

Disaster Recovery Brightens Holidays



Puerto Rico

Photos by Annie Mulligan

“Everyone is excited because we’ll have lights this year. Last December, we were in the dark, living without electricity,” says Ivelisse Morales, Americares mental health and psychosocial program manager in Puerto Rico.

More than a year after Hurricanes Harvey and Maria devastated Texas and Puerto Rico, Americares continues to brighten the future for health care workers and low-income patients who rely on the clinics Americares supports.

In Puerto Rico, to ensure health centers can function even if a future storm cuts power, Americares has installed solar energy systems in two clinics. The solar systems include rooftop collection panels and batteries that store electricity so the clinic’s supply is constant. Electricity powers lights, communications and refrigerators

that keep essential medicines at optimal temperatures.

To further prepare health centers for future disasters, Americares is continuing its disaster preparedness workshops and trainings for health centers and community organizations across the island. The regional disaster planners responsible for preparing Puerto Rico’s health system meet at Americares workshops.

After both hurricanes, health workers saw an increase in mental health needs among patients, their co-workers and themselves. Americares is providing ongoing mental health training—including coping, resilience and psychological first aid—to increase the capacity of 9,000 health workers to address mental health.

In Texas, where Americares is also supporting mobile health clinics for communities still recovering from the disaster, the holidays will be a time of reflection for many. Americares Houston-based Mental Health Clinical Coordinator Lisa LaDue says survivors may be waiting for insurance payments to make repairs on their homes and the holidays, the second since the disaster, could be a reminder of how slow recoveries can be.

Still, there will be lights and parties. “At the larger hospitals and even at smaller clinics, there will be holiday celebrations,” says LaDue. “In our mental health workshops, I’ll encourage people to focus on the progress that has been made.”

Says Morales, “We’re going to make this a bright holiday, filled with music and food.”



Photos by Annie Mulligan

Ivelisse Morales (top) says Puerto Ricans will celebrate the holidays with lights. In Texas (above), Americares supports Covenant House, which provides services for homeless and at-risk youth. Clinic manager Vivian Mohamed (right) found Avicenna Clinic soaked with rain after Hurricane Michael.

“We Need to Work Together to Get Through This”

On October 10, Hurricane Michael exploded onto the Florida Panhandle, flattening homes and businesses with 155 mph winds, heavy rain and a deadly storm surge.

In Panama City, the storm tore the roof off Avicenna Clinic, a free and charitable health center, exposing valuable medical equipment to rain and winds. The building was condemned.

Avicenna Clinic Manager Vivian Mohamed knew patients needed medicine after the storm. “I was doing a mobile clinic out of the back of my car with a doctor and a nurse,” she says.

Immediately after the storm, Americares emergency response teams delivered medicine and relief supplies to evacuation shelters and health centers that remained open and set up a temporary clinic to provide survivors with free care. Within a month, Americares had delivered \$4 million in aid, including 56 shipments of medical and relief supplies, and our mobile clinics had performed nearly 500 patient consultations. Americares is also providing support for clinics to repair damage and open their doors as quickly as possible.

“I really appreciate Americares helping the community because we all need to work together to get through this, and we will get through this, we will rebuild,” says Mohamed.



Photo courtesy of Vivian Mohamed



Friends,

As 2018 turns to 2019, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for all the health you've made possible this year.

Because of your support, Americares medicine reached an estimated 3.2 million people in 97 countries. Every one of the more than 12 million prescriptions we provided went to a person in need, to improve their health and their life. Thank you.

Because of your support, Americares responded to 35 emergencies in 24 countries, with emergency medical teams, temporary clinics, medicine, relief supplies and help for stress and trauma. Our training and workshops prepare vulnerable communities for future disasters, building resiliency. Thank you.

Because of your support, Americares improved the clinical services available to pregnant women and their newborns, brought infection control to clinics so health workers have a safer work environment, and promoted disease prevention and healthy habits in communities from Nepal to the Philippines to the United States. Thank you.

When you are taking stock of your life in 2018, please include these accomplishments. You are making a positive impact in the world.

