



A different kind of aid organization

Summer 2020 • Volume 29 • Issue 2

CAMO is a non-profit, faith-based organization. Bringing Hope to the Forgotten



Founders Opinion

People are asking my opinion on the pandemic.

Founder and International Director Kathryn Tschiegg

Globally, we are facing the worst health crisis in 100 years, and it's clear that getting this virus under control will require hard choices and unwavering commitment from all of us. But I know that with strong leadership and accurate information, we can meet this great challenge in a peaceful but decisive way.

One stumbling block has been a lack of accurate information: the information we receive is often filtered or even censored. Remember the people and institutions who insisted to Columbus that the world was flat? The world would still be flat in many people's eyes if we had listened to those who controlled information at that time.

Discernment, not political preference, should be the test applied to information on the pandemic: we need to check and double-check sources to ensure accuracy before passing information on to others.

It is my responsibility to guide and guard CAMO's mission. Wobbling never works in leadership; for that matter, wobbling does not work in our personal lives either. So my advice is this: commit to a worthy purpose, make a plan, and keep your promises—no matter how hard the current situation might become. Never give in to bitterness or

⁶⁶ Remember the people and institutions who insisted to Columbus that the world was flat? The world would still be flat in many people's eyes if we had listened to those who controlled information at that time. ⁹⁹

indignation, and approach all with a joyful heart, even when that feels impossible. The Pandemic too will pass. Hang in there and do your part to be discerning!



PLANNED GIVING

REMEMBER CAMO IN YOUR ESTATE PLANNING

A bequest to CAMO is a way to guarantee that the people of Honduras will receive the help they need for years to come.

Your planned gift will allow CAMO to continue saving lives and help countless more people in the future.

Give a gift that keeps on giving. Make a transfer of assets, a bequest, or a charitable remainder trust; be part of our donor family.

Ron Taggart, CAMO Board President, stated "CAMO saves lives and I want saving lives and helping those less fortunate than me to be part of my legacy. By remembering CAMO in my will, even though I'll be gone, I'll still be giving in a very effective way. That makes me happy."



In Recognition and the Memory of Professionals Working in Honduras

On Saturday, I was doing some errands when someone stopped me to ask if the USA was the only country with the pandemic and what the situation was in Honduras.

I kindly answered that no, the USA is not alone; numbers are also going up in Honduras. In this newsletter, we would like to update you on what is happening there and to gratefully recognize the daily sacrifices made by Health Care workers in both Honduras and the USA. We pledge to support them in any way we can.

But first, with grief, we dedicate this newsletter to the medical personnel in Honduras who have lost their lives to the pandemic; they were all beloved by their coworkers, family, friends, and were productive, vital people who made a positive impact on society every day. Their loss will be felt by many. Josué Orellana, president of the National Association of Nurses and Auxiliary Nurses of Honduras (ANEAH) as of Aug 3, reported that there have been 1,811 nurses infected with COVID-19 and eighteen deceased; we do not have all of their names at the writing of this newsletter.

The precarious Honduran health system has not been able to absorb this high demand, and many doctors have confirmed the accuracy of images circulating within the medical community that show the saturation of some COVID-19 care centers on the mainland. Many coworkers in Honduras on the front lines are forced to work without adequate PPE, thus increasing their risk. We are so sorry for the loss of their loved ones and stand firm in our continued support of educational, medical, and community needs in hopes of preventing needless COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 related deaths.

in loving memory

- 1. Dr. Alexis Reyes
- 2. Dr. Nasry Handal
- 3. Dr. Mario Benitez
- 4. Dra. Glenda Mejía
- 5. Dr. Américo Reyes (USA)
- 6. Dr. Oscar Tavarone
- 7. Dr. Leonidas Romero
- 8. Dr. Javier Rolando Machado
- 9. Dra. Carlene Hurst
- 10. Dra. Fidelia Odeth Andonie
- 11. Dr. Hector Ramón Paz Rivera
- 12. Dr. Ruben Casanova
- 13. Dr. Arnoldo Jesús Rodas Varela

