



# CAMO

A different kind of aid organization



Winter 2023 • Volume 32 • Issue 3 CAMO is a non-profit, faith-based organization. Bringing Hope to the Forgotten

## Founder's Note

by Kathryn Tschiegg

Every day is an adventure with CAMO. Saturday, October 14th an international team of professionals arrived in Santa Rosa de Copan after 18 hours travel from the USA. Sunday was going to be a day of rest, to orient the new people to the staff, warehouse and programs.

It was a well-laid plan; everything was going accordingly. After our group breakfast, I left before the team to see if all the logistics were in place for the day. Upon entering the office, staff surrounded me with news of a bus crash over a bridge and into a river. The bus was transporting 70 immigrants from Venezuela, Ecuador, Columbia, and Cuba. Four people were dead, some were missing and it was unknown how many were injured and with what type of injury. I asked staff "Who is responding?" They replied, "No one yet. The fire department is very limited. We need CAMO's help." We had the perfect talents in front of us: Dr. Rosalia Mahr, an Emergency Physician with fellowships in adult, pediatric and emergency ultrasound; two intensive care nurses; Monica Coventry and Megan Frank and a respiratory therapist, Jackie Williams. We transported these specialists along with our subdirector of CAMO USA and our first responder trainers to the site. The team packed supplies and equipment and set off to evaluate and assist in the care of the crash victims.



Left: Dr. Rosalia Mahr used her ultrasound device to detect internal bleeding or fractures in the patients. Right: Kathy, Founder and International Director, changing a boy's bandage after the accident.

Upon our arrival, there was no triage set up for the victims. In the end, 20 were transferred to the hospital—6 were admitted and the others were casted, sutured and released to the CAMO facility down the street from the hospital. There, we set up a care center to provide food, clothing, shoes, and emotional support. Meanwhile other CAMO staff took care of the USA international team and conducted the day's scheduled activities.

By 11:00 a.m., the community of Santa Rosa was in full response—the 911 director, police, military, service groups, the mayor, and congresswomen. A church camp provided shelter for those who were not injured. The entire community responded with kindness and humanitarian aid at every level. Several immigrants sat in my office with great gratitude and with tears as they told their story of oppression. My heart broke as I listened. One young woman, admitted to

the hospital with fractures of her pelvis, kept asking for her brother. We knew he was one who was identified as dead at the scene. We then learned that she and her brother had been kidnapped and tortured in Venezuela. The family spent everything to get them released. The parents, fearing for their own lives, sent them alone on the journey of hope for safety in the USA. She has been given permission to stay in Honduras until her fractured pelvis is healed. If returned to Venezuela, she would be arrested for treason.

Their life stories continued to unfold. After this week my reflection is that freedom is a precious gift and is disappearing in our world as leaders paint the bad, good and the good, bad and people are polarized to the point of blindness. Oppression, corruption, egos, and lack of education is the root of evil no matter what party, religion, race or country you are from.



## Neurosurgery Program

### Implementing an image navigation system for the Neurosurgery Program.

The neurosurgical navigation system has been a dream during three years of fundraising to make it a reality. The system provides a three-dimensional mapping by projecting the images obtained by magnetic resonance or tomography. These images allow the surgeon access to perform tumor resection in a safer and more precise and minimally invasive way.

The final cost of the purchase including taxes and importation was \$150,000. It arrived in September and on September 18th the first surgery was performed. During the first four weeks of its use, five patients have received life-changing diagnoses and surgeries.

Francisca, 43, a wife and mother of four, suffered from loss of vision and severe headaches for 15 months. She was diagnosed by CAMO's neurology program and referred to our neurosurgical program.



Dr. Alvarez and his OR staff in Hospital de Occidente using the neuronavigator.

Her husband, Hector, lamented that he was losing her and feared she would die. The neurosurgical navigation system allowed complete resection of the brain tumor. Her vision is returning, and she is pain-free. Now, back home with her family, her husband is filled with great joy—he was so afraid he would have to live without her.



Francisca with her family two months after her brain surgery.



While members of the international team were tending to the bus accident victims, Dr. JC Tabet, Mary Tabet RN, and Anesthesiologist Dr. Ilya Kreylin were working with their neurosurgeon counterpart Dr. Roberto Alvarez. They evaluated 20 patients and selected those for surgery over the next five days. Twelve patients received life-changing surgery.

