

I CARE SAN ANTONIO

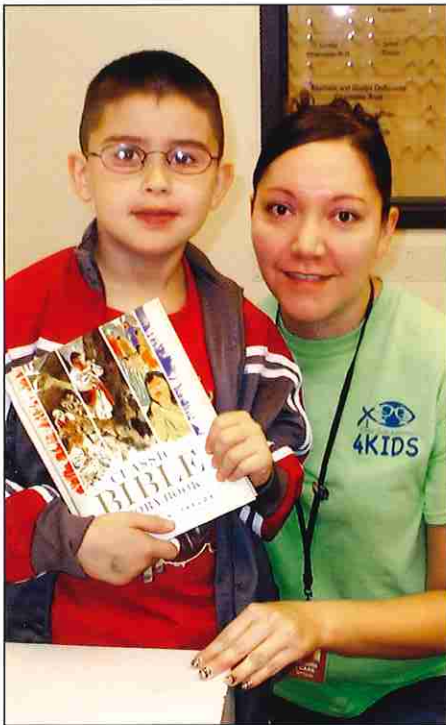
I Care Vision Center
at Haven for Hope

www.icare-sa.org



I CARE SAN ANTONIO 4KIDS

Saturday, October 20 was I Care San Antonio's first annual iCare4Kids event. Local children were referred by their school nurse and thanks to over 30 volunteers, 63 children received free eye exams and glasses. Over \$16,000 worth of care was donated, but the many smiles were priceless.



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Volunteer *Spotlight*

An interview with Brenda Nakoski, COT

Q. Brenda, tell me about yourself and how you became involved in I Care San Antonio.

A. I am originally from Pennsylvania, right on Lake Erie. I love the water. I have 2 sons, grown and out on their own. I live with my husband and 2 dogs. I like to work in my flower gardens. My passion is photography...anything colorful (hot air balloons, flowers, butterflies, fireworks).

I first volunteered at Port San Antonio (former Kelly AFB) when the Katrina evacuees were here in San Antonio. Dr. Rice and his team were a part of that, although I did not know any of them at that time. We went out Saturday and Sunday for a few weekends, did general eye exams, refractions. Most of those people had never had an eye exam. It was great to be able to help the evacuees in a small way.

One of the doctors I work with, Dr. Lane, was talking about going to the I Care Vision Center, and I said that sounds like fun, so he asked me to come with him. I have been returning every first Saturday of the month since then. When I told my mother about what I was doing at the I Care Vision Center she asked me if there was something she could do. So, my mom and I go together; she volunteers at the intake desk, I volunteer as a technician and then we usually go out to lunch together. Quality mom and daughter time.

Q. What has been the most rewarding experience at the I Care Vision Center?

A. When you work in a retinal practice, you see the patients more often than in general ophthalmology. Some people you see every month. You get to know them, and they get to know you. It is the greatest feeling when a returning patient comes up and gives you a big hug on a return visit and says, "I am glad you are here. It is good to see you again!". So often the patients will thank you for



being there. They tell you they are blessed because you are volunteering. Something as simple as doing what I do all week long, on one Saturday morning a month, makes such a difference in their life that they feel blessed. That makes me humble. That touches my heart. That keeps me coming back every month!

Q. What would you like to share with others about volunteering at I Care?

A. Every person who volunteers at I Care is there because they want to be there. Even though we are doing what we do at our paying jobs, it is not like being at work. We are a family. We talk about our home lives, our hopes, our dreams. We support each other in hard times, and have joy for each other in good times. The volunteers at I Care are a very special group. I am honored to be one of them.

A Tale of *Two Cities*

ICSA Mission Trip to Bolivia and Peru

Five members of the I Care team arrived in Sucre, Bolivia, 9,500 feet, in late February for a two week eye mission after a long 24 hour travel day. We joined the Medical Ministries International (MMI) team of 69 people, mostly Canadians who come every year, many of whom we've known a long time: just wonderful people with hearts full of love and such fun. We were blessed with beautiful weather with temps in the 60-70s. Our home/ hotel formerly was a monastery dating back to the XVII century. It had been lovingly restored by an architect/owner with many original furnishings - about 1.5 blocks off the main plaza in Sucre's historical district. The city reminded us of a Spanish colonial San Francisco because it's spread over hills - mountains all around - buildings mostly of red bricks. Lots of eucalyptus trees. We took over part of a big sports complex for the clinic - the computer glasses room had a large window overlooking a busy street scene... always entertaining with traffic gridlock, food stands, hundreds of folks waiting in line to be seen - never a dull moment. Local pastors visit with patients as they wait and during post-op instructions so our patients hear about the real reason we are here, to show the love of Jesus and share His good news. Our final statistics were: 4,707 patients seen, 3,402 glasses dispensed, and 265 surgeries performed.