- 14. Dr. José Adalberto Mejía
- 15. Dr. Luis Reyes Jerezano
- 16. Dr. Hector Baltazar Hernández
- 17. Dra. Denisse Murillo
- 18. Dr. Marvin Antonio Yanez
- 19. Dra. Yamileth Morales Duarte
- 20. Dr. Yamil Maradiaga
- 21. Dr. Marlon Javier Avilez
- 22. Dra. Iris Gallegos
- 23. Dr. Saúl Mayorquin
- 24. Dr. Gustavo Francisco Carías

- 25. Dr. Mario Pavón Moncada
- 26. Dra. Patrica Padget



2 Bringing Hope to the Forgotten

- 27. Dr. José de Jesús Martinez Benítez
- 28. Dr. Tomás Alberto Cáceres Castro
- 29. Dr. German Mauricio Erazo Santos
- 30. Dr. Juan René Valladres Lemaire
- 31. Dr. Sergio Ricardo
- 32. Dr. Oscar Arturo Ney Rivera
- 33. Anesthesiologist Carlos Dubón
- 34. Nurse Karla Figueroa
- 35. Nurse Alejandrina Tejeda
- 36. Nurse Dinora Pineda

- 37. Auxiliary nurse Irma Rinel Rodríguez
- 38. Auxiliary nurse Vilma Sagrario Merlo de Cerrato
- 39. Auxiliary nurse María Emérita Carrasco
- 40. Auxiliary nurse Irma Rinel Rodríguez
- 41. Auxiliary nurse Vicenta Cardoza de Portillo
- 42. Auxiliary nurse Juana Laínez
- 43. Auxiliary nurse Floresmila Aguilar
- 44. Auxiliary nurse Rosa Guadalupe Castellanos
- 45. Lab technician Elena Flores
- 46. Microbiologist Cesar Licona



Honduran healthcare professionals who lost their lives fighting against COVID-19.

CAMO's Response

Despite the crisis, CAMO has made a commitment to the people of Honduras and continues to bring them vital services.

To do so, we have had to be both flexible and creative.

Our Prosthetic/Orthotic and Gastric Cancer Research programs have been located in the Public Hospital for the past 20 years. Since 2005, we have housed our Cervical Cancer, Ultrasound, Mammography and X-ray programs in the Public Health Center, which serves the second largest number of patients in Honduras. We rebuilt this facility in 2014. On March 13th, all these services and many more—were ordered to shut down when the Public Health authorities removed all programs not directly treating COVID-19.

Already, we have begun to see the negative impact of these political decisions on the medical needs of the general population. We have offered viable solutions to continue vital services while also treating COVID-19 patients—but our pleas and suggestions have fallen on deaf ears.

As a result, CAMO has been forced to relocate and remobilize many of our programs in a very short period of time.

The Prosthetic and Orthotic Program was removed from the Public Hospital on May 22. We immediately reached out to the Robles family, who graciously offered space in the new non-profit eye clinic facility inaugurated on February 8th, 2020.

On June 8th, both programs— Ophthalmology and Prosthetics and Orthotics—were reopened. We moved the staff social worker to this facility, along with all the other personnel, equipment, and supplies needed to open these programs and serve patients. Our Prosthetic/Orthotic Program had already treated 47 patients by the end of July. In the same period, the ophthalmology program was able to treat 32 patients.

Meanwhile, the Gastric Cancer program was closed in the last week of July; we have now converted an area of our facility to reopen this program as well.



CAMO's prosthetic team in Honduras: Concepción Perez and Santos Lara, working at the new Robles Facility.

Public Health Center

On March 13, the public health clinic closed the doors.

They still have not opened for general care: they are giving vaccinations and filling prescriptions, but not seeing patients. All the patients with hypertension, heart disease, diabetes, diagnosis, and cervical and breast cancer must go without treatment.

Pre-COVID-19, 25 women per month were treated for cancerous lesions on their cervix. Now 25 women per month will perish if women cannot come to the Center for screening.