One of the patients, 65 year-old Sara, stated, "I could not walk before my surgery. Today I am walking without pain and looking forward to returning to work making cigars, and spending time with my family." During her post-op appointment, she said, "I feel full of joy and happiness. I am recovered! Thanks to God and to you CAMO."

*"I feel full of joy and happiness. I am recovered! Thanks to God and to you CAMO." –Sara*



Left: Dr. Alvarez and Dr. Tabet reviewing Sara's scans in preparation for surgery. Middle: 24 hours after surgery, Dr. Alvarez visited Sara before she was discharged. Right: Sara and her husband in their home.

## Emergency Medicine and ER Development

Emergency Medicine as a professional specialty does not exist in Honduras. But it is on the horizon to be accepted as a residency program by 2025. With this knowledge, we are working with the Ministry of Health to make sure the emergency room is supplied and the ER staff is prepared to convert from a clinic-mentality to an actual emergency room with rapid flow, care and disposition of the patient. In doing this, we are setting the stage for an Emergency Medicine residency training program here in Santa Rosa.

We are so lucky to have with us Dr. Rosalia Mahr from The Ohio State University and Nationwide Children's Hospital. She brings her expertise of emergency medicine in adult, pediatric and ultrasound. She is training the emergency room staff in Santa Rosa de Copan Honduras. Dr. Mahr is here for a month and will continue to return regularly to Honduras to train staff and equip the emergency room with her counterpart, Dr. Shery Rivera. CAMO upgraded the ER infrastructure and design to allow for the new staff to be trained and equipped to facilitate rapid flow and care of the patient.



Dr. Mahr and her counterpart, Dr. Shery Rivera, in Hospital de Occidente's emergency room.

## Biomedical/Maintenance and Central Service Dedication and Implementation

For years, the biomedical volunteers described the difficulty of resources in space, tools and replacement parts when they helped in the Hospital in Santa Rosa. The dire needs have been present for a very long time.

The vision to create a Biomedical/Maintenance Center was initiated by CAMO and the new Hospital Director Dr. Marith Lopex in October 2022. The dedication of this facility was held on October 20, 2023. This project includes policies, procedures, and software specific to tracking the history of each piece of equipment.

We were fortunate to have Alex Berson, a software engineer, on our team to assist us with the implementation of the use of this software. The total cost of the project is \$173,409. We are grateful for the support of our donors, not only in the USA, but also the Mayor's Office in Santa Rosa, the Support Committee of the Hospital de Occidente, and Congressman Javier Trigueros. CAMO provided 58% of the funding.

**This facility has four large rooms fully equipped for the following purposes:**

1. Biomedical preventive maintenance and repair of medical devices
2. Maintenance area for the hospital maintenance staff
3. Decontamination and cleaning of equipment
4. Central service for dispatch of equipment and tracking



Above: Kathy with Santa Rosa's mayor, Anibal Erazo, and hospital staff cutting the ribbon at the biomedical facility inauguration.



Left: Alex Berson and biomedical team preparing the new biomedical facility in the hospital.

## Neonatal Advanced Life Support Training

Monica Coventry and Megan Frank, both neonatal intensive care nurses and instructors, joined this year's brigade. They instructed new nurses in NALS training, recertified other nurses, and updated the NALS instructor we had trained prior to the pandemic.

Their Honduran counterpart, Kenia, has been a long-time champion of education, not only in Hospital Occidente where she works, but also with ongoing education in the Hospital of Gracias 40 minutes from Santa Rosa.

Training-the-trainer is so vital for the continuation of quality care. Their efforts and commitment will benefit future nurses and will save many lives.



Monica Coventry and Megan Frank training nurses in NALS.



Kenia and Denia, NALS instructors in the hospital, received continuing education in the NALS course.

## Respiratory Therapy Career Path on the Horizon

After years of developing the goal of Respiratory Therapy as a career path in Honduras, our dream is becoming a reality as public and private universities have committed to offer this curriculum in the near future. CAMO promised to bring experts in curriculum development and this year’s international brigade delivered on this promise. Ellen Becker, Wendy Castro and Karen Schell are respiratory therapists and professors in respiratory therapy and curriculum development.

