



# CAMO

A different kind of aid organization



Winter 2020 • Volume 29 • Issue 3

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



## Founders Opinion

Founder and International Director, Kathryn Tschiegg

Reflecting on twenty-seven years of service and growing CAMO from a duffel bag in my living room to what it is today, one could become disenchanted with the needs which still present themselves daily.

So I sit here and I wonder what more can be done, knowing that many people suffer every day. As I ponder the reasons for each and everyone's existence, I have come to the realization that all of us are here for a reason, if not just to challenge the concepts of good and evil. Some of us are placed here to raise families, to feed the economy, to exist day to day . . . there are so many reasons we exist, and each and every reason is important. At the same time we know that people around the world with great faith are sitting somewhere tonight with tears rolling down their faces, in great need.

Those of us who have been given the liberty of life to serve and dry those tears with loving kindness need to do so. To be given this liberty and ability and not to use it is unbearable.

Tonight, I find myself with a handkerchief to dry the tears of those who are suffering, and the

choice that lies ahead is so simple. Do I place the handkerchief in my back pocket, do I wave it in defeat, or do I offer it to those in need? There is nothing to gain by keeping it and throwing it away in defeat, but everything to gain by offering it.

In this time of uncertainty and division, of one thing we can rest assured: those who serve and care for another human life in a compassionate, unbiased way are on the right track. I continue to lead CAMO and guide staff to focus on this. Focus on doing good, not evil, in all things and in all ways. We are so honored to have the ethical staff both in Honduras and the USA.

My question to you is: What is your focus? Have you pulled out your handkerchief and offered it to someone in need? What's holding you back? You have nothing to lose. Your act can be as simple as a phone call.

*"In this time of uncertainty and division, of one thing we can rest assured: those who serve and care for another human life in a compassionate, unbiased way are on the right track."*

—Kathryn Tschiegg,  
RN, BBA



Staff in Honduras.

# COVID-19 Impact on CAMO and Our Medical Programs

The pandemic has placed CAMO's critical mission to serve the people of Honduras at risk.

Some decisions have been difficult, but one recent decision leaves me both heavy-hearted and at peace, knowing it is a wise one: the Board of Directors of CAMO USA and CAMO Honduras decided to suspend the USA international teams and staff from travel to Honduras until June of 2021. The state of Copan, where the Fundación CAMO's main operations are located, now has the second-highest death rate of COVID in Honduras, leaving us little choice but to suspend team travel to Honduras.

Our Honduras staff is being pushed to their limits in serving the daily needs of the population. Your continued partnership with us is vital as we witness incredible strength and resourcefulness in our staff. The scale of this pandemic is unlike anything we have ever faced, and it is putting enormous financial pressure on our resources as the people we serve face both increased need and reduced income.

Forty percent of those who had jobs no longer have any income at all. Unlike the USA, Honduras has passed no Acts of Congress with company relief packages, unemployment checks, or bonus checks for those now unemployed. Continued limited operations and shutdowns mean that people are unable to pay even for basic needs, much less the cost of essential medical services.

We continue to provide service to those in need, regardless of their ability to pay. With the gradual reopening of CAMO's medical services, revenue is slowly increasing, but deficits remain. If you are receiving this newsletter, it is because you cared enough to be involved at some level. I am asking you to stay involved, at any level of support; your assistance will go a long way to keep us strong as the pandemic subsides.

CATEGORY	SUB CATEGORY	CLOSED MARCH 15, 2020	DATE REOPENED
WOMEN'S HEALTH PROGRAMS	Ultrasound	Yes	8/31/2020
	Cervical Cancer	Yes	8/31/2020
	Mammography	Yes	8/31/2020
SERVICES FOR DISABILITIES	Orthotic/Prosthetic Lab	Yes	4/23/2020
	Wheelchair Lab	Yes	4/23/2020
	Audiometry Lab	Yes	5/7/2020
GENERAL MEDICAL PROGRAMS	Dentistry	Yes	4/27/2020
	Ophthalmology	Yes	6/9/2020
	Dermatology	Yes	6/23/2020
	X-ray	Yes	8/31/2020
	Diabetic Feet Service	Yes	6/24/2020
	Neurology	Yes	6/25/2020
	Nutrition	Yes	4/23/2020
	Pediatric Cardiology	New program	4/29/2020
	Psychology	Yes	6/26/2020
	General Medicine	New program	9/1/2020
SURGICAL PROGRAMS	Neurosurgery	Emergency surgeries only	
	Endoscopy	Moved endoscopy out of hospital to our facility so we could continue service	4/23/2020
	Urology	N/A	
	Plastic Surgery	N/A	
MAINTENANCE	Biomedical Department	Yes	4/23/2020