We understand the difficulties of treating COVID-19 patients while continuing to provide essential health care services. We have developed viable solutions to these difficulties, and we have submitted these solutions to the Region and to the Minister of Health. We will continue to request action so that we can resume essential services.

Meanwhile, in response to this continued gap in medical services, we moved cervical cancer diagnostics to CAMO's own facility on August 3, combining offices to make room for a clinic so we can provide pap smear services.

On a side note, children with severe malnutrition are making their way to our doors at the Fundación, where our nutritionist provides ongoing treatment plans and resources.

Why We Must Keep Our Services Open

Despite the time, the current difficulties, and the mask covering her face, we could still see the joy in the eyes of Dilma Rosmery Cruz after our team in Honduras put on the new orthotics that will allow her to regain her independence.

Dilma is a single mother living in Macuelizo Santa Bárbara. She had been living with domestic violence for several years. One day she finally worked up her courage to leave home, taking her eleven and seven-year-old sons—but before she could walk out the door, her husband shot her in the back, injuring her spine and leaving her unable to walk and confined to a wheelchair.

So even after leaving that violence behind her, she still found herself helpless, unable to take care of her children. Luckily, CAMO's mission is to provide hope, especially for those who feel helpless. Dilma's neighbors raised money for her transportation to Santa Rosa, and CAMO's prosthetic/ orthotic lab team were able to fit her with a pair of orthotics and teach her to recover her mobility.

"Finally," said Dilma happily, almost in tears, "I'll be able to wash clothes comfortably, without getting all my clothes wet." This donation renews her hope; she now knows she can continue taking care of her two children.



A joyful Dilma the day she received her new orthotics, and our staff working with her.



How Many People Will Go Blind if Services Are Not Allowed to Reopen?

A case in point. When Angela first came to the Robles facility, she was experiencing extreme pain in her left eye and a constant headache.

When Dr. Marco Robles checked her, he found an advanced ulcer causing damage to her eye.

She is a low-income patient from Gracias Lempira and it was difficult for her to reach CAMO, since all the public transportation in Honduras has stopped due to the coronavirus. But, with great effort, she was able to gather some money to travel by motorcycle to Santa Rosa de Copán.

Dr. Marco Robles was able to perform the minor surgery to remove the ulcer and repair the cornea to save her eye. Ten days after the surgery, she came to the clinic to get her surgical sutures removed. You could see a glow and happiness in her face because all of her pain was finally gone and her vision had been restored.





Left: A renovated Angela, twelve days after her surgery, with her grandson Eduar at their home in Gracias, Lempira. Right: Dr. Marco Robles performing Angela's surgery at the new Robles facility.



Pediatric Cardiology Program

On April 24th, after Dr. Poala Pagoaga, a pediatric cardiologist, returned from studying her specialty in Mexico, she asked us if she could become a CAMO counterpart and create a new program for Pediatric Cardiology.



We were happy to have this specialist under our roof to serve an unmet need in the region. Meanwhile, thanks to Nick Giarelli from Cleveland, Ohio, an echocardiogram machine had been donated several months earlier and was already sitting in the warehouse of CAMO Honduras.

Dr. Pagoaga's first patient was thirteenyear-old Eva, who arrived frightened and struggling for breath. Her father made his way to us, seeking help for his firstborn child, after being turned away everywhere else due to restrictions on travel and on public health services due to poor management of COVID-19.

Eva's heart issues and other autoimmune issues were diagnosed and successfully treated; she is now breathing without effort! Eva will continue to be seen monthly for continued care and psychological counseling to help her with her disease.

Top right: Dr. Pagoaga performing Eva's first echocardiogram at CAMO facilities. Left: Eva posing with her father, after sharing her joy about her improved breathing with us.

Fighting for Our Patients' Neurosurgery Program: Delmy Martinez

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Delmy Martinez, 34, was born with hydrocephalus and spina bifida and has been a patient of our neurosurgery program for eight years.

