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“More than half of the children under age 5 arriving at refugee camps in Kenya are acutely or severely malnourished, which weakens their immune systems,” said AmeriCares Vice President of Emergency Response Ella Gudwin. “We are ensuring they have access to lifesaving medical services, as well as nutritional supplements, dramatically increasing their chances of survival.”

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Partner in Profile: Purdue Pharma

In its 25 years as an AmeriCares partner, Purdue Pharma has helped to improve health and save lives in 92 countries. In addition to donating cash and medicines for disasters in Haiti, Chile, Myanmar, Japan and elsewhere, it also helps sustain ongoing aid programs that bring care and medicines to the underserved every day.

One of the programs Purdue Pharma supports is AmeriCares emergency pharmacy, a stock of medical supplies that’s ready to ship at a moment’s notice when disaster strikes. Purdue Pharma consistently fulfills AmeriCares requests to stock our emergency pharmacy with much-needed products such as Betadine, an antiseptic solution which helps treat and prevent deadly infections. Because of supporters like Purdue Pharma, AmeriCares medical aid arrives quickly during emergencies, saving more lives in crisis conditions.

“We are pleased to support AmeriCares efforts to provide health care services and aid the victims of disasters here and around the world,” said Russ Gasdia, vice president of sales and marketing at Purdue. “Their work has been of vital importance in helping to alleviate suffering around the world.”

Since 1986, Purdue Pharma has donated over $115 million in cash and products to AmeriCares, demonstrating its longstanding commitment to improved health worldwide. “Purdue Pharma is an ideal partner,” said Geoff Kneisel, AmeriCares vice president of corporate relations. “It supports AmeriCares in every aspect of our work, donating product in times of emergency and throughout the year, and providing cash grants to support our relief efforts here at home in the U.S. and overseas.”

Voices from the Field: Peru

Medical Brigade Provides Care for the Poor

Lily Bower, AmeriCares associate for Latin America & Caribbean Partnerships, shares her thoughts and impressions from Yangas, Peru where she attended a medical brigade supported by AmeriCares. Medical brigades are teams of medical professionals who spend a day, or several days at a time, providing care to patients in underserved communities.

Yangas is only two hours outside the capital, but it is a completely separate world. Most residents here are too poor to access health services in Lima and often talk about the city like it’s another country. The medical brigades AmeriCares supports lessen this distance by bringing in skilled volunteer doctors to treat patients on weekends from sunrise until sunset.

The brigade I attended was set up in a local school. The chairs and desks were pushed to the corners of the classrooms so they could be used as exam rooms and the large, concrete courtyard in the center of the school served as the waiting room and registration area. When I arrived, there was already a long line of patients waiting and a makeshift pharmacy set up in a dim storeroom.

In a single day, 500 patients received treatment, including a young mother of three with a severely malnourished 4-month-old. The doctors discovered the baby’s cleft palate was preventing him from receiving the nutrition he needs from breastfeeding. A few days later, one of the volunteers returned with specialized infant formula for the baby, and the nearest medical clinic arranged to provide follow-up care for the sick infant.

Volunteers run more than two dozen of these one-day health clinics each year, crisscrossing the country from the Amazonas to the Andes and the frigid, southern border with Bolivia. I am proud to be part of an organization supporting their efforts with donations of medicines and medical supplies. Together we are restoring health and saving lives.
We recently funded the construction of two dental clinics in Japan to restore access to care in a town devastated by the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami. The clinics opened this fall in Minamisanriku, where more than half the population and 95 percent of the infrastructure were washed away by 50-foot tsunami waves. All six of the dental care facilities in the coastal town were destroyed, leaving 10,000 survivors without treatment.

AmeriCares awarded a $400,000 grant to build both clinics, which are staffed by local dentists. The Shizugawa clinic is run by a husband and wife who lost their home and dental practice in the tsunami. Afterward, they lived in their car for three weeks with little food and no heat as snow blanketed the region. They feared having to relocate to find employment, but now can stay and continue to provide care for their fellow survivors.

“We are bringing back oral care, as well as restoring crucial jobs,” said Ramona Bajema, AmeriCares senior Japan program manager. “This is an integral part of the rebuilding process for a community that lost everything.”

The clinics are just one way AmeriCares is aiding survivors of the dual disasters. Our emergency response experts were en route to the impact zone within hours of the emergency and immediately began delivering emergency relief supplies to evacuations centers. An airlift of medical aid followed. As the displaced began moving into temporary homes, our focus shifted to supporting medical care including mental health and counseling. We plan to stay in Japan for up to three years, revitalizing and expanding health services for survivors.

Dental Clinics Open for Earthquake and Tsunami Survivors in Japan

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PHOTO GALLERY
Welcome to a kaleidoscope view of AmeriCares moments around the world

Above top left: The AmeriCares field hospital at the Kambioos refugee camp in Kenya
Above top right: A flood survivor in Pakistan receives relief supplies from AmeriCares
Middle right: A father meets his newborn baby girl at Afshar Hospital in southern Kabul, Afghanistan, which receives donated medicines and supplies from AmeriCares

Above: Boston Red Sox Manager Bobby Valentine gives a high five to a young patient at an AmeriCares-supported program for pediatric cancer patients in the Dominican Republic while AmeriCares President and CEO Curt Welling looks on
Right: Baby Naomi, age 6 months, recovers from surgery at Hospital de Emergencias Pediátricas in Lima, Peru which AmeriCares supports with medicines and supplies

Connect with Us: 

AmeriCares is a nonprofit global health and disaster relief organization which delivers medicines, medical supplies and aid to people in crisis around the world and across the United States.
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