*Your continued partnership with us is vital as we witness incredible strength and resourcefulness in our staff.*



# DONATIONS

Donations continue to flow into our facility in the USA where many volunteers work tirelessly to sort, organize, inventory and pack, making sure every item is needed and can be put into service on its arrival to our facility in Honduras.

Since May 1, we have packed five containers and are waiting on paperwork of three of these. Our June 18th and October 3rd containers arrived in Honduras. We dispatched another from our USA facility October 15th, expected to arrive in four weeks.

Twenty-two institutions have been served with donations of medical supplies in the months of July, August, September and October.

**Volunteers and staff working on sorting and inventory of supplies at CAMO USA and CAMO Honduras facilities.**



Sorting Area, CAMO USA



Warehouse, CAMO Honduras



Logistics Building, CAMO USA



Receiving, CAMO USA



Shipping, CAMO USA



Data Entry, CAMO USA



## Gustavo's Case

**Programs: Pediatric Cardiology, Nutrition, Dental and Psychology**

Gustavo was diagnosed with scrotal hernia when he was three months old. His mother Cindy, seventeen back then, took him to Hospital de Occidente in Santa Rosa de Copán hoping he could get surgery, but there she was told that her baby couldn't go to surgery because he had a heart problem. Given no further explanation, she was sent to a public hospital in San Pedro Sula, the closest location with a pediatric cardiologist.

Cindy, just like any mother, became worried for her child and determined to help her baby, even though she had no money for transportation. She began asking for rides to reach her destination. At San Pedro Sula, the hospital failed to give her an appropriate diagnosis, this time sending her to Tegucigalpa. She again asked for rides to get there, with her baby in her arms, even sleeping in the streets of this major Honduras city since she could not afford accommodations of even the

most humble kind. Again, the hospital offered no diagnosis or solutions. Feeling hopeless, she decided to return to her home in Santa Rosa.

Little did she know that one day, someone would knock at her door offering food donations—which in turn would change her and Gustavo's life. During the pandemic, a lady named Imelda, perhaps a guardian angel, went to her home and found out that little Gustavo was sick. Imelda contacted José Bautista, CAMO Honduras executive Director, and told him about Cindy's case. Gustavo had a heart problem that wasn't yet diagnosed and CAMO had just opened a new pediatric cardiology program, the only such program in western Honduras. Without hesitation, José went to their home and took them to CAMO to see the pediatric specialist.

Now, at the age of four, Gustavo has been diagnosed with a heart disease and he is now receiving the appropriate medical



**Above left: Gustavo and his mother during their visit at CAMO. Above: Jose Bautista with Gustavo waiting to see the nutritionist.**

treatment with CAMO's counterpart cardiologist, Dr. Dilcia Paola Pagoaga. He is also a patient of the nutrition program due to malnutrition, receives dental care, and comes weekly for counseling in the psychology program. Gustavo is gaining strength day by day and will soon be ready for his future hernia surgery. This little boy's treatment, which coordinates multiple departments, has only been made possible by countless donations of equipment, supplies and financial support. Thanks to you, CAMO's many medical programs improve the quality of life of those in need in Honduras.

Gustavo is not alone in his family in receiving help: his sister is also in CAMO's nutrition program, and his grandmother in the Dental program.

## Dariela Julissa's Case

**Program: Orthotic and Prosthetic Lab**



"This institution has greatly served me and other people who need support. CAMO has been a blessing to our lives," affirmed Maria Ofelia, Dariela's mother, as she visited CAMO's orthotic and prosthetic lab in Santa Rosa de Copán for her daughter's new orthotic braces.

Dariela Julissa, a lively seven-year-old girl, was born with a congenital malformation in her left foot and arm. Living in a remote rural community made it difficult for her to start walking and to play with other kids. For most of her life, she was confined to bed, and her mother had to carry her everywhere. When her mother found out about CAMO, she started working to gather funds to travel from Belén Gualcho to Santa Rosa de Copán to get help.

