

Chile Earthquake, February 27, 2010



First of all, we wish to thank all of Free Wheel Chair Mission's friends and supporters who sent us donations that have been very helpful for covering the operational expenses we incurred during our trips to the affected area and for purchasing needs for the earthquake victims; also to Free Wheel Chair Mission, which has already donated Chile 30,000 wheelchairs and promised 7,000 more for this year to be delivered to the earthquake victims; thanks also to Family Care Foundation for their continuous donations now and over the years. Globus Relief, which had sent us a container with donated medical supplies that arrived two days after the earthquake and are now being distributed; they are currently organizing another big shipment of medical supplies and other needful items and have been helping us for years. Direct Relief, which has procured a Federal Express aircraft free of charge (God bless the managers of Federal Express) in which they're sending us 17 pallets of medical supplies, personal hygiene and other items, and have also arranged for pharmaceutical companies such as Abbott and others to donate thousands and thousands of medicines that are urgently needed at the hospitals (this distribution is being organized through the Ministry of Health, which will be channeling it to the different hospitals of all the affected areas. They've also donated 45,000 doses or bottles of children's serum and many other items. VIDA USA, which is sending a container with medical supplies and other items and have also been helping us for years. AMERICARES, which sent personal representatives to Chile to assess the needs firsthand and are arranging two shipments of medical supplies, diapers, flashlights, personal hygiene items, etc., which are already on the way to Chile and will be distributed shortly. The Chilean Army; *Carabineros de Chile*; Hyundai Chile, which is providing free use of their trucks and have been helping us for years; the Mayor of Lo Espejo, who also procured the use of a truck, the students of the FEDES Vocational Training School, who have collected non-perishable food; Francisco, a long-time friend from Brazil, who organized a collection in his community and came down to Chile to purchase a significant amount of items for the earthquake victims; Senator Coloma's staff, who have been helping us distribute relief in the Region of Maule, which was badly hit by the earthquake, and all the FEDES volunteers and staff who are working behind the scenes so the donations can be sent packed and well organized. And in general, of all our friends from other business companies who have contributed toward the relief effort. We will never be able to thank you enough for your invaluable help and kind hearts. God bless you!



Un sector del Centro de Curicó



Steven, at the FEDES warehouse loading the truck with wheelchairs, walking canes, crutches, walkers, diapers and medical supplies.

We traveled to the Region of Maule, where several of the larger public hospitals are uninhabitable. On our first trip we visited the city of Curicó (90% of the downtown area of the city is in shambles, with shops, churches and over 2,500 houses destroyed). Population in this city is 136,000.

The Curicó public hospital was also completely devastated (we weren't able to go near because it's under military protection due to the danger of collapse). At the time of the quake, the hospital had 350 beds taken up and all of the patients had to be evacuated.

Upon our arrival, we were attended by Dr. Carlos Rojas—a long-time friend, as we've been helping this area for several years—who provided us safe-conducts and authorization to enter, and we met with his team in a makeshift room in the basement of a private clinic that afforded them the use of some space to set up the hospital administrative services. We met there with the doctor and nurse in charge of hospital supplies and medicines, who gave us a list of their most urgent needs and commented that they're lacking storage facilities. Almost all of the items they were able to retrieve from the hospital are sitting on a patio under guard by the army and they're trying to find a place to store them. They were loaned two refrigerated containers by one company, one for storing medicines and the other to be used as morgue.



Photos: 1. Steven and Grace with the nurse in charge of hospital supplies, studying the lists of needs to face the emergency.

2. Grace, with one of the soldiers who are guarding the hospital grounds. Access is only granted with a safe-conduct..

3. Unloading the relief aid from the truck with the help of hospital ancillary personnel.





We had the privilege of having Mrs. Juanita Labbe's full-time company. Juanita is the administrator of the Curicó Hospital, who guided us in the distribution of the relief aid we brought with us. She commented: "The night of the earthquake was terrible, as we had to evacuate all of the patients that were in the four-story hospital building among broken glass, fallen serum and monitor stands, and shelves, and cracked walls, and to top it off, in the dark. Those were very critical and anguishing moments." She told us that, thank God, the patients behaved admirably, as frightened as they were. "They cooperated and followed instructions, and nobody complained. It was beautiful to see those whose condition was less serious helping evacuate others who could not fend for themselves. Help came immediately from the fire department and many volunteers, who showed up to help us transfer the patients. The wheelchairs that had been donated before were a big help in this regard. We were very thankful to have them, as it would've have been impossible to evacuate all the bed-ridden patients without them. Initially we used the lights of our mobile phones to find our way in the dark, until we were able to avail ourselves of some flashlights and candles. We could barely see where we were going, as the place was riddled with debris all around. It was a miracle of God, who gave us the strength. We were able to evacuate every one and take them out to the patio, where they spent the rest of the night (the more serious cases were temporarily transferred to private clinics, with the help of their personnel). In the morning we were able to continue transferring the patients to different institutions and hospitals. The two larger hospitals in the area—Talca and Curicó—which handle the more critical cases, were almost completely destroyed, so you can imagine what a complicated situation we found ourselves in. We experienced some very desperate moments and we didn't think we were going to make it. The army came to our rescue and sent us several field hospitals." Later, we were able to talk to one of the officers in charge, who told us: "It's the first time we've used this field hospital. It's designed for desert use, so we don't really know how it's going to hold out when it starts raining."

Juanita took us to the field hospital and introduced us to the medical officer in charge of the hospital's operational logistics. They received us very well and let us visit the patients. We were able to pray with them and encourage them. We also left several wheelchairs and other supplies.



Grace with one of the doctors in charge of the field hospital

Mrs. Carmen has been in the hospital since the day of the earthquake. She has diabetes and high blood pressure. She commented that during the earthquake she became so frightened that her blood pressure condition became unstable and she almost died. She said she was feeling much better now and told us that everybody there was very kind to her.





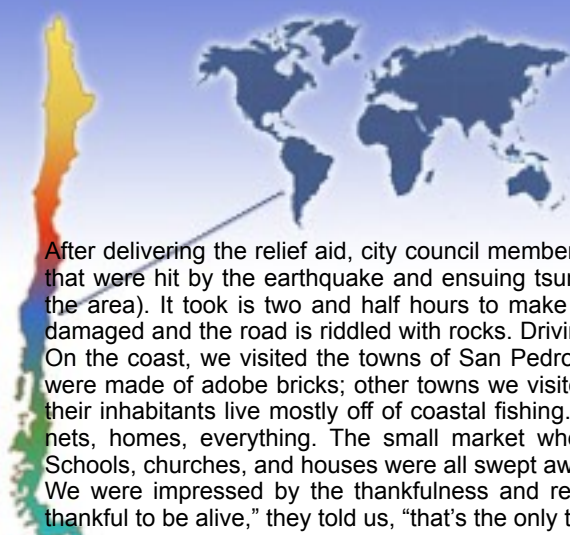
Steven and Grace, talking with the patients. Most of them arrived after the quake, as was the case with Maritza, who was brought in with a stomach hemorrhage. We took some time with each one to pray with them and wish them the best. They all said they were just thankful to be alive.



