Earthquake Victims Need Medicine, Supplies

When the ground shook and her house began to crumble around her, Lakshmi thought she and her toddler son would die. They escaped with their lives, but her family’s future is uncertain.

Lakshmi lives in Khokana, Nepal, just miles from the epicenter of the powerful April 25 earthquake that rocked Nepal, killing more than 8,000 people and destroying nearly 300,000 homes, including the three-story home Laksmi shared with her husband and their two children.

An AmeriCares medical and emergency response team arrived with medicine within 48 hours of the disaster and began to treat survivors, including Lakshmi’s son. Just 10 days after the earthquake, an AmeriCares airlift delivered close to $1 million in medicine and supplies that met needs defined by Nepal’s Ministry of Health and Population and the World Health Organization. This was just one of a dozen AmeriCares air shipments in the first month after the disaster with donations including antibiotics, wound care supplies and medical tents.

An estimated 8 million Nepalese are picking up the pieces of their lives after the earthquake. “We see that 90 percent of health clinics and 95 percent of schools are destroyed in the most affected areas,” says AmeriCares Senior Vice President of Global Programs Dr. E. Anne Peterson, who was in Nepal to meet survivors’ immediate needs and begin AmeriCares long-term plans to help restore and rebuild Nepal’s health system.

After a week of living under a tarp in a damp, crowded camp, Lakshmi’s 2-year-old son began to cough. AmeriCares Dr. Swati Jha examined Lakshmi’s little boy and told the worried mother that he did not have a chest infection. Relieved, Lakshmi thanked the doctors and emergency staff.

Lakshmi says she is hopeful that she and her family can rebuild their home, even though they do not have the funds to do so themselves. “We are just waiting for tomorrow,” she says.

Your Donations Support Patients Here at Home

After she relocated to Texas last year to lower her cost of living, 64-year-old Christina worried she couldn’t afford her blood pressure medication. Retired and on a fixed income, Christina had frequent dizzy spells and chest pain. Then she found the Greater Killeen Free Clinic, one of more than 800 safety net clinics in the U.S. that receive donated medicine from AmeriCares. There, Christina received her medication—for free.

“If I didn’t get my medication from the clinic I would have to struggle,” said Christina. “Without it, I honestly don’t know where I would be today, or if I would be here.”

“Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the U.S. and low-income patients are at highest risk,” says Lindsay O’Brien, manager of AmeriCares U.S. Medical Assistance Program. “AmeriCares is committed to helping the most vulnerable patients.”

AmeriCares is the nation’s largest provider of donated medical aid to the U.S. health care safety net. Supported by the GE Foundation, the program helps partner clinics to increase capacity, provide comprehensive care, improve health outcomes and reduce costs for patients.
In Cochabamba, Bolivia, 24-year-old Marcelo* could smell and taste food, but swallowing brought only pain. After six years of surviving on mostly liquids, the university student was very thin and risking malnutrition. When Marcelo’s family could not afford surgery for his condition, doctors told them of one other option: A U.S. volunteer surgery team supported by AmeriCares was about to visit Cochabamba and perform surgeries at no cost to patients. Bolivian doctors contacted the team, from an organization called Solidarity Bridge, and the visiting surgeons put Marcelo on their schedule.

“AmeriCares is vitally important,” says Solidarity Bridge surgeon Dr. Malcolm Bilimoria. “We would not be able to do even part of the surgeries without their donations. We take AmeriCares donations—every single one—and treat them like gold.” The Solidarity Bridge team mentors and partners with Bolivian medical staff each trip; the teams perform surgeries together, including Marcelo’s. AmeriCares supports more than 1,200 volunteer medical teams each year—more than 80 percent train local medical staff on their visits, building local health care capacity.

“Thank God everything went well and I am recovering rapidly—I can’t wait to go home,” says Marcelo. “I was waiting for this moment, for a surgery to make me better. Now I am better and will be able to eat as much as I want.” Marcelo has every chance for a productive, healthy life—his immediate plans include university exams, soccer and fully savoring his mother’s cooking.

*name changed
Partner in Profile: U.S. Chemicals

When Carol Piccaro assumed leadership of U.S. Chemicals from her father, she made some changes: Carol certified the company “woman-owned”, began a sustainability program and introduced wellness programs for employees. But one thing didn’t change: U.S. Chemicals’ support of AmeriCares.

Social responsibility and giving back have long been part of U.S. Chemicals’ corporate culture. “Health is a human right. It’s critical to a productive society,” says Carol. Carol joined the business in 1983 and was elected president and CEO when her father, Howard Von Oehsen, died in 1995. The global chemical distributor generously supports AmeriCares with regular, timely donations. Many recent contributions are targeted to AmeriCares Free Clinics, which serve the low-income uninsured in the Connecticut communities where both AmeriCares and U.S. Chemicals are headquartered. A hands-on executive, Carol has participated in AmeriCares airlifts to experience firsthand AmeriCares work, including trips to the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Mexico and Nicaragua.

Now, U.S. Chemicals has chosen AmeriCares as its charity of choice for the company’s annual giving campaign. AmeriCares created a unique fundraising web page for U.S. Chemicals and over the year, the company will encourage employees and clients alike to donate—the fundraising goal is $50,000, which U.S. Chemicals will match dollar for dollar. “This giving platform extends the opportunity to our clients, employees and their networks,” says Carol. “It demonstrates how important we think philanthropy is for everyone.”

Ebola Survivor Says “Thank You”

When Morris was sickened with Ebola last year, he received quality care at an Ebola treatment unit supported by AmeriCares in Tubmanburg, Liberia, and he recovered. But surviving Ebola is bittersweet: Morris lost his wife and seven other members of his community in the epidemic.

Now, struggling with side effects of Ebola including aches and weakness, Morris works to keep his neighbors and five children safe and healthy. In his community, he spreads the message of how to prevent Ebola infection. “People must keep washing their hands and not wash dead bodies,” Morris says.

“Those who are in other places that send their money just for us to be well, I want to tell them thank you,” says Morris. “Because if it were not for their sake, it would not be easy for us in Liberia.”

AmeriCares has provided more than $2.8 million in aid to Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone to support local health partners. Our aid includes millions of pieces of protective gear and recruitment of foreign medical staff. AmeriCares also supplied three Ebola treatment units in Liberia managed by the International Organization for Migration and is committed to strengthening health systems in the region.

Low-income patients receive free care at AmeriCares Free Clinics (top). Ebola survivor Morris Sirleaf thanks donors from his home in Liberia (above).
Your Donations at Work in 64 Countries

AmeriCares sent medicine and medical supplies to the following countries:


With your help, between January 1 and March 31, 2015, AmeriCares sent medicine and medical supplies to the following countries:

Haiti

AmeriCares Medical Officer Dr. Julie Varughese checks the health of a tiny patient at Real Hope for Haiti, which provides health care to malnourished children and has been supported by AmeriCares for five years.

Philippines

These children will have access to health care thanks to AmeriCares repairs of community clinics damaged by Typhoon Haiyan in November 2013.

Nepal

When 14 tons of AmeriCares medicine and supplies landed in Kathmandu, Nepal, AmeriCares staff made sure it moved quickly to hospitals and clinics. Click here to see a video of AmeriCares Nepal airlift.

Liberia

This young mother carried her child for three hours so he could receive a free vaccination at an AmeriCares mobile clinic.

AmeriCares is an emergency response and global health organization committed to saving lives and building healthier futures for people in crisis in the United States and around the world.