Recently her shunt became occluded, requiring emergency surgery but the public hospital would not allow the surgery due to COVID-19.

Delmy comes from a low-income family from Cucuyagua, Copán. Due to the current situation, many Honduran public hospitals, including Hospital de Occidente, are having difficulty treating patients with other chronic diseases. So with no accessible medical treatment, her only option for survival was pay unaffordable sums for treatment in a private clinic.

"I couldn't stop crying," her mother told us. "We felt hopeless." When

Dr. Roberto Alvarez (a CAMO counterpart) heard about Delmy's plight, he didn't hesitate, but found a way to support this family. Thanks to his response and solidarity, and to the generous donations we received through the Ruta Copán fundraising event, Dr. Yeimy Batres Munguia and Dr. Alfredo Tábora performed the emergency surgery at the private hospital in Santa Rosa de Copán, saving Delmy's life. One more person saved—there is no greater reward than to see Delmy happy, smiling, and home once more with her family.

Clockwise: Dr. Roberto Alvarez with Delmy after her life-saving surgery. A happy Delmy at her home in Cucuyagua, Copán. A family with renewed hopes.





Trade School: What is Happening?

The technical school has become one of the centers where small business owners are being trained in biosecurity issues by the Municipal **Emergency Committee (CODEM).**

These workshops are intended for owners and employees to take care of their health and customers by preventing the spread of COVID-19.

In June and July, we conducted biosafety sessions. One hundred eighty people attended, representing different companies in the areas of general commerce, taxis, hotels, educators, spare parts sales, and transportation.

The trade school has also provided courses to the Youth for Conservation Honduras program promoted by the United States Forest Service. These took place on July 13 and July 31, 2020, and focused on:

- The conservation of protected areas, biodiversity, and watersheds in western Honduras.
- Providing training and experience to young people in careers related to conservation, preparing them for higher education.
- Reducing poverty in one of the regions with the highest unemployment and migration rates, and the lowest economic rates, in the country.

Thirty-six young people between eighteen and twenty-two years old (sixteen women and twenty men) attended from the states (Departments) of Ocotepeque, Choluteca, Lake Yojoa, La Mosquitia. Two more came from the Dominican Republic.



Small business owners receiving biosecurity training at the Trade School facility, weeks before the reopening of the economy in Honduras.

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CARPENTRY TOOLS **NEEDED TOO!**



PLEASE CHECK YOUR CLOSETS. ATTICS, TOOL

MANY THANKS TO **HELPING HANDS!**



Putting Things Into Perspective

Honduras Vital Statistics

- Population of approximately 9.5 million
- 43,278 square miles of land for comparison: this is roughly the size of Louisiana at 43,566 square miles

The Honduras government's response to the pandemic has been to shut the country down, and it remains in that situation. Before the pandemic, the employment situation was this:

- Unemployment 5% people looking for work
- Underemployment 55% people making less than minimum wage—in Honduras, that means less than \$368 per month

The majority of the underemployed are now without any income—and unlike in the USA or other higher-income countries, there has been no government bailout or unemployment checks, either for individuals or for companies.

The impact is devastating; recovery will be difficult if not impossible for many.

Present Impact and Health Department Status in Honduras

Presently we have seen more need than ever in rural and urban areas, because all health sectors have prioritized COVID-19 care over all other services. This has created extreme neglect of primary health care, with dire consequences for the entire population.

Basic health care in Honduras causes most citizens constant concern and uncertainty, due to the limited ability of its health service network to respond to basic needs—a situation made even more difficult by the weak economy.

The health system in Honduras is integrated with a private sector providing limited coverage to approximately 15% of the population. The public sector, made up of the Ministry of Health (SESAL) and the Honduran Institute of Social Security (IHSS), cares for the other 85% of the population. The public health system network is made up of two levels:

- · Level One: Comprehensive Health Centers (CIS) and polyclinics.
- Level Two (Hospital): basic hospitals that have the five basic specialties; general hospitals.