On behalf of all the staff at Americares and our partners around the world, in communities large and small, thank you for your commitment and ongoing support. It means the world to us.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Nyenhuis
President and CEO

Winter Festival in India

Diwali Celebrates Light

At Americares India headquarters, the annual Diwali celebration in mid November is a chance for the entire staff to be in the office together. Americares seven mobile health center teams are usually traveling throughout Mumbai's slums to provide primary care and health education. But on Diwali, the biggest holiday in Mumbai, the medical vans stay in the garage.

"Diwali symbolizes the end of darkness and the arrival of brightness and hope," says Fazilat Biviji, an Americares associate in Mumbai. "Human values are reinforced, including the values of charity and brotherhood." The staff celebrates with a meal, candles, prayers and a traditional Rangoli sand painting, created to welcome Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity.

There's a lot to celebrate. As well as the mobile medical center program, which treated tens of thousands of patients at 131 locations last year, Americares staff in India also managed a school health education program that reached 22,000 students. To prevent the spread of hepatitis B, Americares educated 5,800 health workers and 11,000 women in Mumbai's slum communities. Staff was involved in the emergency response to the deadly floods in Kerala in southern India.



The Rangoli sand painting features Americares Hero icon (top). Staff from Americares India and U.S. headquarters gather to celebrate Diwali with a meal, prayers and festive competitions. (above).

Americares also brought together more than 120 India-based health organizations for the 9th Spirit of Humanity Awards, which recognize the best health ideas in the country.

Diwali marks the end of the wet monsoon season and the beginning of the drier winter months. As the rain ends and days shorten, Diwali lights sparkle throughout Mumbai.

From the Field: Floods Ruin Holiday in Kerala

Onam is a late-August festival in the southern Indian state of Kerala. Widespread floods that began August 15 made celebrating all but impossible this year. More than 1 million people were living in camps because their homes were damaged or destroyed.

Americares responded to the floods, sending medical teams and supplies from Mumbai. In the first six weeks, Americares established emergency medical clinics in nine districts that provided 8,500 survivors with primary care and 12,000 families with relief supplies. In the coming months, Americares will also roll out a mental health program in 325 locations, provide 7,000 new mothers with nutrition and support the rehabilitation of 60 damaged health centers.

"The mood in Kerala was depressed during Onam," says Americares Mental Health Technical Advisor Maggie Zraly, who asked local people



Floods in Kerala, in southern India, drove more than 1 million people from their homes in August.

how they celebrated. "Even if a family wasn't directly affected by the flood, most everyone knew someone who was."

Onam gift shopping couldn't be done because of the floods, Zraly says, but people not hit by the floods sent holiday items to friends and relatives in affected areas. "In the camps during Onam, celebrations that would usually take place inside a home were shared," she says. "Flood refugees pooled what resources they had and cooked and sang together."

Partner in Profile: Johnson & Johnson

In one day, Lucy's life changed: In their home in rural Tanzania, she and her husband heard a radio announcement that described the childbirth injury Lucy had suffered, which was making normal life for her impossible. They learned that Lucy could get a free surgical repair through a program offered by AmeriCares in partnership with global health care company Johnson & Johnson. Along with free physical therapy and counseling, the surgery repaired Lucy's life, so she could engage with her family and community.

This joint project in Tanzania is just one facet of the partnership that J&J and AmeriCares have built over more than 35 years. J&J has donated enough medicine for 37 million treatments, including surgical supplies, medicine, wound care and hygiene products. J&J supports AmeriCares during emergencies, such as the recent earthquake in Indonesia, and has also collaborated on health projects in Bangladesh, Liberia and Puerto Rico, as well as Tanzania, to improve mental and maternal health and obstetrics and strengthen health systems.

Through its popular Donate a Photo smartphone application, J&J promotes charitable giving to AmeriCares, among other organizations. When they share a photo on the app, users trigger a \$1 donation from J&J to a partner charity. This year, Donate a Photo supported more than 1,600 AmeriCares emergency kits for families. Since the app's 2013 launch, nearly 4 million photos have been shared.

Johnson & Johnson



Every photo donated on J&J's photo sharing platform generates \$1 for AmeriCares. Learn more and download the app at donatephoto.com

"At Johnson & Johnson, we believe good health is the foundation of vibrant lives, thriving communities and forward progress. That's why we invest our resources in people and organizations on the front lines of care as they change the trajectory of health for the world's most vulnerable people," says Michael Sneed, Executive Vice President, Global Corporate Affairs & Chief Communication Officer. "We are committed to using our reach and size to make health and wellness accessible and affordable for all."

