

# Aid Arrives in Gaza and Israel



In October, Israeli airstrikes damaged buildings in Gaza, above. Staff from our partner Anera examined an Americares shipment bound for Gaza, bottom. (Top photo by Ibrahim Zaanoun/Anera; bottom photo courtesy of Anera)

Within in a month of the violent attack on Israel on October 7 and the escalation of ongoing hostilities that followed, Americares had provided emergency funding and other assistance to organizations with staff on the ground in both Israel and Gaza.

“Our support will help health facilities continue operating and providing essential health services to children and adults most impacted by this crisis,” says Americares Deputy Senior Vice President of Emergency Programs Provasch Budden.

Americares support included funding for intravenous solutions, syringes, bandages, catheters and stents, which arrived in Gaza on November 3. Americares logistics

experts deployed to Egypt to participate in coordination meetings and facilitate shipments across the Rafah border to Gaza. An Americares shipment of essential medicines and medical supplies designed to treat a population of 100,000 people for three months arrived in Gaza November 27. The shipment included 6 tons of desperately needed surgical supplies, bandages, antibiotics, oral rehydration salts and labor and delivery supplies. More shipments are planned.

“The situation in Gaza is absolutely dire—tens of thousands of families need food, clean water and shelter—and hospitals are running out of fuel,” says Budden.

In Israel, Americares is working with multiple organizations to meet the physical and mental health needs of those affected by the crisis. Americares funds provided volunteer emergency medical personnel working in southern Israel with trauma kits, defibrillators and medic bags, as well as essential humanitarian aid supplies for volunteers and those displaced by the war. Americares is also supporting a mental health hotline in Israel as well as relief supplies for a displaced Eritrean community fleeing the attacks in southern Israel.



## For Maui: “Hope, Healing and Light”

When wildfires decimated communities in Maui, Hawaii, Americares responded by providing resources that local organizations identified as urgent needs: medicine, relief supplies, mental health support and, with a partner, a portable clinic to serve as a health hub for adults and children.

“Homes and businesses, including health clinics, were gone in a day,” says Mariel Fonteyn, Americares director of U.S. emergency response. “Survivors were forced to find shelter where they could, and it may be months before they have a home to return to. It’s important that health care is accessible regardless of where survivors are staying or how long they will be there.”

A month after the fires, which killed 93 people and destroyed thousands of homes and buildings, Americares mental health experts began working closely with community and health organizations, providing one-on-one counseling, training and resource sharing for more than 150 local health providers and volunteers whose patients were dealing with trauma and loss; many health workers were also personally affected by the fires.

“You provided absolutely necessary hope and healing and light,” says one health provider who took part in the program. “*Mahalo nui loa* (thank you).”



With a local community organizer (center), Americares staff welcomes the portable clinic to Maui.





From the **President and CEO**

Dear Friends,

Each January, I open a new calendar and see each blank page as an opportunity for a new beginning.

When I closed the book on 2023, my calendar was more than full, with too much activity to describe here. One cheerful event stands out: On December 1, Americares clinic in El Salvador celebrated 20 years of operation. The clinic in rural El Salvador is a model of quality health care delivered with warmth and compassion, providing care for nearly 30,000 patients each year. *Feliz aniversario* to my colleagues and the community there!

Of course, 2023 was filled with challenges: Storms flooded regions in India, Libya and the Philippines; earthquakes devastated Afghanistan; deadly wildfires destroyed communities in Maui; and crises put millions of lives at risk in Gaza, Israel and Ukraine.

In each emergency, Americares responded quickly — and continues to respond. It's not always easy to cross borders with shipments of critical medicine and medical supplies; sometimes, we are forced to wait when we know lives are at stake. But with 44 years of experience, at Americares we know we must maintain strong partnerships, be ready at all times, persevere and explore every option — that is how our emergency funding, medicine and medical supplies arrive where they are needed most, in times of emergency and every day.

And our achievements are only possible because of your support and commitment to save lives and improve health.

