



OSSA is a 501c3 charitable organization started by Geri and Barry Messinger MD to support surgical care in Guatemala. Millions of people throughout the world do not have access to basic surgery such as appendectomies, hip fractures, and hysterectomies. While volunteering on several international medical trips we became aware of the large number of people living with poorly healed broken bones- unable to use an arm or leg, affecting their ability to earn a living all due to their inability to pay for the care they needed.

We decided to share our knowledge and resources to influence change. Over a couple of years our concept developed and we've initiated a plan. OSSA is currently expanding educational opportunities for Guatemalan orthopedic residents, updating orthopedic equipment, and supporting surgical care for those patients that can't afford to pay for their urgent surgery needs.

Due to lack of public funding, surgical techniques advance more slowly in public hospitals in Guatemala. Equipment is often older or non-existent and in many areas techniques lag behind the U.S by 30 years. We started working in 2013 with the National Hospital of San Marcos, San Marcos Guatemala, a 260 bed public hospital located in the mountainous Western Highlands coffee growing region with a large indigenous population. The hospital has recently created 5 residency programs-Orthopedics and Traumatology, General Surgery, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Internal Medicine, and Pediatrics, as well as medical and nursing students-A regional hub of learning activity.

80% of the Guatemalan population pays out of pocket for their medical care. Health insurance is rare and more than 60% of the people live below the international poverty level.(WHO) There are 22 different indigenous languages and cultures.

By collecting and delivering donations of equipment and funds, we have already provided some patients in need with orthopedic surgery.

In August, 2013 we purchased the first arthroscopic equipment for the hospital and the 15 residents continue to train in arthroscopic surgery. This July 2016 we installed 3 new operating room tables and also established the first Surgical Skills Simulation Laboratory in Guatemala where the residents and local physicians can practice up to date trauma and surgical techniques- A newsworthy story covered nationally by all Guatemalan newspapers and TV stations.

If you would like to read more about our projects, have equipment, a skill, or wish to donate, you can contact us at www.orthogiving.org,

Or write to us at: OSSA, 9 Bruce Rd, Manchester, CT 06040.