In the background the soldiers are digging ditches around the tents, as rain was forecasted and it's the first time this hospital is being used, as it was designed for the desert in Northern Chile. They have three air-circulation devices inside the tents, but the officer told us it's not enough, as it's very hot at noon and cold during the night. The tent on the right is where the doctors are lodged.



Grace shows the makeshift bathrooms built by the soldiers for the patients and personnel to be able to wash up.



After delivering the relief aid, city council member Jaime Cuesta picked us up and came with us to visit the Maule coastal areas that were hit by the earthquake and ensuing tsunami (because it's under military protection, we needed safe-conducts to enter the area). It took us two and half hours to make it to the coast from Curicó, as many small bridges and highway sections are damaged and the road is riddled with rocks. Driving on them is dangerous due to potential landslides. We had to be very careful. On the coast, we visited the towns of San Pedro—a small town by a river, where 90% of the houses collapsed, most of which were made of adobe bricks; other towns we visited were La Pesca, Iloca, Duau and Lincanten. These towns are very poor and their inhabitants live mostly off of coastal fishing. Their situation is even worse off now, as they lost it all, including their boats, nets, homes, everything. The small market where fish brought to shore was cleaned and sold was completely destroyed. Schools, churches, and houses were all swept away by the tsunami.

We were impressed by the thankfulness and resignation of the townspeople we spoke with on the way through. "We're just thankful to be alive," they told us, "that's the only thing that matters. We'll start over again."

They told us that one of the policemen noticed that the sea was behaving strangely after the quake, so he took his motorcycle (while the rest of his fellow policemen stayed back at the station taking out the firearms and some documents), and drove through all the little towns down the coast yelling at the top of his voice (he didn't have a megaphone) advising every one to leave their homes and head for the hills. The people told us that thanks to the policeman's quick action, they saved their lives. The police station was swept away and everything in it was lost.

We visited several camps close to the hills, where people had set up tents for the earthquake victims. There aren't enough tents for everybody, so a small refuge was built with nylon or plastic and boards in order to protect themselves from the wind and the sun (the need for tents is urgent, as the rainy season will soon start and tents are out of stock everywhere). During our tour we were able to distribute diapers for children and adults, walking canes, crutches, wheelchairs, and medical supplies which we left at the medical outposts attended by volunteer doctors.

At one of the camps we met Yasna and Luisa, two young mothers, who received diapers to share with all the children in the area. Yasna has a 25-day old baby and had run off to the hills with it. She told us: "It was a miracle we're still alive. I'm so thankful. Here we are, all helping each other. While some care for the children, others cook or help clearing debris (they built a makeshift refuge with wood scrap and plastic in order to protect themselves and have a larger place to eat and keep the babies in the shade). It was a heavy experience for us because the water came in from one side. There were no big waves, so that threw us off, but the mass of water gushed in powerfully sweeping away everything in its path. We were dumbfounded. There was mass confusion and a roaring noise. The most devastating thing was to see the wreckage in the morning..." She broke down and started crying. We gave her a hug and some words of hope and encouragement. They thanked us from the bottom of their heart. We were deeply moved by the greatness and gratitude of all the people we spoke with, such as Mrs. Olga Jara, whose is 76 years old and walks with a lot of difficulty. She told us she suffers from Parkinson's disease. When we asked her how she was feeling, she tenderly responded: "I'm fine. With God's favor, we're still alive. My granddaughter is also fine. She helped me make it to the hills. It's just that lately I haven't been feeling very well because of my sickness, but now, with this walking cane you brought me I'm going to be better as I'll feel more stable when walking. Because we're sleeping in the tents, in the afternoon I have to climb up the hill and that wears me out." We asked her if she would rather have a walker, but she respectfully answered: "No, thank you. I like to get around and do things on my own. I'm a very active person. When I had my little house (it was swept away by the tsunami), I would bake bread and *empanadas*, and I would sell them. I've always kept myself busy and that's what I'm going to continue to do. I love plants and flowers; I had lots of them in my little house." With tears in her eyes she looked down at where her house used to be and sighed: "Now I have nothing left... But God knows; with His favor we'll pull out of this. Thank you for not forgetting us."

We had to speed up distributing everything we had, as at 6:00 pm it started to get dark. The people finished drinking some hot tea and were getting ready to climb up the hill for fear of the replicas and another tsunami).

"Climbing up and down the hills everyday carrying children and babies is tough," an elderly man commented. "We don't know how much longer we'll be able to do this without getting sick. It's very cold up there at night, especially for the children and the babies. The first night I almost froze to death. My bones ached so bad from lying on the floor that I could hardly move in the morning."



Photo 1: Steven with the Rodriguez family, who received diapers.

Photos 2 and 3: Grace with Yazna

Photo 4: Luisa and her 4-month old baby

Photo 5: Steven and Grace with sweet Olga Jara, who received a walking cane.



Photo 1: Grace with Curicó city council member Jaime Orellana and another council member from Duau, who accompanied us down the coast. The pastor of the town, whose church was destroyed, asked us for diapers and a walker for his mother who incurred serious injuries during the earthquake and was at the hospital. She was going to be discharged the next day and was going to need a walker to get around.



Photo 2: Another one of the camps. The stench of rotting fish and garbage was very strong in some areas down the coast. Many people tried to gather whatever personal belongings they could find.



Photo 3: Juana and Marta, happy to have a walking cane. Both of them suffer from arthritis on their knees and hips. They had to climb the hills with the help of a tree branch, which was very unsuitable.

Photo 4: Juan suffers from arthritis and was very happy to receive a walking cane, as his condition worsened after the quake, and every afternoon they have climb up the hill. He also got diapers for another elderly man who had just been discharged from the hospital and couldn't climb down the hill.

Photo 5: Reinaldo suffers high blood pressure, diabetes and arthritis. He was so happy to receive a walking stick. He commented: "You can't imagine what a help it is to me. Thank you for giving us these items. I never thought things like this would be given to us in situation like this. Thank you very much. God bless you."





This is what is left of the coastal towns of Pesca, Iloca y Duau .



Photos 1 and 2: The school and the fishing market were completely destroyed.

Photo 3: One of the churches that remained out of commission. Those made of adobe bricks were completely destroyed.

Photos 4 and 5: Because it was vacation season, there was a circus with tents, animals, and a playground in the area. It was all completely destroyed. Thank God they were able to retrieve the wild animals and take them to a safe place so they wouldn't hurt anybody. However, they weren't able to save the other animals; they lost their trucks, campers, vehicles and all the cages. They were all very worried about one of the young ladies who was pregnant and almost ready to give birth, as she was missing and they haven't been able to find her.