Many wonderful stories... keep in mind that these people are very poor. A 19-yr-old boy (Richard) came to the clinic early in the trip with rapidly declining sight. It was determined that both retinas were detaching and that he would probably be blind within days if he didn't have surgery. Our medical director knew a retina specialist in Santa Cruz, Bolivia who could do the surgery for free but \$3000 was still needed to cover Richard's flight and



Photo by Mari Saenz, Volunteer ICSA Technician

other expenses. Within minutes, members of our team had donated the money to cover the expenses and Richard was flown to Santa Cruz for the surgery the next day. He stayed with an uncle in that city. Happy ending, Richard had successful surgery and met us at the airport when we left, happily hugging everyone with his restored vision! Richard's story would be heartwarming but the real story is that he had been raised in the church but had fallen away; God was not relevant in his life. But our demonstration of love in Jesus' name convinced him that God had sent our team just for him and he surrendered His life to Christ while talking to our local project director over the phone. We were overjoyed. We do not see many "commitments" to Christ during

our short trips but fully know that He uses our testimony of service to bring people to Him.

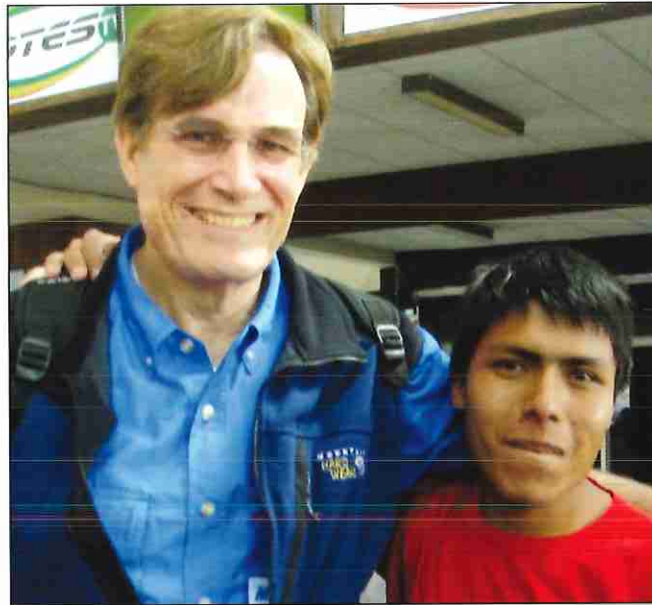
In late July, another four person I Care team traveled with MMI to Ayacucho, Peru. At 9,000 feet in the Andes, Ayacucho is a lovely Spanish colonial town. In cool mornings and warm afternoons, we had beautiful clear weather to walk through the center of town to and from the clinic. We stayed in a quaint hotel run by a faithful Christian family who suffered terribly for their faith during the terrorist reign of the Shining Path in the 80s. What a wonderful experience to serve the Lord and help the Peruvian and Quechuan people, descendants of the Incas, recover their sight. Our team of 48 saw 3,001 people, dispensed 2,492 pairs of glasses, and performed 117 surgeries (cataract and pterigium). What a tremendous blessing to all.

Each morning began with a lively worship service with team members and our patients. The good news of Jesus was shared as they began their trip through the clinic.

Many lives were transformed with that awesome story.

There were many individual stories of changed lives during our trip. One young boy was told he had retinitis pigmentosa, or night blindness, that would eventually rob him of his sight. He had family members with the same disease but the confirming news was devastating. Our local pastor, Astrubal, spent an hour with him and his family sharing the light of the good news of Jesus. Although he would eventually lose his physical sight, he received eternal life from Jesus that day, spiritual sight that would last an eternity.