Once there, you could see Dariela's excitement in her eyes: as our prosthetic department staff



**Dariela in our orthotic/prosthetic lab getting her new orthotic braces.**

adjusted the orthoses, she quickly stood up and tried to walk. Dariela will soon start second grade and can't wait to go back to school and play with her classmates.

As our programs slowly reactivate, many children and adults like Dariela have been able to receive the gift of mobility.

# CAMO's New Role

We received a call from the Minister of Health on Sunday March 22, 2020 for assistance with management of funding from the International Bank of Development (IBD).

We began conversations, requesting clear terms and a budget, but their response was delayed for months while COVID raged on. Finally, in August, the Minister of Health called again and asked us to help; again we asked for a contract and guidelines. Finally, after further exchanges, they provided the necessary information. We signed the contract on October 1, 2020 and will administrate the funding for three of the eighteen departments of Honduras: Copan, Ocotepeque and Lempira.

The contract includes purchasing of PPE; hiring of human resources such as doctors and nursing staff; anesthesia, X-rays and cleaning supplies; and monitoring the care of the COVID patient both pre-hospital and in the hospital.

We immediately set up a transparency and social oversight committee to assure that IDB purchasing guidelines are followed. We are also insisting that no price gouging, no political positioning, and no nepotism take place. Politicians are quite angry about this; nepotism, positioning, and price inflation to line their own pockets are standard procedure in Honduras. But we hold firm to our ethics. Our goal is to meet the needs of the COVID infected population with this funding. It is important to mention that we have already achieved significant monetary savings in the budget lines, due to the prices negotiated for purchases, and this money has already been reinvested in additional supplies.

On October 1, we selected the personnel of the rapid response teams for the departments of Copán, Lempira and Intibucá that will be carrying out the mobile brigades within the framework of the Ministry of Health strategy. We have contracted with 177 staff to date.

Purchases of biosafety equipment, medical equipment, laboratory supplies, and medicines have been made, according to the requests received by the nurses and doctor working directly with COVID patients. Unfortunately, deficits in the public health system were already so severe pre-COVID that staff are now feeling the impact of this very poor,

corrupt system, and the innocent are suffering as a result. CAMO continues to advocate for those in need. Our support as managers goes beyond what is stipulated in the agreements.

CAMO continues to support Hospitals with donations of high flow respiratory

support equipment (C-Pap), accompanied by training for doctors and nurses in its use and management. We recognize that only teamwork and collaboration with health institutions will allow us to advance and decrease mortality.



**Top: Dr. Eleazar Montalvan, CAMO's volunteer, training doctors in the use and management of C-Pap machines. Bottom left: Dr. Gracia Martinez, Director of Hospital Juan Manuel Galvez, receiving PPE supplies from CAMO Honduras Director, Jose Bautista. Bottom right: Training COVID nurses in high flow C-Pap application and protocols.**



# SG Foundation Assistance in Education

This month of October, CAMO is celebrating three years of working in partnership with the SG Foundation to fund the CAMO Nursing Standardized Procedures and Protocol Training Program for nurses with limited access to continuing education in western Honduras.

We are thrilled and so grateful to have developed such a strong relationship with the SG Foundation.

The need for Nursing Standardized Procedures and Protocol Training was identified when medical teams from CAMO-USA conducted evaluations, working side by side with Honduran nurses, and identified the following lack of proper nursing procedures:

- Inappropriate and dangerous bio-hazard techniques
- Lack of documentation in patient records
- Lack of knowledge of basic nursing skills
- Zero standardized protocol training

To decrease patient suffering and mortality, standardized and intensive training programs are required. Thanks to the past three years of SG Foundation funding, the Nursing Standardized Procedures and Protocol Training has been expanded throughout Honduras. CAMO has now trained 456 nurses from The Hospital de

Occidente, Auxiliary Nursing School, CEUTEC/UNITEC, Santa Rosa Medical Center, Hospital Juan Manuel Galvez, The National Institute of Social Security, The Maternal and Child Clinics of Corquin, Copan and Sesecapa, Ocotepeque and the Hospital del Socorro de lo Alto.

In August of this year, CAMO submitted a proposal for \$15,000 from the SG Foundation for year four, which was successful. Kathy received approval for the \$15,000 match to be used for general education needs, including the literacy program, biosecurity training, etc. This funding, plus matching funds from United Titanium (Mike Reardon) and Orcutt-Knecht Family Charitable Fund will help to continue this program in spite of the challenges of COVID-19.