Boeing Jet Arrives in Chile with Relief Aid Donated by Americares



Steven Colon, President of FEDES Foundation, receiving the Boeing plane with Capt. Stephen R. Taylor, President of Boeing Business Jets, and Carlos Horan Boeing Regional Sales Director.



Steven with Michelle Jackson Latin American representative of Americares.



Thumbs up! Everything went okay. Boeing's Marketing Director, Charles Colburn is second from left.



Initiating the unloading operation with Carlos, Michelle and Chilean Air Force officer and Logistics Manager, Mario Jorquera.

Americares, is a US NGO that distributes humanitarian aid worldwide, has partnered with Fundacion Fedes in Chile and is providing us with many invaluable donations to help many people affected by the Chile earthquake. Here we are at the airport receiving a Boeing cargo airplane with 22 pallets of medical supplies and personal hygiene items which will be delivered in the area of Talcahuano and Concepción. There are a lot of problems with skin diseases in that area, since there is no running water or electricity. Boeing donated the air freight to bring the shipment provided by Americares, and also arranged the LAN equipment to unload the plane and paid for all the transportation to our storage facilities in Chile. What amazing team work. We could never thank Boeing and Americares enough for their generous hearts and quick response to the needs of the many people affected by this devastating earthquake. God bless you! Americares is also donating a modular hospital for the city of Angol and is locally purchasing many other supplies for the people in need.



Mr. Taylor with Steven and Michelle thanking God that the shipment is here and will soon be delivered to the needy.



Thanks to David Sears, of Boeing's freight company, Carolina Sanchez, official customs agent of FIDAE, Paola Miralles of Onemi (government emergency agency), and the Undersecretary of the Interior, Rodrigo Ubilla. All of them helped us to get the shipment through customs the same day. Here the shipment is being unloaded from the trucks at our storage facilities. Next morning, Fedes volunteers helped organize the hygiene kits in order to deliver them as quickly as possible.



Sample hygiene kit that will be delivered to people affected by the earthquake donated by Americares and the Ensure by Abbott. It has soap, toothbrushes, masks, toothpaste, bandages, flash light, box with basic first aid items, a full box of diapers for those who have small children, Ensure drink etc. We will be receiving another shipment of personal hygiene items which will enable us to add shampoo and other supplies to the kits. Wheelchairs, crutches, canes, walkers, blankets, and other medical supplies for the hospitals will be delivered along with the hygiene kits. We will also be making deliveries of thousands of Ensure, a vitamin enriched drink that has been donated by Abbott Laboratories Chile, and also 45,000 Pedialyte bottles, a rehydrating drink for children, to replace lost fluids and electrolytes, also donated by Abbott. James Tait, Abbot's local manager, is also working on other significant donations for the earthquake victims. It's so overwhelming to see how so many people and companies are joining to help. We also have another plane-load being sent by Americares via UPS, a 40 foot container with medical supplies provided by VIDA USA and 17 pallets provided by Direct Relief via FEDEX. UPS and FED EX are also providing free freight. Free Wheel Chair Mission has 6 containers on the way with 3,300 wheel chairs and has promised 7,000 for 2010.



Trip to the city of Constitución, hit by the earthquake



Three weeks have passed since the magnitude 8.8 earthquake hit the coast of Chile, shaking cities into rubble then sending a tsunami crashing through the remains. Ever since, the FEDES team has been receiving and coordinating the reception and distribution of aid, and making relief trips to many cities in the disaster area. In the wee hours of March 17th, Steven and Grace Colon, and a group of volunteers loaded two trucks full of wheelchairs, walkers, blankets, food, clothing, personal hygiene kits, and thick plastic sheeting, and set off for the city of Constitución.



On the way we stopped in the city of Curico, where we had heard there were several tent camps of people who had lost their homes but had received very little aid, as well as a medical center in desperate need of supplies. Though short on time, we stopped to unload food, clothing, blankets, hygiene kits, as well as to sing songs and give smiles to the group of families we found camped in a field in the middle of the city. Though we'd heard of the sacking and mobbing of supply transports in the disaster area, we didn't experience any trouble as the people were so grateful and patiently waited and thanked us over and over again for thinking of them. We then dropped some wheelchairs, walkers, canes, and several boxes of medical supplies at the local medical facility, and then continued south. When arriving in Constitución we met up with some local officials and began the distribution.

I think the closest thing you could compare the destruction this city suffered to is bombing in an all out war. Over 90% of the city center is uninhabitable; the majority is made up of piles of rubble. There are large fishing boats washed up far inland, heavy machinery twisted and overturned in a powerful statement of the tsunami's strength, bare foundations where homes used to be, and thousands of refugees living in makeshift tents or with friends or relatives who could take them in. Parts of the city are still without running water and electricity and sewer runs where pipes were broken close to the surface. In the face of all this need it's hard to feel that anything you can do will make a difference, but as we stopped in each area to give what we could, we saw how important our presence was to the people there.





Our first visit in Constitución was to the school of Chacarillas, which had been turned into an emergency reception center for the senior citizens of three low income retirement homes, as well as quite a few families. Many of them had barely gotten out of their former residences alive and had lost everything. We unloaded wheelchairs, walkers, canes, diapers, food, and hygiene kits, then spent time talking with and listening to the people there.

One of the greatest needs for the victims is a listening ear and a sympathetic hug, as many are traumatized and have lost loved ones as well as all their belongings. The songs we sang were also a real hit, as the upbeat music imparted a message of hope and encouraged people to keep fighting.

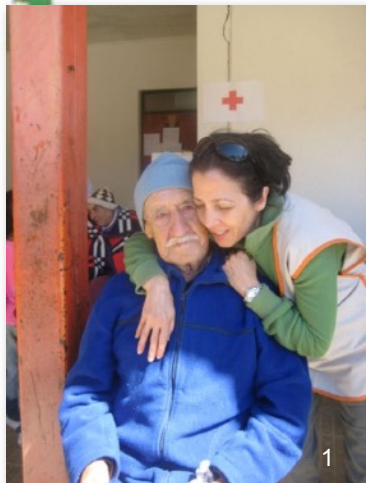


Photo1: Carmen, giving a few words of comfort to Mario, who is going through a very difficult time. He told us: "I've been through the three biggest earthquakes in Chile, and in each one of them, I lost everything. But this one has been the worst, as I lost my loving wife, whom I wasn't able to help. There was so much dust when everything started to collapse, that I couldn't see where she was... It's been terrible for me. He thanked us for our loving words of encouragement.

Photos 2 & 3: Humberto. When he first got there he would get around by lifting a chair he used for prop. When we offered him a wheelchair, his face lit up. Right away he sat down and went to try it out around the school playground.

Photo4: Hugo is blind. He was abandoned and was taken in in the home for the elderly. He was happy to sit comfortably in a chair and rest his legs.

Photo 5: Jose, happy with his new walker.

Photo 6: Francisco, giving diapers and supplies to Veronica, the director of the Esparta home for the elderly, which was destroyed by the tsunami.