In their contract with CAMO, the World Bank stated this: "The health system in Honduras faces severe problems with a total number of beds of 6,668 (this includes the public and private sectors), which implies that there is a ratio of 0.8 beds per 1,000 inhabitants, a figure that is much lower compared to other underdeveloped countries in the region." For comparison, the USA has a ratio of 2.77 beds per 1,000 inhabitants, according to World Bank data.

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In recent months, demand for health services has increased rapidly due to suspected and confirmed COVID-19 cases. This has required an urgent reorganization of care services for the population infected with COVID-19, which implies increased demand on an already extremely limited existing resource. As a result, general services have been shut down and spaces taken away from essential primary care. For the same reasons, the country now has a deficit of personal protective equipment (PPE) for health personnel, and lifesaving medical equipment such as ventilators and ventilator supplies that were insufficient even before the pandemic are unavailable now.

Exacerbating an already impossible situation, political figures appropriate scarce resources to care for their own families the result of a poorly managed health care system combined with deeply rooted corruption within the system. Finally, poor living conditions—including multiple families sharing one room shelters—increase the likelihood of rapid transmission of disease. And as the economy continues to decline due to the shutdown, even more people will be forced to share limited space.

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COVID Shatters Latin America's Middle-Class Dreams



"The newly unemployed, many with no safety net after working in the vast informal labor force, are increasingly destitute. The UN's World Food Program warns there could be a hunger crisis...Luis Alberto Moreno, president of Inter-American Development Bank, said the challenges for governments up and down the region are steep: Debt-to-GDP levels, which stood at 57% last year, are expected to hit 70% or higher. Coupled with a 30% drop in the money relatives in the U.S. and Europe send to support families, the blow amounts to a financial storm unlike any in modern times. 'This is to me the Great Depression with the Spanish Flu at the same time,' Mr. Moreno said from Washington.' Latin America probably will be hit as a region the hardest of any place in the world."

All of these factors combine to create a perfect storm for a healthcare crisis. As a result, organizations and businesses have sought out CAMO to manage funding to address the pandemic in our region. Based on the credibility and leadership of the Fundación CAMO Honduras, the Commission on Tourism in Santa Rosa directed donations from 33 local companies to CAMO. These local companies raised \$7,168 and have asked CAMO to manage and monitor the delivery of supplies and bed donations.

Similarly, we have been asked by World Bank to administrate funding for three departments (states) of Honduras to respond to COVID-19. We are presently in the final phase of signing this contract, waiting only for the annex's final contract from the Ministry of Health.

We stand firm in our commitment to get funds to the people in greatest need, bypassing the corrupt system.

Intervention Strategy for Santa Rosa de Copán

In this time of crisis, in addition to donating medical supplies to medical care centers, CAMO has been supporting the city by defining an intervention strategy for Santa Rosa de Copán in an effort to reduce COVID19 infections, improve care for infected patients, save lives, and assist with strategies to reduce the devastating impact on the city's economy.

In Santa Rosa de Copán, the Municipal Emergency Committee (CODEM), an entity created in the event of an emergency, has been formed. It includes local and national authorities as well as volunteer professionals with knowledge of relevant fields.

José Bautista, Director of CAMO, and Dr. Roberto Álvarez, CAMO Honduras board president and neurosurgeon at Hospital de Occidente, are part of this committee. CAMO's role has been to provide biosecurity material and physical space in the ETAOO for the development of education for small business owners on good biosecurity and contagion prevention practices once the companies open to the public.

Currently, in the city, companies are allowed to open by reducing their number of employees to 40% and with the population circulating according to their last ID digit.

The community is concerned about lack of support from the national government in the preparation of triage centers and stabilization centers in our city; for this reason, private companies are developing campaigns to manage equipment and supplies for the care of patients with COVID-19.



Above: José Bautista, Fundación-

appointment at a CAMO facility in

Honduras.

CAMO Executive Director, with little Alexandra minutes before her dental

Right: Dr. Roberto Alvarez, CAMO's Honduras Board President, alongside José Bautista, Fundación-CAMO Executive Director, running a meeting with the Municipal Emergency Committee (CODEM).