The funding has been used for preparing trainers, who then pass on their knowledge by training others to be trainers in their turn. In June 2019, 500 more copies of the *Standardization of Nursing Procedures* were published, thanks to the SG Foundation funding! This new publication allows CAMO to expand and impact more nurses nationwide.



Above: Nursing procedure manual.  
Right: Kenia Calderon training the nurses of the COVID ward in proper protocols.



# Hungry and At Risk

## An Update About Vitamin Angels

Since 2018, CAMO has been working with Vitamin Angels, a charity from Europe whose primary mission is to eliminate malnutrition in children.

Our work with this organization began when Vitamin Angels first approached CAMO to offer their multivitamin products for distribution among CAMO programs and partner organizations such as health care centers, hospitals, and municipal governments. At that time, Nancy Nikiforow submitted the first request for donations of Vitamin A 100,000 and 200,000 IU, Albendazole 400 mg (deworming), and multivitamins for pregnant women. The goal was to prioritize children under five and pregnant women who, due to their low protein diet, weren't able to get essential nutrients.

From 2018 through today, CAMO has received annual donations from Vitamin Angels for distribution throughout the year among CAMO's partner organizations, who then distribute doses on a daily basis in their health centers or promote health campaigns run by nurses and social workers who visit rural communities, identifying vitamin-deficient children and women.

This year, after the shutdown in Honduras due to COVID-19, Jose Bautista and Yeny Garcia were able to follow up on each of these donations made to the partner organization. We were surprised to learn that most of them relied only on these donations to serve their communities because they did not get enough inventory from the National Secretary of Health. In fact, health workers reported they were almost out of vitamins already, and were glad to hear that CAMO was submitting a new donation request for Vitamin Angels. We provided additional supplements to fifteen networks and public health care clinics in the departments of Ocotepeque, Copán and Lempira.

Sadly, CAMO envisions a greater need for these donations due to the economic impact of COVID-19. "Many Honduran families barely had enough pre-COVID, and found it hard to achieve a balanced nutritional diet," stated health workers in each center visited by CAMO. Now more than ever, Vitamin Angels' partnership with us is vital as we respond to the needs of health centers and municipal governments.

**Above right: Eighteen month Santi Madrid receiving his dose of Vitamin A.**



If you are interested in supporting our nutritional programs, help would be greatly appreciated! Cost for one infant's treatment for one month is \$30; supplements for a malnourished COVID adult patient are \$180 per month.



WE LOVE  
HELPING  
HANDS!

### Help Our Dental Program by Providing Dental Kits

IT'S A GREAT ACTIVITY FOR ANY GROUP!

#### DENTAL KITS INCLUDE:

toothbrush, toothpaste, dental floss, wash cloth  
and a bar of soap.



CALL THE CAMO  
OFFICE AT  
330.683.5956  
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INFORMATION



# Hunger in the Time of Coronavirus

The saying “food is medicine” has never been more important than during a global pandemic.

The delicate balance between food, recuperation and survival is being challenged to the limit by the COVID-19 pandemic, especially when money for food is scarce. CAMO remains steadfast as a source of nutritional support in western Honduras in these trying times.

The COVID-19 pandemic may have emptied the streets of western Honduras, isolated people in their homes, and forced us to re-imagine face-to-face CAMO services, but the dedication of CAMO and nutritionist Bianca Ramirez has not ceased.

In fact, the pandemic has provided an opportunity for her and CAMO to highlight Food as Medicine. In July, Bianca partnered with Mildred Tejada, clinical oncologic psychologist, and Operation Smile, to present a webinar to health workers on how to manage emotional hunger amidst a pandemic. She also gave a presentation on clinical and hospital nutrition to ninety-eight



**Bianca Ramírez, providing nutritional training to nurses of the COVID-19 ward.**



**Bianca Ramírez, providing nutritional assessment to low-income, malnourished children in western Honduras.**

prospective university nutrition students, developed the first ever nutrition assessment protocols for nurses in Honduras, and partnered with the Hospital Occidente nutritionist in a presentation on benefits of therapeutic diets for hospitalized patients.