As the glow of the trips fade, the clothes are washed and the equipment put away, we are left with enduring



Dr. Rice and Richard

participate in these missions. Just have a desire to be used by God. Please join us. You will be blessed!

memories of God's powerful work among peoples of different cultures and languages. There are many challenges and discomforts on an overseas mission (cold showers, missing luggage/supplies/equipment for 6 days, among others), but to see changed lives in our patients and team members stirs within you a strong desire to return. We will travel again with MMI to Sucre, Bolivia, from 23 Feb to 9 March for an eye mission. You do not have to be medically trained to

Betsey and Bob Rice MD

Make holidays happy *all year long!*

As we come to the end of another successful year, we want to thank those who have contributed to our success and ask if you will help us once again. The holiday season is the perfect time to show those around you how much you care. For those who are hard to buy for, consider making a donation to I Care San Antonio in honor of them or in memory of someone special as a gift this season. In return, your donation will be recognized and a Christmas card will be sent mentioning your thoughtfulness.

Making a donation is simple; fill out the form below and send it to our office along with the name of the person to be honored and their address. We'll take care of the rest - Christmas shopping has never been easier!

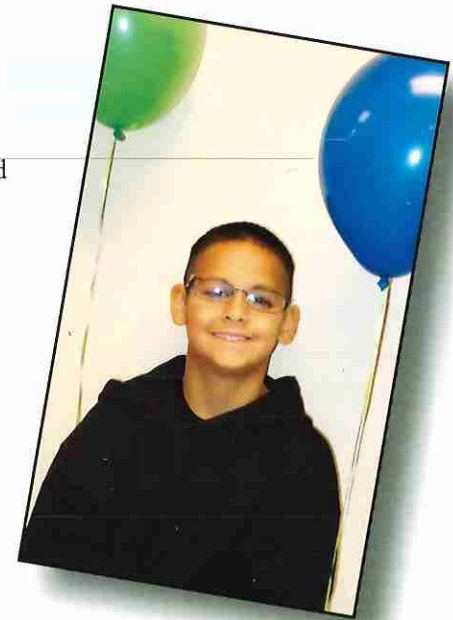
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

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A Patient's Story

Pete Diaz

Hello, my name is Pete, and I am a student of the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! I study the Word, evangelize under bridges, alleys, homeless camps – anywhere I can go to find the lost and lead them to Christ. I once was an alcoholic, drug addict and gang member for 30 years of my life, but Jesus Christ set me free. Now all I desire to do is reach out to others. My work is at times very physical and demanding.

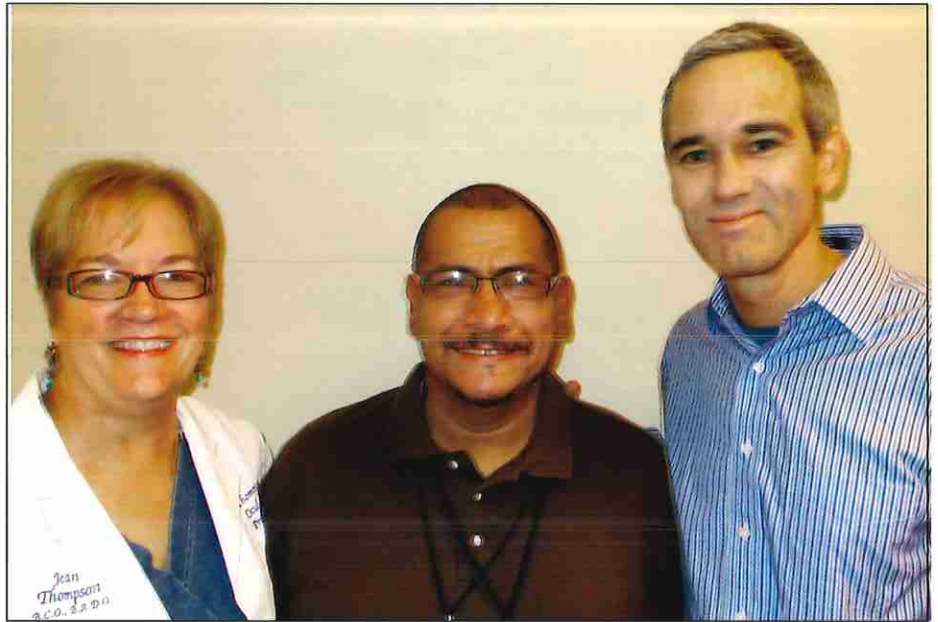
Prior to coming to I Care San Antonio, my work wasn't just physical and demanding, it was also very painful due to the pain I suffered because of the condition of my blind eye. My eye became blind years ago due to the different fights I was involved in. It was so painful that I could not focus on what God has called me to do.