Photo 7: Cedro and Amber, entertaining the old folks.

Photo 8: FEDES volunteers along with a group of volunteers from "Juventud con una Misión" (Youth with a Mission), who came from Mendoza, Argentina, to help out with the relief effort.





We then visited several homes where there were invalids or senior citizens in need of wheelchairs. Many of the most affected in the disaster zone were from low income areas, so to receive a brand new wheelchair provided them with independence and comfort that they most likely could never have afforded; much less now after having lost the little they had. The reactions we got from them though, were priceless, and we were just thankful to be a part of brightening their futures in any way. .



Jose Manuel Gonzalez is 87 and has diabetes. The earthquake destroyed his home (it has to be demolished). His son told us that he refuses to go to the old folks' home: "He doesn't want to leave the house though it's in danger of collapsing. All his life and efforts and memories are here. He barely speaks and cries all the time. It's affected him very strongly." We told him we were bringing him a gift of God's love. He broke down and cried, and thanked us wholeheartedly for having come to visit him.



Fernando Rodreau is 37. He's had bone marrow tuberculosis for 3 years now never had a wheel chair so they had to carry him around they were so happy with this gift from God. Him and his wife and children had to move to his mother's house, who had to take in her sons and their families because they lost everything at the earthquake. Susana—the mother—told us that two of her sons were out at sea fishing at the time the tsunami struck. When they came ashore in the morning at first they were devastated, because their houses disappeared, they thought their families had perished. Thank God their family survived they were able to get out in time and flee up to the hills.

She was very thankful for the help we gave them. Because her grand daughters are very good students, they were granted scholarships to study at a boarding school in Santiago, as all the schools in the area were completely destroyed.





After driving by the city center and coastal areas, distributing food, blankets, clothing and hygiene kits to the fishermen's families and other communities which had been most devastated, we reached the top of a hill where a series of government apartments for low income families had collapsed, killing eight people in only one building of six apartments, including parents with their two small children. The residents who had been living there were camped out next to the shattered building, working together to try to survive. We gave them all the supplies we could and spent time listening to them, crying, singing, even dancing with them. We had to admire these brave people, who are facing a very bleak immediate future uncomplainingly. Indeed throughout our trip we were impressed with people's courage and positive attitudes in the face of tragedy.

Our day ended at the regional hospital of Constitution, where we delivered all the wheelchairs, crutches, diapers, walkers and alcohol swabs they needed. A local family invited us to spend the night at their home, and ended up being invaluable for our work the next day.



At the Hospital in Constitution we were welcomed by the Assistant Director, Dr. Gonzalo San Martin, who was happy to receive the donation of orthopedic items and medical supplies.



After a good night's sleep and hearty breakfast, we set out to work the next day. First we delivered more wheelchairs and other supplies to people's homes or camps. Many have only makeshift tents or ones made of flimsy material that get soaked through with the dew, so with the rainy season on the way, we got to work making them as water tight as possible, hanging heavy plastic above and below them to control the rain flow and make a larger living space. This we did in several camps especially where there were mostly women and children whose little shelters would have been wallowing in mud with just a light sprinkle. There was actually a huge demand for it, as the amount of people living in the streets reaches into the thousands.



In the outlying areas of the town, where virtually no aid had arrived, we found the demand for the thick plastic sheeting was stronger than ever. As most of their houses were made of adobe bricks, entire villages were reduced to rubble by the quake. A family whose house had crumbled told us that generations of their family had been living in it for over 200 years. On the bright side, while we distributed the supplies we had, the children of this small rural village were just thrilled to get up in the cab of the semi truck and honk the horn, play, and laugh at the "funny accents" that some in our international crew had.



José Alborno, 14. His wheelchair was destroyed in the earthquake. He was happy to be able to roll around the town again and help his mother in any way he could.



Little Steven having a great time on the truck.

Ana Luisa, in front of her home, which incurred severe damage during earthquake, as most of the adobe houses in the town of Putu. Ana told us that her mother died, as they were unable to get her out in time. By a miracle, her husband was able to get her out of the house through a window. Because of her back and hip condition, she is unable to move by herself. The whole situation has really taken a toll on her health. She was very thankful for the wheelchair.



We had lunch and a tearful goodbye from the family who'd taken such good care of us. They begged us to come back as soon as we could, and we definitely intend to.



Paz, who is seen here with Steven looking at the devastated areas, is a community leader who took us around for the 2 days we stayed in Constitucion. She knew where all the tent camps were, the school where they took all the old folks, and knew many families in need not only in Constitucion but in all the surrounding towns. Her family and friends put us up for the night and really took care of us while there. The next picture shows us having lunch with her family. Her cousin died trying to save others from the Tsunami

From there we headed on to the Hospital of Talca to deliver wheelchairs and supplies.



Steven and several volunteers were received at the Talca military field hospital by request of the director. Dr. Carolina Chacón, to deliver the orthopedic items and medical supplies.



Grace delivers the donation to the director of the Talca Hospital, Dr. Carolina Chacón.



Carmen, talking with the patients at the Talca field hospital

The regional hospital in Talca was so damaged by the quake they were running at only 20% capacity and had a field hospital camped outside. Our team split up and some went to each, taking whatever supplies the staff said were most needed.

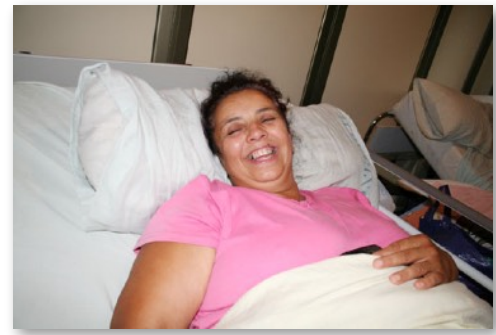
While in the hospital Grace brought a wheelchair to an elderly woman, Margarita, 67 years old, who had survived her home collapsing on top of her, though she was severely injured and had to have several operations to save her legs. She gave us the most beautiful smile and thanks, when suddenly, we saw the woman (Mariana) in the bed next to hers crying. When Grace asked her if she was OK or in a lot of pain, she explained she wasn't crying from sorrow, but from happiness for her neighbor. "I have a walker and when I leave here I can take it and keep going, but the lady next to me has lost all she had in the world, and just yesterday I was telling God that nobody cares, that everyone has forgotten about us. I'm going to have to apologize to Him now because you people coming here and bringing exactly what she needed at the moment she needed it, just makes me so happy for her and is proof that somebody does care." Needless to say, we were all on the verge of tears too. After leaving what we could, we finally started the long trip home to Santiago.



Jessica, delivering diapers and orthopedic items to the provisional traumatology ward of the Talca Hospital.



Margarita, 67.



Mariana gave us a big smile of happiness and gratitude for her friend



A big thank you to all our sponsors and those who made this trip possible. We couldn't have done it without you!