Thank you,

Christine Squires  
President and CEO

## Now Schools Are a Hub for Mental Health

A downpour of rain sounds like the start of a hurricane; a truck driving by shakes the house like an earthquake; a crowded classroom is overwhelming after the isolation of COVID-19: Students in Puerto Rico were bringing their stress to school, and teachers were unsure of how to help. To meet the need, Americares San Juan-based team developed a program and trained more than 600 teachers and school staff in 13 schools to identify distress and serve as links between students, parents and the larger community — including medical, mental health and psychosocial providers. Now, each of the 13 schools is a hub for understanding and connection. “This is the first time we received training to support the emotional needs of the students,” says Dilma Ortíz, school director at Manuel Velilla Elementary School in Toa Alta. “We usually receive training focused on academic improvement that leaves out the socio-emotional dimension that now more than ever is so important.” In her town, 32.4 percent of families are affected by poverty.

Training a wide range of school staff is effective, says Glorianne López, the school psychologist at Demetrio Rivera

Elementary School in Corozal, where she is the only counselor for 250 students in kindergarten through 8th grade. “Now I have eyes everywhere around the school,” says Lopez. “There was one week I received five referrals of students with suicidal ideation.”

Mental health is one focus of Americares health programs in Puerto Rico. In all, since Hurricane Maria devastated the U.S. territory in 2017, through training and direct counseling, Americares has accomplished 41,000 interventions.



School psychologist Glorianne López enjoys wider support after Americares training, which focuses on student needs (above).

## A Life-Changing Surgery, Once Out of Reach



When he was just 23, Aldo\* lost his vision. His parents saved funds to take him to a doctor near their home in Guatemala, who said surgery would cost \$4,000, far outside the family's ability to pay, as Aldo's father earned just \$2 a day.

Each year, Americares provides medicine and medical supplies to U.S.-based volunteer medical teams who travel outside the country to provide training for local staff and free medical and surgical care — including specialty eye care. When Christopher Wallyn, D.O., and his team made their fourth trip with the Foundation for Saving Sight, with medical supplies from Americares, Aldo, now 27, was one of the 128 patients the team examined at Hospital Obras Sociales Monseñor Gregorio Schaffer in San Lucas Tolimán.

Upon examination, Dr. Wallyn's team saw cataracts so advanced, it was as if they were looking at the eyes of an 80-year-old. They determined Aldo's eyes were otherwise healthy, so the team was optimistic when they removed one cataract. “To our amazement, the day after surgery, he was able to see faces, including the face of his mother,” says Dr. Wallyn. Aldo cried with relief. “I was trapped in my mind for four years,” he said. Dr. Wallyn reported that after the second surgery, Aldo walked home, unaided.

“The surgery would not have been possible without the sedative donated by Americares,” says Dr. Wallyn. Last year, Americares provided 514 volunteer medical teams with \$60 million in medicine and medical supplies on trips to 70 countries; the teams provided more than 27,000 free surgeries, like the ones that changed Aldo's life.

\*name changed for privacy

## Partner in Profile: Baxter International

When Türkiye and Syria were rocked by powerful, deadly earthquakes in February 2023, AmeriCares responded immediately: Our critical medicine and medical supplies reached hospitals in northern Syria in three days, including lifesaving intravenous fluids and other medications donated by Baxter International Inc.

Since 1987, Baxter has supported AmeriCares health programs, including emergency responses like the earthquakes, with enough medicine to fill 2.2 million prescriptions and more than 19 million medical supplies. Through AmeriCares, Baxter's products have improved health in 139 countries and reached 85 countries during emergencies. In addition to supporting emergency responses, Baxter also manufactures products specifically for donation to AmeriCares to pre-position medical aid and help provide ongoing support for communities in need.

"Our commitment to the global community is rooted in Baxter's mission to save and sustain lives," says Verónica Arroyave, executive director of the Baxter International Foundation and vice president of corporate responsibility and global philanthropy at Baxter. "We are proud to partner with AmeriCares to help advance our goal to increase access to health care for underserved populations in the United States and around the world."

In addition to Baxter's donations of medicine and medical supplies, the Baxter International Foundation (Baxter's philanthropic arm) funds AmeriCares health programs, including

# Baxter



AmeriCares medicine and medical supplies were enroute to and arrived in Syria within days of the February 2023 earthquakes.

the annual Emergency Response Partners program, which provides a foundation of readiness for AmeriCares emergency programs and fuels swift responses worldwide. Most recently, Baxter provided emergency funds for AmeriCares response to the wildfires in Maui.

