 26 at the Westin Galleria as we honor Dr. Fielding & Mrs. Flossie Fromberg and Dr. Sean & Mrs. Rachel Boutros.

Chaired by Mr. Curt & Mrs. Sharon Webb and Dr. J.R. & Mrs. Jennifer Cali, the event will celebrate the
later, Dr. Brian Parsley replaced Sandra’s hip.

Sandra asked me to give Dr. Parsley her gratitude and she asked me to tell him that soon she would be marrying. But, this story is not about Sandra’s gratitude to Faith In Practice or to her surgical team. Nor is it about how she can walk or how she can live a normal life, marry, have children, as wonderful as that is. This story is about loaves and fishes.

At the end of the clinic day, Sandra rushed up to tell me that seven of the patients she had brought to the clinic for wheelchairs received a medical check, were fitted, and now had wheelchairs. In fact, they were loading the chairs on the top of the bus right now. She told me that the 16 others would be receiving a surgery and she would be accompanying them to Antigua when the time came. She showed me her notebook. Patient names, dates for surgery, line by line. As the bus pulled away, everyone was enthusiastically waving goodbye. As I watched their smiling faces framed in the bus windows, I wondered how many more “Sandras” there were on that bus. Which of them would live out their gratitude by serving others, as Sandra had done.

And I thought, loaves and fishes. Loaves and fishes on the bus. And, I remembered how our patients never say, “thank you for helping me.” They always, always say, “thank you for helping us.” Then they show us what gratitude looks like.
For the many ways those we serve show us what true mission is all about, we give God thanks.

For the many ways that God continues to multiply loaves and fishes in this mission through us, through them, we give God thanks.

Rev. Linda L. McCarty
President & CEO

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