Until our next trip, greetings from our team of volunteers: Carmen, Francisco, Amber, Jessica, Cedro, Grace, and Steven, who took the picture.



Disaster Relief Trip to Talcahuano

April , 2010



Steven Colon, President of the Fedes foundation with Congressman Enrique Accorsi, Minister of Health Dr. Jaime Mañalich, and Maule Regional Director of Health Filipe Puelma meeting to coordinate distribution of aid donations for Chile.

After our trips to Curico and Constitucion Steven and Grace held a meeting with the Minister of Health, several congressmen, and other representatives of the country's health sector to discuss the distribution of medical aid and other donations donated by Direct Relief, Americares, Vida USA, Family Care Foundation, Globus Relief and Free Wheel Chair Mission through Fedes for Chile's disaster zone.



Steven Colon receiving donation of Ensure High Nutritional drink from Regional Directors and representatives of Abbot Laboratories



Laboratories 

A special thank you to Abbott who donated 4,800 Ensure high nutrition drinks, and 45,000 pedalyte drinks for children. With conditions in the camps so poor and thousands of children and elderly at high risk from malnutrition, the nutrients in these precious drinks could be literally lifesaving. This donation was arranged by Direct Relief.



A Fedex plane full of donated humanitarian aid from Direct Relief arrived. Fedex flew it down, shipped and helped us get it through customs free of charge, enabling us to get the supplies directly to the victims in a very timely manner and at minimal cost.



Fotos cortesía Emol

Our third relief trip took us to the city of Talcahuano, the epicenter of the disaster. This major fishing port suffered from both the earthquake and a tsunami which was so powerful it overturned many ships or dragged them far inland.

The Municipality of Talcahuano's Director of Health, Herman Gormaz and his team, escorted us to each of the major makeshift camps and health care centers in the city and outlying areas where we distributed 700 personal hygiene kits donated by Americares. Each family received a bag containing toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, bandages, water bottles, skincare kits, flash light, bandages, sun block cream, and more. We also distributed thousands of diapers for children as requested at the camps.

Loading the container with hygiene kits and other items to distribute



Sample hygiene kit





Below and Right: Distributing medical supplies donated by Americares and wheelchairs donated by Free Wheel Chair Mission at Public clinics in Talcahuano and rural health centers with Hernan Gormaz, the Municipality's Director of Health and a representative of Americares.



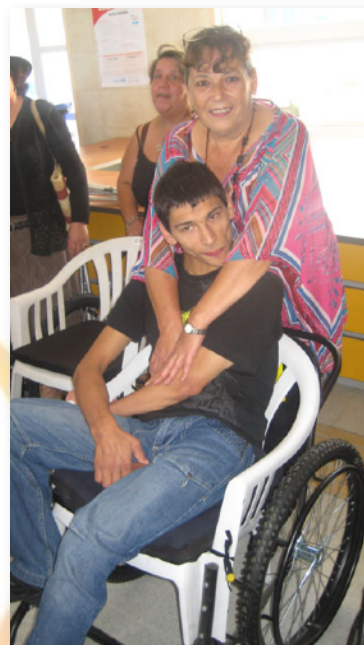
Free Wheelchair Mission
TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH THE GIFT OF MOBILITY



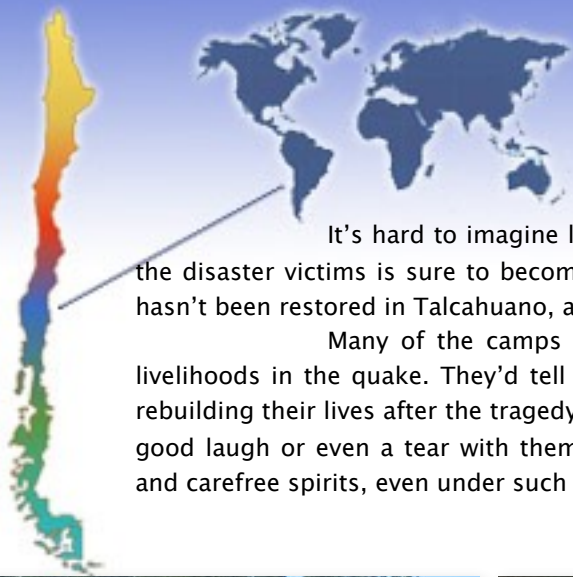
Theresa Peres, a polio victim, thankful to finally have a wheelchair.



The staff at Nursing home Lirquen y Tome will have a much easier time caring for Georgina Espinosa and Aurestela Velazquez now.



Italo Montalva, who suffers from cerebral palsy and his mother.



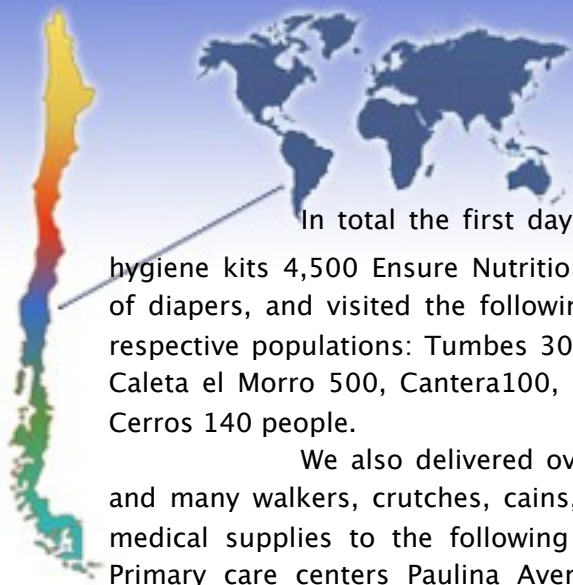
It's hard to imagine living under these conditions. With winter rains on the way, the plight of the disaster victims is sure to become even more difficult. A month after the earthquake running water still hasn't been restored in Talcahuano, and electricity in the camps is a dreamed of luxury at this point.

Many of the camps are inhabited by fishermen's families, who lost both their homes and livelihoods in the quake. They'd tell us their stories of terror from earth and sea, but also of how they are rebuilding their lives after the tragedy. They seemed to really appreciate the time we spent sharing hugs and a good laugh or even a tear with them. Playing with the children was especially heartwarming, as their cheer and carefree spirits, even under such extreme circumstances, bring hope and laughter in the camps.



Distribution in the Tumbes camps where 300 people live. Right: Life goes on for little ones growing up and taking their first steps in the camps.





In total the first day we distributed 700 hygiene kits 4,500 Ensure Nutrition drinks, thousands of diapers, and visited the following camps with their respective populations: Tumbes 300, Porto Ingles 140, Caleta el Morro 500, Cantera 100, La Cancha 150, Los Cerros 140 people.