Next up is a virtual workshop on nutritional care for patients with COVID-19 struggling to breathe and requiring intensive care at Hospital Occidente and neighboring hospitals in Gracias in Lempira, and San Marcos in Ocotepeque. CAMO nutrition counterparts Deborah Marino, Ph.D., RDN and Joe Marino, MD have been collaborating remotely via Zoom, email and WhatsApp.

As one of the few nutritionists in western Honduras, Bianca Ramirez continues office visits with nutritionally vulnerable children, adults and their families, providing a much needed lifeline. She is also offering sage nutrition advice to health professionals and individuals recuperating at home from COVID-19.

Good nutrition is important for health and wellness, but is absolutely essential for

healing and survival in a pandemic in which poor nutrition engages in a vicious cycle with infection.

Her advice emphasizes the importance of immune boosting vitamins C and D and the trace mineral zinc in recommended amounts, as well as nutritionally rich food sources in adequate quantities. CAMO is able to assist with counseling, food resources, specialized formulas and supplements in dire situations, but the demand far outweighs the need.

*Your contributions to Food for Healing continue to make a difference. Mil gracias for your support.*

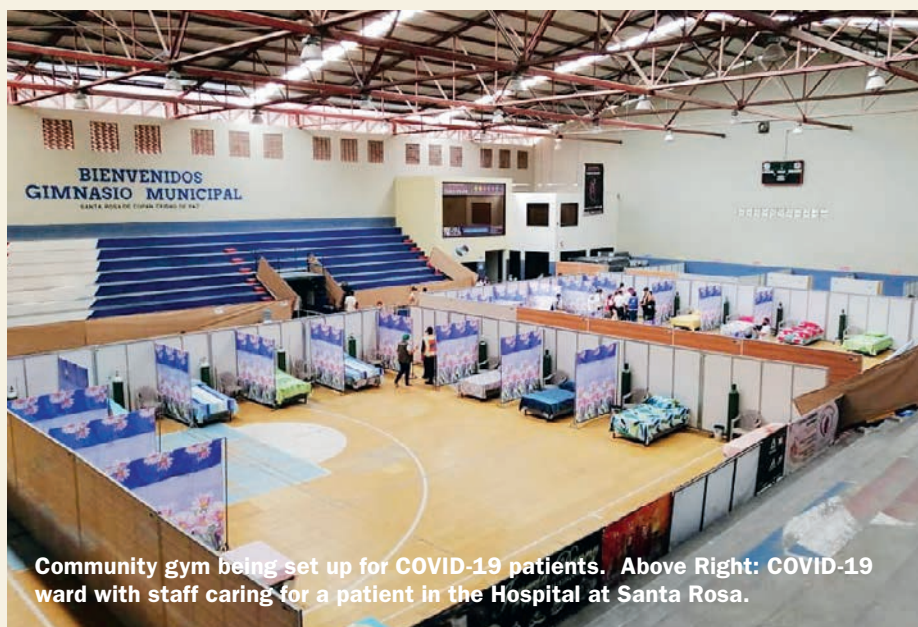


# Facilities Built By CAMO Are Playing a Very Important Role in the Fight Against COVID-19

The community gym is serving as a triage, testing and treatment area for those people who test positive for COVID-19.

The public health center has opened its doors again to serve the general public. The hospital would not be functional without the medical compressed air system, electric system, and water system that CAMO installed, along with improvements made in much of the hospital, including the laundry, kitchen, emergency room, diagnostic department, endoscopy department, pediatric unit, and NICU.

We have served a vital role pre-COVID, enabling the Public Health hospital for this region to serve its population. We continue to be the main source of ventilators and education. On the writing of this newsletter there were fifty COVID patients



Community gym being set up for COVID-19 patients. Above Right: COVID-19 ward with staff caring for a patient in the Hospital at Santa Rosa.

in the Hospital de Occidente, fifteen on ventilators, and ten on high flow Bi-Pap. With only three physicians, one registered nurse and five nonprofessional nurses for 24/7 coverage!

Again, the Ministry of Health reveals

their lack of understanding of patient care and intervention. I only make this statement knowing of the amount of money which has disappeared in the public health care system and the deadly decisions they are making—or not making.

## Trade School Progress

The trade school continues to be under construction as we slowly progress forward. We have now invested approximately \$250,000 in this new structure. We will continue to progress forward as funding becomes available.

This is a vital structure as it provides opportunity for skilled labor training. The facility at this time is assisting with the training of companies on operations during the pandemic. It is one of my dreams, hope and aspiration that before I retire this facility will be completed.