What's Happening in CAMO USA

Support from CAMO USA is vital as it feeds the supply chain for over 64 institutions and fills gaps on a daily basis.

Two shipments are awaiting legal paperwork in Honduras, and we are rapidly filling the next container. Your support is vital: each container costs an average of \$10,500 to transport from our door to CAMO Honduras, including container, broker, legal, and custom fees. That may sound like a big sum, but it's a bargain considering the lifesaving equipment that each container carries: a fair market value of \$100,000 to \$300,000 of desperately needed supplies.

To continue our services in Honduras, CAMO USA needs to raise \$20,000 more than it did pre-COVID-19, because of pandemic-induced shortfalls that include the loss of income on an institutional level and individuals' inability to pay anything for the services they need. Until Honduras returns to pre-COVID-19 economics, we will continue to fill these gaps—but we can only do so with your support.

CAMO USA is so grateful to all the volunteers who provide a wide range of services, including the cleaners from a men's group home in Canton, nurses who sort all the products, groups who help with landscaping, technically-gifted individuals who assist with equipment testing and repair, drivers who pick up donations and unload them, carpenters who prepare containers and hands who load them for shipment, data experts who track information, individuals who help with our mailing of thank you notes, sorters who pack diapers and linens—and the list goes on. There is always something for volunteers to do.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED, WE SURE DO NEED YOUR HELP! CALL THE OFFICE AND ASK FOR OUR VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR **MARY SAYLOR** OR EMAIL HER AT **MARYS@CAMO.ORG**.



USA volunteers sorting and packing the donated supplies before shipment.

Thank you for your support!

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We are grateful for the Pines, golfers, and all of our volunteers. All of you are vital parts of CAMO. Thanks to your support we raised \$24,865 that will definitely help us to continue: "Bringing hope to the forgotten."



Sponsors:

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Your help and support goes a very long way for those who otherwise could not imagine the care they receive through CAMO.

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Theo's Car Show

THEO STARTED THIS FUNDRAISER AT AGE SEVEN!

He is now nine and has organized his third annual event in Smithville, Ohio. This year, he was able to bring twenty-two antique cars to the show, which raised \$467 in donations for CAMO. At nine years old, Theo has now raised more than \$1,000 for us.

Theo standing in front of his family's antique car. He made sure to point out he had placed a mask on the grill.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Salsa Sizzle September 19th, 2020: CAMO's 12th Salsa Sizzle

The Salsa Sizzle Committee continues to rethink this event due to the restrictions of COVID-19. Please stay tuned as we will be getting in touch with those who have been loyal supporters of this event.

Wayne County Fair

We will not be at the Wayne County Fair this year but stay tuned, we have other ideas in the works!

Go Green!

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Donate your old cell phones and empty ink/toner cartridges to CAMO.



Please call the office for more information: 330.683.5956 or 330.313.1000



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CAFÉ CAMO can also be purchased at: CAMO offices, Shisler's Cheese House Lehman's Hardware in Kidron RoomScapes in Wooster Runion Furniture

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Help CAMO continue to provide life-saving and life-changing services in Honduras. Throughout the year, be thoughtful about your purchases and consider investing in something that has an impact. Give the gift of caring by reimaging gift-giving for yourself and for your loved ones. Think about that expensive cup of coffee: one cup could buy a book for our literacy program. Honor a friend or family member by making a memorial gift.

Your help is vital to keep providing life-changing services to those in the greatest need.

Visit CAMO.ORG or call the CAMO office 330-683-5956 • Fax 330-313-1001



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Make a donation • Host a fundraiser! Need ideas? Call the CAMO office or email camo@camo.org!

Volunteer onsite or offsite CAMO needs volunteers!

Your legacy could include CAMO! Please consider including us in your estate planning.

Know someone who would like to learn about CAMO? Please send us their contact info!

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CAMO is accredited by the Better Business Bureau and meets all 21 standards.

When you are done with this issue, please pass it along to someone you know who may be interested in our mission.