We also delivered over 100 wheelchairs, and many walkers, crutches, canes, alcohol swabs and medical supplies to the following 8 medical centers: Primary care centers Paulina Avendaño, San Vicente, Centro Familiar Cerros de Talcahuano, Centro de Salud Leo Camp Portus, Hualpencillo, Urbano Cerros de Talcahuano, Bella Vista, Hospital Penco Lirquen and its nursing home Francisco Baeza.





Life in the camps:



With only tents for shelter and no running water in a camp for 500 people, getting ready for the day is a whole other ball game.

Photo 1: Raising the floor of the tent to prepare for rainy season

Photo 2: Combing the little one's hair

Photo 3: Washing laundry

Photo 4: Bringing water.





Makeshift medical center in one of the Tumbes camps.



Plastic shields 3 small tents from the rain, each of which shelters a family.

Social worker Marisel Pena (right in the above photo), Loreto Cerda, and Cristobal Arevalo guided us to each camp and gave us a detailed explanation of conditions the displaced are living under and their needs.

Camp kindergarten/school and activity center.



The next day we began the distribution of wheel chairs. Thanks to Free Wheel Chair Mission we delivered over 100 wheelchairs, And Globus Relief donated walkers, crutches and canes for many invalids, the elderly, or otherwise disabled people. Here are a few stories of the recipients of the wheelchairs.



Below left: Marcos Luna, 37, had an accident at work, broke his leg and hips, and was recovering at home after multiple corrective surgeries when the earthquake and tsunami hit. His wife had to literally drag him out of the house and up to the mountains on foot in the middle of the night to escape the water. About halfway there someone picked them up, however his hip came back out of joint and the pins holding his legs together came out of place.

Their home was flooded and the surgeries have been redone, but we found him surprisingly upbeat considering what he'd lived through. With all they still needed to recover, the wheelchair was an unexpected godsend.



Above Left: Grace with Pricio Rosas, 51, who suffered from a heart attack 4 months ago which left him mute, but he was moved to tears with joy, as were the rest of his family, that now they could take him outside.

Above: Adjusting the footrest on the wheelchair for John Silva who had lost a leg and use of the other due to polio as a child and only had crutches to drag himself with

Left: Diego, a 9 year old paraplegic due to underdeveloped motor skills, lost his wheelchair in the earthquake. As we got him settled into his new chair he wouldn't stop smiling at us. We laughed with him about the races he'd be able to have now with his sporty new vehicle.





Those are just a little sample of the many people we had the privilege of meeting and delivering aid to. We feel honored to be a link of this chain of love and help, made up of all of you, our sponsors, co-workers, and all others who are making the miracle of hope happen. Thank you so much for your faithfulness. God bless and keep you.



GLOBUS RELIEF

We partner to provide life saving resources to people in need



June 2010



Donation of Pedialyte from Abbott Laboratories

In the month of June Abbott Laboratories donated 45,000 bottles of Pedialyte to be distributed at health centers throughout the regions affected by the earthquake of February 27th. Pedialyte is specially formulated to quickly replace lost fluids and electrolytes due to diarrhea and vomiting.

With sanitation challenges in the disaster zones and camps putting a large population at risk for disease, this donation can make a significant impact in helping reduce risks of dehydration in infants and children. The donation has an estimated value of over \$500,000 USD.



Photos: James Tait, General Manager of Abbot Chile; Cristian Escanilla, Head of Distribution Cenabast at Cenabast, the Ministry of Health's distribution center; Jose Luis Sarabia Commercial Manager of Abbot Diabetes Care; Juan Carlos Sola Commercial Director of Abbot Nutritional International, and Steven Colon, president of FEDES.



June 2010



Donation of medical supplies by Vida USA and Glaxo



Above: Vida USA donated a container of medical supplies to be distributed in medical centers and hospitals throughout the regions affected by the February earthquake.



Above: Mayor Carlos Inostroza thanks FEDES for a donation of medical supplies, diapers, and orthopedic equipment for medical centers in Lo Espejo.



Above: GSK Glaxo Laboratories donated 10,000 doses of panadol (pain reliever) for the Hospital of Chillan. Here Steven Colon, president of FEDES, receives the donation from Nilo Zuniga, warehouse manager for Glaxo.



Aid Trip to Concepcion, Dichato and surrounding areas.

FEDES' latest visit to the disaster zone was to the region of Bio Bio. After loading up a truck with family sized hygiene kits donated by Americares, as well as diapers, crutches and walkers, we set off to Concepcion, the second largest city in Chile, located near the epicenter of the February 27th quake.

Senator Alejandro Navarro, the senator for Bio Bio, sent part of his staff to guide us to the camps with a large team of young volunteers to help us with the distribution. They were a tremendous help and their youthful, cheerful energy brought smiles wherever we went. We spent the day going shelter to shelter delivering the packages to each family.





Conditions in the camps for those displaced by the earthquake are still tremendously difficult. The largest camp, on the outskirts of the city of Dichato, is divided into 5 sections, each with between 100 and 200 families. Now that the winter rains have set in, accessibility is limited so there are water and supply shortages continually. Children in the camps often can't get to school and those adults who still have jobs outside many times find the routes to their work cut off.

Many of the men have left to look for work elsewhere leaving the women alone with the children to try to eke out an existence in their one room shelters, the majority of which lack insulation. The impression you get of the camps is of rows and rows of wooden crates in a sea of mud. The portable toilets don't get emptied nearly enough for conditions to remain sanitary and without running water it's basically impossible to keep the "mediaguas" (shelters) clean. With temperatures reaching below freezing at night, it's little wonder that respiratory and skin diseases are spreading rampantly. Domestic violence is also a major concern as feelings of futility, helplessness and anger beset the victims and, as always, it is the most vulnerable who reap the consequences.





LIFE IN THE CAMPS





Tamara, one of the camp community organizers told us, “It’s not the loss of my things that hurts me. Things can be replaced. It’s the loss of my dignity that makes me depressed. I can’t wash my hands in my own home. I have to trudge through the mud to toilets that I would never have used in the worst circumstances. I miss being by neighbors I know and trust, my community. I miss being able to work and support myself and taking pride in my home.”

Some of the camp sectors have worked hard to create a sense of community. They name passages between the shelters after loved ones who passed away in the earthquake; another named a passage after the first baby born in the camp, another after the oldest survivor in their camp, etc. They explained to us that above being grateful for the supplies we brought, they’re mostly thankful for the personal touch and that our visit shows them that they haven’t been forgotten.



July 2010



DISTRIBUTION OF AMERICARES DONATION OF SUPPLIES FOR EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS :

A large population of the victims of the earthquake and tsunami of February 27th, 2010, lost their homes in the destruction. These families, many of whom already lived in “at risk” and low income conditions, now live in camps and emergency shelters, most of which lack insulation. Due to below freezing temperatures in the evenings and the fact that most of them also lost all their belongings in the disaster, most of them experience extreme cold at night, and also lack basic personal hygiene products. FEDES requested assistance to provide blankets and family sized hygiene kits to those living in the camps.

