When Fatima* came to the clinic, she didn’t smile. She had fled violence in her homeland of Syria and, now a refugee living in Jordan, was ashamed of her infected teeth. Even worse, her mouth pain made eating and drinking difficult.

“Often, the dental needs of refugees are not seen as a priority,” says Akbik Hamman, MD, a doctor in Americares Medical Outreach network who brought a volunteer medical team to the patient’s adopted hometown in Jordan. In the last five years, Hamman and his team have taken nine trips to Jordan to provide free medical care for Syrian refugees. On this trip, Americares provided local anesthetic, antibiotics, toothbrushes, toothpaste and more.

Other volunteer medical teams have treated Syrian refugees in Greece, Lebanon and Turkey using critical supplies donated by Americares. In all, in the last seven years, Americares has provided $4.8 million worth of support for medical teams seeking to help refugees who have fled Syria.

An exam showed that Fatima had numerous cavities and abscesses, which Hamman’s team treated successfully. “The team was able to restore her smile and alleviate her pain,” Hamman says. “This alone was priceless.”

*[names changed for privacy]*

With Your Support, a Refugee Smiles Again

More than anything, 6-year-old Alejandra wanted to go to school near her home in Honduras. But an infection on her foot made walking impossible. Even worse, the infection threatened her life.

Alejandra* was born with clubfoot, a congenital birth defect that caused her foot to be twisted severely. As a result, Alejandra always walked on the tender outside of her foot. Eventually, the skin near her ankle wore away, leading to a life-threatening infection.

Alejandra’s family was not sure she’d survive—until a volunteer medical team supported by Americares intervened.

In partnership with a local health center, the team from Community Health Partnership-Honduras was making home visits to patients unable travel. A local health advocate told the team about Alejandra, an orphan who lives with her grandmother and great-grandmother. The medical team traveled to Alejandra’s home and treated her infection, using the medicine and medical supplies—including antibiotics—provided by Americares, at no cost to the family. Alejandra began recovering immediately.

Even better, the visiting doctors told Alejandra and her family that when her foot healed, she could have corrective surgery.

“[Americares] generous donations are so critical to our success,” says Community Health Partnership-Honduras Founder and Director Jennifer Smith. “Together, we truly make a difference.”

Americares supports hundreds of teams like Community Health Partnership-Honduras with critical medicine and medical supplies—last year, enough medicine for 1.2 million prescriptions, like the antibiotics used to treat Alejandra’s foot. In total, Americares provided volunteer doctors with more than $67 million in medical products last year, helping them care for 840,000 patients in 82 countries. The teams also provide training on safe surgery (see story, page 2).

“Americares Medical Outreach supports care that can be truly life-changing,” says Julie Varughese, MD, Americares chief medical officer. “These medical professionals bring quality health services and medicine to communities where even basic health services are often limited.”

Just a few months after Community Health Partnership-Honduras treated her infection, Alejandra received corrective surgery. Now, learning to walk again, she can look forward to a healthy future.

“Together, We Truly Make a Difference”

Volunteer doctors provided free dental services to Syrian refugees in Jordan.

Photo courtesy of Akbik Hamman, MD

Photo by Community Health Partnership-Honduras

Volunteer doctors told Alejandra and her family that she could have corrective surgery on her clubfoot.

*names changed for privacy*
Dear Friends,

Your commitment makes all of our achievements possible. Americares programs to save lives and improve health are only possible because of your desire to make a difference in the world.

The stories in the pages of this newsletter are just one proof of that. Throughout the year, our staff also tracks and monitors all of our health programs worldwide to measure Americares impact on the lives of people affected by poverty or disaster. Here’s what they’re reporting for 2019:

43 emergencies in 24 countries: Americares emergency response teams were working constantly where disaster and crisis cut access to health care—from Syria to the Bahamas.

11,000 health workers trained: To make sustainable improvements, Americares invests in people, with the training health workers need to stay safe, informed and on the job.

2 million people reached by medicine alone: Every prescription from Americares changes a life immediately and provides hope for the future.

This year, I had the privilege of meeting patients helped by Americares in Colombia, India, the United States and Uzbekistan—speaking different languages, but all asking me to do the same thing: thank the generous people who make Americares possible. That is you.

Thank you! And all the best to you and your family in 2020.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Nyenhuis
President and CEO

P.S.: We’re grateful that Americares earns your trust—and Charity Navigator’s highest four-star rating!

Your Donation Sends Doctors Around the World

By Tricia Gordon, Director, Americares Medical Outreach

Volunteer surgical teams work side by side with local staff to provide free surgeries. These toddlers are recovering from life-changing operations to correct cleft lips and palates.

I heard the baby’s loud cry and smiled. In this hospital in urban San Salvador, El Salvador, a hearty cry meant that another tiny patient was out of surgery and recovery and wanted her mother—now! I don’t often travel for my job as director of Americares Medical Outreach, but it’s good to see firsthand how my team’s efforts make a difference.

The baby was quickly soothed, and soon the mother herself was weeping. She was looking at her baby’s face and could see that the cleft lip that had made feeding a struggle was now repaired by precise and delicate surgery. A nurse checked the oxygen monitor clipped to the baby’s finger and, seeing that all was well, removed it, signaling that the baby was recovering.

So much that made this surgery possible—the anesthetic, sutures, antibiotics, the monitor—was donated by Americares Medical Outreach to this team that traveled from the U.S. to provide surgeries to families in need. Just last year, Americares helped equip more than 1,000 volunteer medical teams who traveled to 82 countries and performed 43,000 surgeries—all for free, just like the baby’s lip repair I had seen.