The CAMO team provided expertise for the course names, course topics, sequencing of courses, criteria for laboratory needs, and clinical needs. The team further recommended faculty knowledge and experience criteria for each course. They spent their week with professionals from both universities and developed curriculum that will complement the career path and will be accepted by both universities.

By the end of the week, it was decided that the first RT students will be accepted into the private university in 2025 and into the public university in 2026. CAMO will support five Honduran professors to travel to the USA so they can see a RT training program and lab along with the clinical application. They will



Ellen Becker, Wendy Castro, and Karen Schell meeting with university representatives to develop the new respiratory therapy curriculum.

then return to Honduras to complete a needs assessment in the hospitals where the students will do clinical experience. These professors will also spend one week with US-trained respiratory therapists volunteering in a public hospital. This will prepare them to train their students in the challenges they will encounter in clinical settings.

*Special thanks to Karen and her RT network for bringing so many talented people to Honduras from the University of Kansas Medical Center (KUMC) and expert volunteers from the American Association of Respiratory Therapists.*

## “Creating My Future Here”

CAMO’s Education Department continues with the project called “Creating My Future Here.” This project seeks to promote youth employability in Honduras. CAMO signed this grant with USAID in April 2023. To date, we have trained 625 people in First Aid, CPR, nursing protocols and soft skills. Of the people trained, 225 have already been offered employment.



Students receiving CPR training by CAMO.



## Literacy and Caring for the Children

The fourth annual reading contest was held in Corquín, Copán with 35 elementary schools and preschools participating. 102 children were chosen to represent their schools. CAMO supports these schools, with a population of 1,259 children, by providing screening and treatment in the areas of dental, vision, hearing and nutrition; purchasing textbooks and creating libraries.

We are expanding the literacy program to Yoro, Honduras. CAMO sponsored 7 teachers from Yoro on September 27-29, 2023. The objective was to provide training to the teachers on the teaching techniques and activities to improve reading and writing through the practice of speed reading and comprehensive reading with the support of Santillana textbooks.

Assistant Director of CAMO USA, Rachel Foltz, has been traveling to Subirana, Yoro, Honduras for the last 14 years. Seeing the need for improved education and health care in this region, Rachel invited seven teachers from Subirana to visit schools participating in CAMO's literacy program.

This visit inspired and encouraged them that change is possible in their community as well.

Next year, Subirana will be the 17th school participating in CAMO's literacy program, first with a new library and then the acquisition of new textbooks the following year.

Rachel is also working with staff at the public health clinic in Subirana, Yoro to improve the clinic's infrastructure and add dental and ultrasound programs.

Screening Services Provided: January – October 2023									
DENTAL		VISION		HEARING		NUTRITION		Total Screened	Referrals
Screened	Ref.	Screened	Ref.	Screened	Ref.	Screened	Ref.		
1,165	-	335	50	298	15	310	18	2,108	60



Teachers from Subirana, Yoro visited schools participating in CAMO's Literacy Program.

## Clinical Education in Respiratory Therapy

Until the RT profession is fully established, CAMO will continue to train nurses in the area of respiratory care of their patients.

Tim Larson, RT and seasoned CAMO volunteer, partnered with two new RT volunteers, Elissa Williams and Jackie Williams, to train 30 Honduran nurses on caring for the respiratory needs of patients. They intervened with many patients experiencing respiratory equipment problems and were instrumental in improving ventilation of numerous patients.



Elissa Williams training nurses in the use of respiratory equipment.

## Trade School: Bricks and Mortar

In Honduras, where the poverty rate is 52.4 percent, the Trade School (ETAOO) is on a mission to create change and provide educational opportunities, particularly to people from low-income backgrounds.



Currently, the trade school trains 150-200 individuals each month, expanding its curriculum to include entrepreneurship and employability workshops. Through new partnerships with local businesses and the government entity INFOP, ETAOO is helping individuals gain essential skills and certifications for a brighter future. Our involvement with the Trade School started in 2003. Today it is thriving and growing with the new wing in full use.

The construction of a new second building is making good progress — the first floor is completed and construction has begun on the second story. Then a parking area will be added. Building dedication is expected in March of 2025. We still need \$22,600 for completion of the second floor.