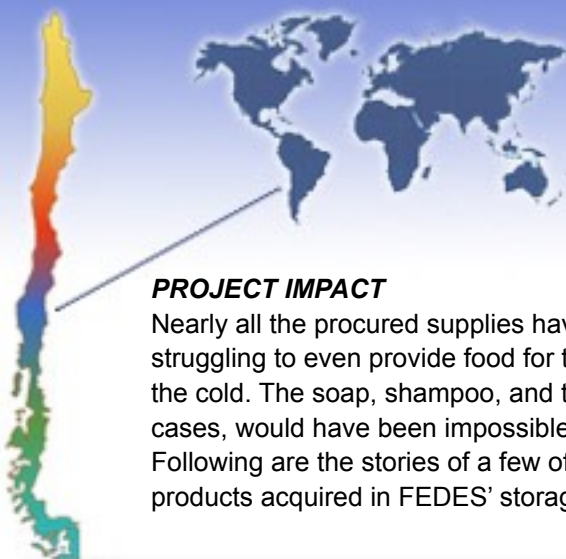
PROCUREMENT OF SUPPLIES:

With the grant provided by AmeriCares FEDES purchased 3000 blankets, 1000 large packages of shampoo, 3000 packs of soap, and a large quantity of toilet paper. These products were brought to FEDES' storage facility in Santiago where they were complimented by other supplies, then taken, in several trips, to each of the affected regions for distribution.



Pictures: Supplies in FEDES Foundation's warehouse and being loaded onto trucks for distribution





PROJECT IMPACT

Nearly all the procured supplies have been distributed in the disaster zone. Many families who are struggling to even provide food for their little ones and senior citizens now have blankets to help combat the cold. The soap, shampoo, and toilet paper help towards enabling a standard of hygiene that, in some cases, would have been impossible or at least, difficult.

Following are the stories of a few of the people we met on our distribution trips, as well as photos of the products acquired in FEDES' storage facilities and their distribution in the disaster zone.



Amelia

Amelia's caring attitude and heart for people caused her to be voted to the community organizer for a camp of over 100 families. The wife of a fisherman herself, with aging parents (one of whom is in a wheelchair), several small children, and hundreds of desperate people to look after, she has our deep admiration, though she feels it's all too much. She cried as she explained the distressing circumstances of some of those in the camp and expressed her appreciation that people were sending the blankets, supplies, and encouragement they need so much. She asked us to please come back soon and invited us to her daughter's second birthday next month.

Mariana, like many of displaced, comes from a community of fishermen's families. Her house was not totally destroyed in the earthquake, but the cliff next to it was destabilized and is in danger of collapse so she and her family were evacuated by local authorities. Before the quake their little community already struggled to provide for their families. She explained to us how the men have to go, in their canoe sized crafts, as far as 3 days out to sea in order to find the fish that used to be right in the bay. During winter, the stormy weather and cold makes this an extremely precarious job with a tragically low pay off. Payment for their catch - the unit measure being 36 foot-long or larger fish - is as low as 3000 pesos (that is about \$ 6.00 USD total or \$.17 a fish). Now even that is gone as the tsunami that followed the quake destroyed their small boats and nets which were their only source of livelihood, or washed them out to sea.

Mariana has not lost her fighting spirit though. Determined to provide a home, not just shelter for her family, she has decorated their little shelter as best she could and was even planting flowers when we arrived with the supplies.





Carolina

We met Carolina and her beautiful little boy Felipe on our first visit to one of the camps in Tome. Felipe was just taking his first steps and shone a huge smile at anyone who stopped to chat or play with him. On our next visit to the region though, when we met Carolina she told us Felipe is sick in bed with an intestinal disease. It seems fumes of broken sewer lines next to their shelter the polluted mud have begun spreading illness in the camps. She was very thankful for the hygiene packet, as the products it contains will be a tool in combating these diseases and stopping them from spreading. We hope to see little Felipe up and around next time we visit.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- FEDES would like to express our deep appreciation for AmeriCares solidarity and generosity throughout the aftermath of this disaster, and the caring and friendship they have shown both us and the Chilean people through it. Your efforts to bring relief to the suffering are rippling through the lives of thousands, who, though they cannot thank you personally, ask us to convey their gratitude to those who sent help in their time of need.







Through Direct Relief's networking, Abbott Laboratories donated 45,000 Pedialyte drinks to Hospitals in all the Regions affected by the earthquake

In July Steven Colon and other representatives of FEDES traveled to the city of Chillan to follow up on the arrival of Abbott's donation of Pedialyte to the regional public hospital of Chillan. The hospital suffered significant structural damage during the earthquake on February 27th and subsequent aftershocks and has still not recovered use of over 25% of its facilities.

Director of Public Health Services for Ñuble Dr. Iván Paul Espinoza, Director of Hospital Clínico Herminda Martín Dr. Rodrigo Avendaño Brandeis, Chief of pediatrics Dr. Eliana Feres Elfenbein, María Eugenia Cerda Aguilar, pharmaceutical chemist and head of pharmaceutical department of Hospital Clínico Herminda Martín, and Paula Canales Peña, health service consultant for Ñuble received us and gave us a tour of the hospital, taking us to the pediatric wards to meet some of the patients there who will be benefitting from Abbot's donation. Thanks to Abbott's generosity many of the children who find themselves at risk from dehydration and diarrhea will have a valuable tool for regaining their strength that they probably could not have afforded otherwise. After our visit to the wards we went to the hospital's rehabilitation and storage center where the boxes of Pedialyte were being stored.



Above left: Steven Colon, president of FEDES, Director of Public Health Services for Ñuble Dr. Iván Paul Espinoza, and Director of Hospital Clínico Herminda Martín Dr. Rodrigo Avendaño Brandeis validating the donation receipt.

Above Right: Steven Colon visiting children's ward.

Left: Steven Colon and Dr. Iván Paul Espinoza at the hospital's storage facilities.



In the course of a tour of the establishments that received the donation from Abbot Laboratories, which was administrated by DIRECT RELIEF and FEDES in the weeks following the quake, Steven Colon, president of FEDES, visited the Family Health Centers of Tucapel and Pedro de Valdivia.

Accompanied by the Director of Health Services Dr. Graciela Saldías, Director of DAS of Concepción, Jimena Brito Director of the Family Health Center TUCAPEL. Sandra Robles Head Pharmacist of Health Services and Dr. Gonzalo Urrea, Steven held meetings with the administrators and doctors of the Cesfam, who, along with some of the young patients at the health centers, expressed their thanks for the donation.