The oxygen monitors, called pulse oximeters, can be critical during surgery when a patient is under anesthesia. By providing both the monitors and training, Americares is making lasting, sustainable improvements at the hospitals and clinics Medical Outreach teams partner with. Since 2015 Americares has donated more than 2,900 pulse oximeters and supported the training of more than 5,000 local health workers in this and other safe surgery practices. The visiting teams also train local staff to use World Health Organization safe surgery checklists. All of these resources are available at no cost to volunteer teams on the Americares Medical Outreach website.

The volunteer medical teams work side by side with local staff, taking on tough cases, showing the latest techniques and bringing quality medicine, while local health workers demonstrate their hands-on skills and knowledge, critical in these low-resource settings. Seventy-five percent of teams return to the same host facility year after year. A new initiative seeks to improve the host facilities, so teams and local staff can accomplish more together.

That baby’s healthy cry? It means Americares strategy to strengthen local health centers is working and makes my job fulfilling every day.
Tom and Bettie Deen believe steadfastly in philanthropy’s importance.

It’s a belief they inherited from their parents—and one they’re demonstrating for their children and grandchildren.

“We were taught, and we saw in real-life models, the importance of giving back,” says Tom. Both Tom’s and Bettie’s mothers included nonprofit organizations in their estate plans. “Hopefully, we’ve carried this on to our children and grandchildren,” Tom says.

Tom and Bettie see charitable giving as an answer to a great need—especially during disasters when survivors are vulnerable. Charitable giving, Tom and Bettie say, is imperative for those who enjoy privilege.

“You’ll watch horror happening to innocent people that have done nothing to deserve it,” says Bettie. “It’s unseemly not to participate in helping them, in whatever small or big way—you can.”

Tom and Bettie have chosen to include Americares in their estate plans. And, after a successful career as a transportation executive, Tom knows the value of a well-researched plan.

“We had a duty to at least give back part of what we’ve received,” says Tom. “Our conscience would not permit us to do anything but that.”

To learn more about your options, please contact Karen Malner directly at 203-658-9500 or by email at plannedgiving@americares.org, and she will be happy to assist you. Thank you!
Your Donations at Work—During Emergencies and Every Day

With your help, between September 1 and November 30, 2019, Americares provided project support, medicine and medical supplies to the following countries and U.S. territories:

Afghanistan
Azerbaijan
Bahrain
Bangladesh
Bosnia
Bulgaria
Cambodia
Cameroon
Canada
Cape Verde
Central African Republic
Chad
Colombia
Comoros
Costa Rica
Cuba
Cyprus
Democratic Republic of the Congo
Dominican Republic
Ecuador
Egypt
El Salvador
Equatorial Guinea
Eritrea
Estonia
Ethiopia
Fiji
Finland
France
Gabon
Gambia
Georgia
Germany
Ghana
Greece
Grenada
Guatemala
Guinea
Guinea-Bissau
Haiti
Honduras
Hong Kong
Hungary
Iceland
Ireland
Israel
Italy
Jamaica
Japan
Jordan
Kazakhstan
Kenya
Kuwait
Kyrgyzstan
Laos
Latvia
Lebanon
Lesotho
Liberia
Libya
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Madagascar
Malawi
Mali
Malaysia
Maldives
Moldova
Monaco
Mongolia
Montenegro
Morocco
Mozambique
Myanmar
Namibia
Nepal
Netherlands
New Zealand
Nicaragua
Nigeria
Niger
Norway
Oman
Pakistan
Panama
Papua New Guinea
Peru
Philippines
Poland
Portugal
Qatar
Romania
Russia
Rwanda
Saudi Arabia
Senegal
Serbia
Seychelles
Sierra Leone
Singapore
Slovakia
Slovenia
Solomon Islands
Somalia
South Africa
Spain
Sri Lanka
Sudan
Suriname
Swaziland
Sweden
Switzerland
Syria
Tajikistan
Tanzania
Thailand
Timor-Leste
Togo
Tokelau
Tonga
Trinidad and Tobago
Tunisia
Turkmenistan
Turkey
Tuvalu
Uganda
Ukraine
United Arab Emirates
United Kingdom
United States
Uruguay
Uzbekistan
Vanuatu
Vatican City
Venezuela
Viet Nam
Yemen
Zambia
Zimbabwe

Americares Emergency Response Partners

These organizations and individuals support Americares year-round readiness for global emergencies.

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AmerisourceBergen Foundation
Anthem Foundation
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FCA Foundation
Horizon Therapeutics
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Medtronic
Northrop Grumman
Novartis
Odyssey Group Foundation
Patagonia
Southwest Airlines
Teleflex Foundation
Vertex Foundation
Voya Foundation

To improve health for patients—and ensure health workers stay safe—Americares brings training and support to health centers around the world, including one near this man’s home in Tanzania, where Americares has trained and vaccinated thousands of health care providers.

Two years ago, the Americares-supported Stephen F. Austin Community Health Network mobile clinic helped DeWayne get back on his feet after Hurricane Harvey destroyed his home and medicines. Today, DeWayne is healthy and stable—and credits the quality care he received at the clinic with his recovery.

Since Hurricane Dorian struck the Bahamas in September, Americares has been on the ground, helping survivors by providing medical and mental health consultations. Americares is also providing mental health and psychosocial training for health workers, to ensure they can meet the needs of patients.