*We still need \$22,600 for completion of the second floor.  
Please call 330-683-5956 to assist our goal.*



**BEFORE**

Trade School prior to the construction of the carpentry and welding areas.



**AFTER**

Construction in progress on the Trade School's second story.

## MakerSpace Team “MOO Team” (Makers of Ohio)

MakerSpaces are usually non-profit co-ops or clubs where members can exercise their creativity by utilizing a variety of equipment that ranges from 3D printers and laser cutters to woodworking and machine tools. MakerSpace facilities are popping up all over the United States, and thanks to the generosity of Wooster’s Romich Foundation, Santa Rosa de Copan’s ETAOO Trade School is the proud recipient of equipment that will serve as the foundation for its very own MakerSpace.

The equipment includes a circuit printer and router cutter, heat transfer press, sublimation printer, laser engraver, 3D printer, band saw, belt sander and drill press. The Romich Foundation also donated a full complement of consumables and small tools.

The equipment is capable of producing a wide variety of products, including printed and router cut greeting cards, vinyl signs, coffee mugs, jewelry, laser cut wooden signs, key chains, T-shirts, and a host of other products. The Romich Foundation also provided an enthusiastic team of knowledgeable trainers consisting of Sara and Izy Meshew, Jeff Snure, and Lydia Hassenzahl. CAMO provided Eliza Alvarado to interpret.

Early on, the team decided they needed



The Romich MakerSpace team trained students at the Trade School during the Fall brigade.

a name and “Makers of Ohio” was decided upon, or the “Moo Crew.” The Moo Crew spent nearly a full day installing and testing the new equipment and spent the rest of the week instructing the four future trainers in its use.

As the class continued through the week, the level of excitement exhibited by the new instructors grew and grew. Each new instructor was required to complete a project on each of the machines using their creativity

and technical knowledge. These newly trained instructors will continue the course after the departure of the Moo Crew.

The MakerSpace team and the 3-D printer were able to create an important adapter that was lost. This adapter was needed in order to restore use of twenty CPAP machines that had been converted into high-flow oxygen delivery systems. The Moo Crew provided the engineered drawing and produced five adapters.

## Daycare Center

The current enrollment at the daycare is 65 children. CAMO continues to pay the wages of the full-time teacher Riena.

CAMO’s nutritionist, Bianca, visits the daycare every month to evaluate the nutritional needs and CAMO provides funding for food every Friday.

We have also arranged for a general practitioner, Dr. Rajo, to visit the daycare to provide evaluation, treatment and follow-up of the children.



Reina, CAMO’s daycare teacher with several students.



## Where Are They Now?

Valeria and Conery, twin sisters, attended CAMO's daycare center from ages 3-6 years old. In 2009, their parents, working with limited incomes, sought a haven for their children as their mother worked in a cigar factory, and their father served as an auto parts salesman. CAMO's Daycare Center not only provided much-needed security but also marked the beginning of their educational journey.

Now, 20 years old, Valeria and Conery have proudly graduated with degrees in Hotel Management and found employment in the hospitality industry. The Daycare Center's support was instrumental in their journey towards success. The twins vividly remember their preschool teacher, Reina, for her unwavering dedication, warmth, and patience.

Their story serves as a poignant reminder of the critical role that public daycare centers play in the lives of families with limited resources. These institutions offer more than just a safe space for children — they lay the foundation for a promising future.



Valeria and Conery, with their co-workers.

## October International Team



*Professionals  
joined us  
from Kansas,  
Illinois, Texas,  
Oregon, Colorado  
and Ohio.*

**Front:** Alejandra Elvir, Administration; Dr. JC Tabet, Neurosurgeon; Mary Harris, RN; Kathryn Tschiegg, Director; Ronald Taggart, Board President; Rachel Foltz, Assistant Director; Dr. Roberto Alvarez, Neurosurgeon

**Middle:** Ellen Becker, Respiratory Educator; Dr. Ilya Kreynin, Anesthesiologist; Karen Schell, Respiratory Educator; Wendy Castro, Respiratory Educator; Elissa Williams, Respiratory Therapist; Dr. Rosalia Mahr, Emergency Medicine; Megan Frank, RN (NICU); Monica Coventry, RN (NICU); Eliza Alvarado, Translator

**Back:** Daniel Stevens, Translator; Jackie Williams, Respiratory Therapist; Tim Larson, Respiratory Therapist; Ryan Propst, Prosthetist; Alex Berson, Software Engineer; Jeffrey Snure, MakerSpace Trainer; Izabel Meshew, MakerSpace Trainer; Lydia Hassenzahl, MakerSpace Trainer; Sarah Meshew, MakerSpace Trainer

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF OUR RECENT FUNDRAISING EVENTS



We raised \$23,084 for CAMO's Neurosurgery Program.