I met with the staff and volunteer doctors at I Care San Antonio and they decided the only way to alleviate the pain was to remove the eye. On June 13, 2012, my eye was removed.

Once I was done with the surgery, I had an artificial eye made and now no one knows that my eye is not real! I went from a life of daily pain to a life free of pain! I can now do what God has called me to do without any pain whatsoever.

First, I give all the praise, honor and glory to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and thanks to I Care San Antonio. I want to extend a special thanks to Dr. Debacker for performing my surgery and for implanting my prosthetic. Also to Jean Thompson for my prosthetic; no one can tell my eye isn't real! To Rhonda Ullom, for her eagerness to help and her continued support through all for my eye care needs, and to the entire staff at I Care San Antonio because they DO CARE!

*Respectfully in Christ,
Pete Diaz*



Jean Thompson, Pete Diaz, Dr. Christopher Debacker

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Features include:

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from the

President's Desk

What Does It Mean to be a Faith-Based Organization?

My earliest childhood memories are of my brothers and I sitting around my mother at night while she read a beautifully illustrated children's Bible to us before bedtime. I remember vividly the fierce lions that were lying around Daniel when he was thrown into their den and the picture of blind Samson in chains pulling giant pillars down around his captors. Throughout my adult life I often take for granted that most people know these Bible stories. The truth is

just the opposite—many people have never heard these wonderful faith-building stories about God and His redeeming power.

I Care San Antonio (ICSA) was founded as a "Faith-Based Organization" and we include this statement in our mission, annual reports and newsletters. According to Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, the term 'Faith-Based' is used to describe any organization or government idea or plan based on religious beliefs, specifically Christian beliefs. Such faith-based organizations typically deliver a variety of services to the public, such as caring for the infirmed and the poor (paraphrased).

After reading this description I realize it doesn't come close to what we mean. Our volunteers and staff are doing more than just giving back to the community. We are living out the charge that James gives us in the New Testament where he says "What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? ...As a body without the spirit is dead so faith without deeds is dead." Our volunteers are deeply committed Christians who back up their faith with their time, energy and resources by being servants to the poor and homeless. We currently have 24 physician teams treating patients every month. I say teams because most physicians bring in their own



Doug Radcliffe volunteering at the iCare4kids

staff to assist them. In order to spend time in our clinic, it usually means they have to close their own practice (which is lost revenue to them).

We are deeply committed to serving the working poor and homeless. Our clinic is equipped with state of the art equipment. It's not only a cheerful and attractive environment to be treated in; it is also a great place to work. We pray for the patients and treat everyone with respect and dignity. All the patients are offered a New Believers Bible in English

or Spanish. We also have copies of the New Believers Recovery Bible for those who are on the road to recovery. Perhaps the most popular item on the Haven 4 Hope campus is our little flashlight/key ring with the inscription "Jesus the Light of the World". Many of the members like to read after lights out on campus. The Board of Directors prays at each of their meetings thanking God for the opportunity to serve and asking for God's guidance and direction. We take the words 'Faith-Based' very seriously.

We recently had our first annual full day iCare4Kids clinic where we treated 63 children with vision problems. Over 30 volunteers served throughout the day. I worked in the optical shop; it was a real joy talking to the kids and the parents while helping them pick out their new glasses. The best part for me was, after they got measured for their glasses, giving each child a new illustrated children's Bible to take home with them. Children are often the most effective evangelists and God works through them just as He does with the rest of us. Our hope at ICSA is that through our deeds and not just through our words we are pointing others to Christ, our great Redeemer and Physician.

*God Bless
Doug Radcliffe, President*



I
CARE SAN ANTONIO

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for you to consider
this year and next.

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Libby Bentley

I Care San Antonio

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San Antonio, Texas 78207

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