Defeating the Kissing Bug and Saving Lives

High in the Bolivian mountains, Berta stands with her daughter Lena, proud of her efforts to defeat Chagas, a disease that was running rampant in her community.

More than 6 million people worldwide are infected with Chagas, a life-threatening disease discovered more than a century ago. Caused by a protozoan parasite, it is found living in the walls of homes of lower income families, primarily in Latin America.

Chagas is spread by the triatomine bug, or “kissing bug” through human contact with the feces or urine of the bug. Less than half of the people infected show visible signs of the disease, including fever, swelling of the infection site, and difficulty breathing. But the infection, if not stopped early, will cause the destruction of the heart muscles and nervous system, often leading to heart failure and sudden death.

Six years ago Berta came to MAP wanting to help the women in her community. “I can’t stay like this,” she said. “My dream is to teach other women, to make them more powerful in their communities. When women come together, we can do more. That is my dream that we will work as a team for the betterment of our community.”

MAP International has worked in Bolivia for more than 30 years, and recently partnered with the AbbVie Foundation to launch an aggressive program to eradicate Chagas.

Berta is now a trained Community Health Promoter with MAP. She works with the women in her community to stop the spread of Chagas disease, saving countless lives.

Grealda, just 25, has also been trained as a Community Health Promoter by MAP. Motivated by the desire to protect her young son from the painful death that comes with Chagas disease, Grealda decided to do something about it. “I share everything I learn with others,” she said. “I help families fix their homes and prevent the kissing bugs from living in their homes. We plant family gardens and I now know how to raise my child healthy.”
MAP President & CEO, Steve Stirling in Bolivia for Chagas education with MAP Community Health Specialist, Stella Losado.

We Give Thanks for You: A Letter from the President

We often say that medicine changes everything. Perhaps it is more accurate to say that lack of medicine changes everything.

Most of us can’t even imagine a world without access to medicine and health care. But in this issue we've shared stories of people who struggled every day because of diseases that are entirely curable (like Chagas or meningitis) or treatable (like Congenital Myasthenia Gravis).

I am so grateful for friends like you who make it possible for MAP International to touch these lives and give people hope. Without you, we simply wouldn’t be able to help.

At this time of year, I am reminded again and again that you make all the difference in the work we do. As we enter the holiday season, I hope you know that your support for MAP gives so much to so many.

May God bless you during this special time of year and may you sense the gratitude of the many whose lives have been changed because of you.

When there is health there is hope,

Steve Stirling
President & CEO
Lives Changed; A Family Restored

Julio, Milvia, his wife, and their daughters, Paola and Maria, live in Guatemala City. “My wife and I knew that there was something wrong with our daughters from an early age, around four or five years old. They were really weak, falling down easily and they seemed to lose their ability to do physical activities as they grew up.”

Julio and his wife struggled to pay for the medical costs to properly diagnose their daughters. After countless visits to doctors in Guatemala, Julio and his family flew to the United States where they were finally able to properly diagnose the condition as Congenital Myasthenia Gravis (CMG), an inherited neuromuscular disorder.

“Since childhood, life revolved around medical care and other kind of therapies that could help them. My wife could never work, because my daughters need a lot of help on their everyday activities.” Life has been difficult for the family because Guatemala does not have proper access and infrastructure for people living with disabilities.

Julio and his wife never stopped fighting for their daughters. For the last several years MAP International, in partnership with one of our pharmaceutical companies, has provided medicines for Paola and Maria.

“The medicines provided by MAP have really changed our lives. Since we got the diagnosis and they started taking the medicine, they felt a lot better. Their condition stabilized.

“Thank you for everything. Our gratitude will never be enough, but our hearts are grateful and you and your organization are always in our prayers.”

The Surgical Haircut

This little boy was brought into Panguma Hospital in Sierra Leone near death with a very high fever. Diagnosed with meningitis, an IV was started in his scalp and he was given the “surgical haircut”.

Greatly relieved that her son was receiving help, his mother explained that she had lost two other children to high fever because she had no money to seek medical care for them. But because the hospital received lifesaving medications from MAP and Christian Relief Services, this young boy’s life was saved and he and his mother were very happy about his new haircut.

You Ask MAP, We Answer

What is Charity Navigator and what do its ratings really mean?

Charity Navigator is the leading “watchdog agency” that helps individuals and foundations evaluate and compare charities. The organization rates charities on their financial health, accountability and transparency. These scores help provide a clear assessment on each charity and help donors compare charities.

MAP International is a 4 Star charity (the highest rating possible) and also received a perfect 100 score based on a number of factors. According to Charity Navigator a 4 Star charity “exceeds industry standards and outperforms most charities in its Cause.”

To see MAP’s rating for yourself, go to www.charitynavigator.org and search MAP International.
From MAP Fellow to MAP Board

As a young medical student, Allen Craig had never left the country until he went on a medical mission trip to Honduras as a MAP Fellow. “My MAP-supported mission trip to Honduras kindled my interest in low resource countries and in global health, which remains to this day,” says Craig.

Today, Dr. Craig heads the Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) Africa Polio Eradication Team and has traveled the world. “I’ve had the unique opportunity to live and work in Zambia on malaria for five years with my family and to work on polio eradication in Africa for the past three and a half years. I have also gone on several other short term mission trips in Latin America.”

Coming full circle, Craig now serves on the board of directors of MAP. “MAP provides critically needed resources to the poor in many countries. The medicines they provide can be life saving to many who can’t afford them,” he says.

“I am honored to serve on the MAP board and help further the mission of this organization. The board is doing its best to ensure that the organization is efficient and effective in the work it does and that MAP brings honor to God in all that it does.”

MAP’s Gift Catalog is coming soon! Look for it in your mail or shop online after November 20 at www.map.org/gifts.

MAP brings honor to God in all that it does.

Hurricane Matthew Response: Haiti

By the time this is in your hands, our first container of hurricane relief to Haiti will have already been received and distributed to those in most need. Life-saving medicines and emergency supplies to help 10,000 people for 90 days, were delivered to our partners on the ground within days of this devastating hurricane.

We need your help now to ensure that children and families receive the urgent medicines they so desperately need.

Every dollar you give will provide $60 of help to victims of Hurricane Matthew in Haiti. Donate now at www.map.org/hurricane-matthew.