*It's amazing!*

A big thank you to all Car Clubs who participated and to the sponsors.



Thank you to the golfers, sponsors, volunteers, and Oak Shadows Golf Club!

We raised \$16,500

All proceeds from this event go toward the initiation of a literacy program in an elementary school and infrastructure improvements to a public health clinic. By the end of 2024, we plan to have ultrasound and dental programs in Subirana, Yoro.

2nd Annual CAMO Yoro Project Golf Scramble



Salsa Sizzle

We had a blast at the 15th Annual Salsa Sizzle Event on Saturday, September 16th.

We raised \$44,409.03 to support CAMO's educational programs for adults and children in Honduras.



This year we raised more than \$1,900 to support CAMO.

What an incredible and fun event we had!

**UPCOMING  
EVENTS**



Central American Medical Outreach and Kathryn Tschiegg wish to thank the following sponsors for their generous support of Three Decades of Service Celebration.

Diamond	Pallotta Ford
Platinum	Noble Foundation Ron Taggart
Gold	Seaman Corporation United Titanium
Silver	Steve and Cheryl Shapiro Wooster Community Hospital
Bronze	Charles and Ruth Brown Ben Vorhees and Cari DeSantis Cheryl Koehler Wooster Brush
Friends	Dee and Mary Vaidya Freeman Building Systems

# GIVING TUESDAY

UPCOMING CAMPAIGN

Tuesday November 28, 2023

Giving Tuesday is a global generosity movement unleashing the power and impact of giving. It inspires hundreds of millions of people to give, collaborate, and celebrate generosity.

Our goal is to reach **\$120,000!**

Join this global movement on November 28th, 2023. With your support, CAMO can continue providing life-saving services to those in need.

If you wish to support our cause follow the link below or scan the QR code, your donation will be much appreciated.



[camo.org/givingtuesday](https://camo.org/givingtuesday)



## YEAR-END TAX PLANNING STRATEGIES

### IRA CHARITABLE ROLLOVER: *Using your IRA to fund charitable giving*

*Are you taking a required minimum distribution from your IRA this year?*

If you are age 70 1/2 you can make a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) to Central American Medical Outreach (CAMO) and reduce your taxes.

#### **BENEFITS OF A QCD:**

- Avoid taxes on transfers of up to \$100,000 from your IRA to CAMO
- Satisfy your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) for the year
- Reduce your taxable income, even if you do not itemize deductions

A qualified charitable distribution is a simple and easy way for you to use your IRA to help CAMO provide life-saving services for the people of Honduras, now and in the future—all while also enjoying valuable tax savings.

If you have an interest in this tax-advantageous gifting concept, please contact your tax advisor and/or your financial advisor to review and then direct your distribution as a contribution directly to CAMO.

#### **LET SAVING LIVES BE PART OF YOUR LEGACY**

We welcome the opportunity to review all giving options and discuss how your planned gift can play a meaningful role in your planning and CAMO's future.

#### **FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:**

Kathryn Tschiegg, CAMO;  
(330) 683-5956

Melanie Reusser-Garcia,  
Wayne County  
Community Foundation;  
(330) 262-3877

Lisa Lynch,  
The Columbus Foundation;  
(614) 251-4000

Brenda Cummins,  
The Cleveland Foundation;  
(216) 615-7158

*Information you share will be kept confidential and we respect any decision to remain anonymous*

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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-imaging 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.*

Beneficiary of CAMO's literacy project.

Visit [CAMO.ORG](http://CAMO.ORG) or call the CAMO office 330-683-5956



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



See CAMO's story as it unfolds. Follow [camobringshope](https://www.instagram.com/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.*