Health Care Addresses Stress, Trauma

Where disaster has struck, stress and trauma can take hold, eroding good health. In Jordan, AmeriCares added mental health services to an existing program that addresses chronic disease in both Jordanians and Syrians, who have fled violence in their country. Not only have participants eased their stress, but their physical health has improved as well.



This grandfather has learned that walking and playing with his grandson not only relieve stress, but also help lower his blood sugar.

Plan a Gift, Leave a Legacy



Over 20 years, author Joel Stratte-McClure has made multiple trips to complete a hike around the entire Mediterranean Sea. The experience served as background for his trilogy of books and also informed his decision to include AmeriCares in his estate plan. "I've seen my share of disasters in my career," says Stratte-McClure, "and I was impressed then, as I am now, with AmeriCares impact and low overhead."

The California-based writer learned of AmeriCares when he met the sister of AmeriCares founder Bob Macauley, who told him stories about the organization's activities. That led Stratte-McClure's daughter to volunteer for AmeriCares, which deepened the family's understanding of the disaster relief and development organization.

When deciding to include AmeriCares in his estate plan, Stratte-McClure took advantage of AmeriCares matching program for legacy commitments, which matches a portion of his future gift immediately. "It's very smart," Stratte-McClure says. "AmeriCares benefits right away."

For information on year-end, tax-smart ways of giving to AmeriCares, contact Karen Malner at (203) 658-9569 or (800) 486-4357, extension 596, or kmalner@americares.org



Now's the time: You can make history by saving more lives with our \$1 Million Healthy Clinics Challenge! Your gift is doubled before December 31. Go to americares.org/million to make your year-end gift.

Your Donations at Work—In Emergencies and Every Day

With your help, between September 1 and October 31, 2018, AmeriCares sent project support, medicine and medical supplies to the following countries and U.S. territories.

Afghanistan	Cambodia	Ecuador	Ghana	Indonesia	Lebanon	Palestinian Territories	Sierra Leone	Togo	Uzbekistan
Antigua and Barbuda	China	Egypt	Grenada	Iraq	Liberia	Peru	St. Lucia	Uganda	Vietnam
Armenia	Colombia	El Salvador	Guatemala	Jamaica	Mali	Philippines	St. Vincent Island	United States	Yemen
Bahamas	Costa Rica	Eritrea	Guyana	Jordan	Mexico	Puerto Rico	Tanzania	U.S. Virgin Islands	Zambia
Belize	Dominica	Ethiopia	Haiti	Kenya	Nepal	Rwanda	Thailand		Zimbabwe
Brazil	Dominican Republic	Gambia	India	Kosovo	Nigeria				

Emergency Response Partners

These organizations support AmeriCares year-round readiness for global emergencies.

- Alexion Pharmaceuticals
- AmerisourceBergen Foundation
- Anthem Foundation
- Chevron
- FCA Foundation
- Horizon Pharma
- Medtronic
- MoneyGram Foundation
- Northrop Grumman
- OdysseyRe Foundation
- Patagonia
- Southwest Airlines
- Vanech Family Foundation
- Voya Financial



Connecticut

More than 1,000 people received free flu shots at AmeriCares Free Clinics in October through a partnership with Walgreens. The shots were given at all four AmeriCares clinic locations in Connecticut.



California

Deadly wildfires tore through California in November. The fires killed dozens and forced 300,000 from their homes. AmeriCares is providing respiratory masks, first aid supplies and other critically needed items.



Indonesia

An earthquake and tsunami devastated Sulawesi, Indonesia, on September 28. AmeriCares is equipping 15 temporary health centers to help survivors access health services while the region recovers.



Tanzania

Tanzania has few resources to invest in public health. AmeriCares trains health workers to stay safe and infection-free on the job, building local capacity and strengthening the country's health system.



AmeriCares is a health-focused relief and development organization that responds to people affected by poverty or disaster with life-changing health programs, medicine and medical supplies.

88 Hamilton Avenue, Stamford, CT 06902
 203.658.9500 | 1.800.486.HELP | americares.org
 Editor: Kathy Kukula, editor@americares.org

Connect with us



@americares

Health is on the Way is a trademark of Tandigm Health, LLC.