Below: Construction of Trade School. Image at left shows one wing of the Trade School.





# Salsa Sizzle Results



2020  
**SALSA  
SIZZLE**  
*with a twist*



## THANK YOU

for your support!



CAMO would like to extend a special thank you to our many sponsors. Below are those who donated \$500- \$10,000 before September 11. Many more of you donated and we are happy to report the campaign has exceeded all expectations. Our goal was 50k and we are excited to share that to date we have raised 70k. WE are truly blessed by each one of our donors.

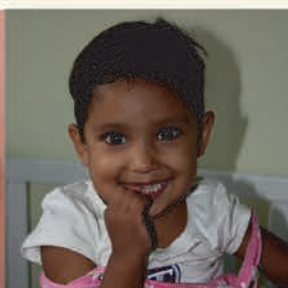
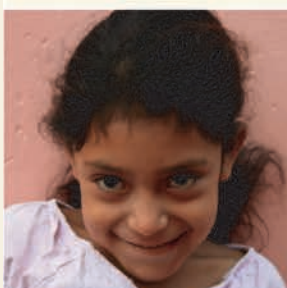
### EVENT SPONSORS

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- Special thank you for Dennis & Kathryn Helmuth for the donation of the Hot Air Balloon Prize & Cash prize sponsorship.





# Special Projects

## for your church, family, neighbors and friends

THE FOLLOWING KITS WOULD MAKE GREAT CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR THOSE IN NEED

### Baby Bundles

2 cloth diapers, 2 safety pins, 2 infant t-shirts and 1 receiving blanket (not knitted). Optional items: baby brush, comb, baby lotion and shampoo. Wrap all in the receiving blanket.

### Dental Kits

Toothbrush, toothpaste, dental floss, wash cloth and bar of soap. Place all in Ziploc bag.

### School Supply Kits

Rulers, pencils, crayons, erasers, scissors, and glue placed in a school supply box or zipper pouch.



CALL THE CAMO  
OFFICE AT  
330.683.5956  
FOR MORE  
INFORMATION



### UPCOMING EVENTS

- Giving Tuesday  
*Tuesday after Thanksgiving*
- Year-End Giving Campaigns
- Shipments Every 2 Months
- Teams Suspended



## CAFÉ CAMO

WAKE UP WITH CHARITY  
IN YOUR HEART!

PURCHASE AT [SHOP.CAMO.ORG](http://SHOP.CAMO.ORG)

Select the **SHOP** link and we'll  
take care of the rest.

CAFÉ CAMO can also be  
purchased at:

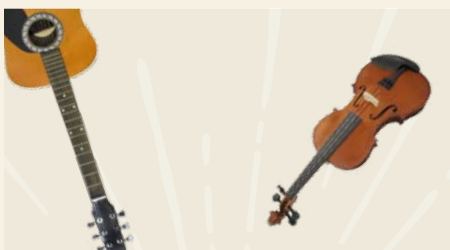
- CAMO offices
- Shisler's Cheese House
- Lehman's Hardware in Kidron
- RoomScapes in Wooster
- Runion Furniture

## Thank You

Special thanks to **Jennifer Hayward**, Professor of English at the College of Wooster, for volunteering to edit this publication, and to staff **Heidi Hernandez**, **Fannie Tejada** and **Yeny Garcia** in Honduras who assisted with the collection and confirmation of information.



### SPORTS EQUIPMENT NEEDED!



### MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS!



### AND CARPENTRY TOOLS TOO!



PLEASE CHECK  
YOUR CLOSETS,  
ATTICS, TOOL  
SHED & GARAGE!

MANY THANKS TO  
HELPING HANDS!

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## Give A Gift That Really Matters!



**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 re-imagining 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**



Like **Central American Medical Outreach** on Facebook and SHARE with your friends!



See CAMO's story as it unfolds. Follow **camobringshope** on Instagram



Be a part of CAMO's exciting journey by subscribing to the **CAMO USA** channel



Follow **Central American Medical Outreach** on LinkedIn

### WAYS YOU CAN HELP

#### **Make a donation • Host a fundraiser!**

Need ideas? Call the CAMO office or email [camo@camo.org](mailto: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!

#### **Find CAMO on Facebook**

Invite your friends to learn about what we do!



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.*