Health Centers and Hospitals in Talcahuano



Photos

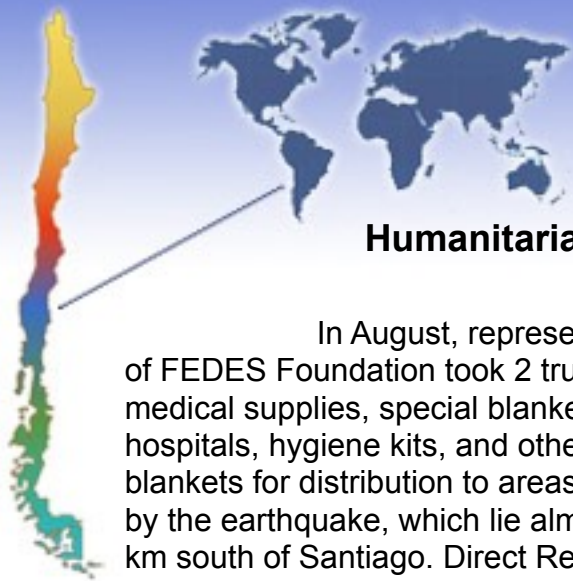
- 1: Steven Colon delivering the donation to Maria Placencia, Pharmacist of the Hospital of Penco -Lirquen.
- 2: Doctor Vladimir Hermosilla Director of Health Services of South Talcahuano and Alejandra Sandoval Director of the Health Center of La Floresta for the town of Huelpen with Steven Colon.

New truck donated by Abbott Laboratories



Today FEDES Foundation also acquired a new truck purchased with funding that Abbott provided. This will make the transport of supplies to the quake-affected regions much easier and faster and is an invaluable long term asset.

FEDES would like to thank Abbott Laboratories for the care and continuous support for the less fortunate and those suffering here in Chile, as well as Direct Relief for their contributions and facilitation of these projects. We appreciate your efforts and collaboration with us so much and treasure your friendship and support. Thank you and may God bless you!



August 2010



Humanitarian Aid Trip to Araucanía Region

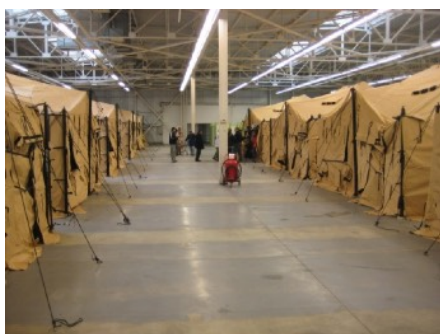
In August, representatives of FEDES Foundation took 2 trucks full of medical supplies, special blankets for hospitals, hygiene kits, and other blankets for distribution to areas affected by the earthquake, which lie almost 700 km south of Santiago. Direct Relief contributed thousands of dollars worth of medical supplies, supplies for the hygiene kits and blankets for distribution in Temuco and the surrounding areas.

Our first stop was at the Temporary Diagnostic and Treatment Center in Temuco, which was a shopping center that had been converted into an emergency medical center when several wings of the Hospital of Temuco were closed due to earthquake damage.



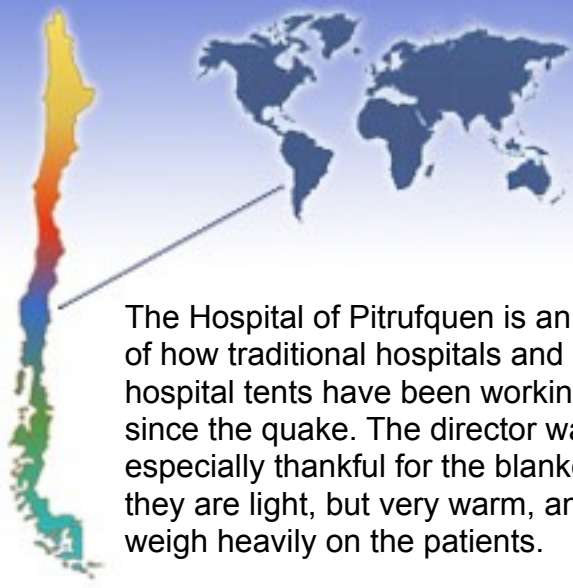


We unloaded the bulk of medical supplies, walkers, crutches, canes, and other supplies from Abbott Laboratories at the Temporary Diagnostic Center, which serves as a distribution center for other hospitals in that area. Then accompanied by Director of the Ministry of Health for the region of Araucania, Dr. María Angélica Barría, and social worker Margarita Saavedra, we visited several other hospitals in the region to deliver hospital blankets and assessing the situation in the region.



Left: FEDES personnel with the Director of Health for Araucania, Dr. María Angélica Barría, and other Ministry of Health staff at the Hospital of Galvarino. Right: President of FEDES, Steven Colon with a young patient who is using the polar blankets donated by Direct Relief.





The Hospital of Pitrufquen is an example of how traditional hospitals and campaign hospital tents have been working jointly since the quake. The director was especially thankful for the blankets since they are light, but very warm, and don't weigh heavily on the patients.



Meeting with the Governor of Araucanía

President of FEDES Foundation Steven Colon met with Governor Miguel Mellado Suazo and Director of Health for Araucanía, Dr. María Angélica Barría to discuss further collaboration and future projects.





Blankets, hygiene kits, and diapers were distributed to low income families in the rural towns of Cunco, Melipeuco, Vilcún, Galvarino and Nehuentúe. These towns are largely populated by indigenous Mapuche inhabitants. Nehuentúe falls within the list of the top ten most vulnerable populations in the country.

Many of the beneficiaries walked hours to receive the help, since hygiene articles like those donated by Direct Relief are hard to come as their meager earnings barely cover their most basic necessities of food and shelter. Others left their children at home gathering firewood while the mother came to receive the donation.

One young mother told us it was the first time she had received anything from a foreign country, and repeatedly told us, "Please thank the Americans for bringing this for us. We live so far down that help doesn't usually reach this far. We need it so much. Thank you."





QUIKSILVER DONATES WET SUITS TO IMPOVERISHED FISHERMEN

Artisanal fishermen usually come from impoverished families that work from small boats with no shelter and often can't afford equipment for the dives they make to catch tightly controlled quotas of fish. The unit measure is a box of 36 foot-long or larger fish, which sells for as little as 3000 pesos (that is about \$ 6.00 USD total or \$.17 a fish) to a middle man and sees about an 1000% markup by the time it arrives to consumers. Due to unsustainable overfishing close to Chile's shores by commercial fishing companies, artisanal fishermen increasingly must go farther and farther to find their catch. They're often at sea for up to 3 days at a time in inclement weather and suffer from the cold and wet, which brings on disease.

Senator Francisco Chahuan accompanied Steven Colon and Agueda Martin from FEDES in distributing eighty full body wetsuits, donated by Quiksilver in the USA, hygiene kits and blankets. The fishermen could hardly believe their eyes when they saw the suits. They will keep them warm and protect their skin from the elements. The hygiene kits and blankets donated by Americares and Direct Relief will benefit their whole families as well.





CONTAINER OF MEDICAL SUPPLIES DONATED BY GLOBUS

A container of medical supplies for the region of Maule, one of the most affected regions of the quake, was donated by Globus Relief. The medical supplies will be delivered to medical centers and hospitals throughout the region.