Headquartered in Deerfield, Ill., Baxter offers a leading portfolio of diagnostic, critical care, kidney care, nutrition, hospital and surgical products used across patient homes, hospitals, physician offices and other sites of care. The Baxter International Foundation helps advance Baxter's mission to save and sustain lives by partnering with organizations around the world to increase access to health care for the underserved, develop the next generation of innovators who will lead the way in advancing health care and to create a positive, long-lasting impact in communities globally.

## Our Donor Community

Andrei Dunca is a software engineer and entrepreneur who likes to solve problems and create value for people, whether they are scrolling on social media or seeking to deliver medicine quickly. "I like building things and creating value in the world through technology," Dunca says.



Andrei Dunca

In the mid-2000s, Dunca and his team figured out a way for video on the internet to earn income. The company Dunca co-founded, LiveRail, was one of the first, and Facebook (now Meta) bought the firm in 2014. "It was a really successful outcome for investors and employees," says Dunca, who grew up in Romania and now lives in Berlin.

Dunca has continued solving problems — he's invested in startups, including technology companies focused on early cancer detection and others innovating sanitation solutions for low-resource communities. He is currently Chief Technology Officer at Cargo, a video shopping platform. Most importantly, Dunca has started giving back. "I read what Chuck Feeney said, 'You can only wear one pair of pants at a time.'"

Dunca brings his engineering mindset to philanthropy and supports global, national and local causes. AmeriCares is his global cause.

It's fitting that Dunca first became aware of AmeriCares through a Facebook ad for an emergency response. He's learned more about the organization through his involvement with AmeriCares northern California leadership council and has introduced AmeriCares to his contacts at Zipline, which AmeriCares works with in Ghana to deliver medicine to remote areas by drone. Dunca is eager to support AmeriCares mission and his own — finding and implementing new ideas that bring value to people.

## Your Gift Saves Lives After Deadly Floods

While many people in Derna, Libya, knew Storm Daniel was forecast last September, they did not know the dams above the city could not hold the storm's deluge. Two dams burst, sending floodwater rushing through coastal Derna and surrounding areas; the torrent destroyed everything in its wake. An estimated 4,300 people were killed and more than 40,000 made homeless; bridges, roads and health facilities were also damaged or destroyed.

AmeriCares responded with shipments of medicine and medical supplies, which contain enough medicine to support 100,000 survivors for three months, including antibiotics, first-aid supplies and other urgently needed items. The medicines and medical supplies will be used to treat survivors at local health facilities and mobile clinics operated by International Medical Corps.

"We know that after disasters of this magnitude, there is an increased risk of illness and infectious diseases as families are forced to evacuate and stay in temporary shelters," said AmeriCares Emergency Medical Officer Dr. Prabu Selvam. "This shipment will serve as a lifeline for countless families in need of support."



Prior to Storm Daniel, many families in Libya were already grappling with significant hardship, including the challenges of conflict, displacement and limited access to basic necessities and health care.



# Your Donations at Work — During Emergencies and Every Day

With your help, between May 15 and November 1, 2023, AmeriCares sent project support, medicine and medical supplies to the following countries and U.S. territories:

Afghanistan	Cambodia	Egypt	Honduras	Lao People's	Mexico	Northern	Puerto Rico	Sri Lanka	Uruguay
Angola	Central African	El Salvador	India	Democratic	Mongolia	Mariana	Romania	Syria	Uzbekistan
Armenia	Republic	Eswatini	Indonesia	Republic	Morocco	Islands	Rwanda	Tajikistan	Venezuela
Bahamas	Colombia	Ethiopia	Israel	Lebanon	Mozambique	Pakistan	Saint Lucia	Tanzania	Vietnam
Bangladesh	Costa Rica	Gambia	Jamaica	Liberia	Nepal	Palestine	Saint Vincent	Togo	Yemen
Belarus	Cote D'Ivoire	Ghana	Jordan	Madagascar	Nicaragua	Panama	and the	Türkiye	Zambia
Belize	Dominican	Guatemala	Kenya	Malawi	Nigeria	Peru	Grenadines	Uganda	Zimbabwe
Bolivia	Republic	Guyana	Kyrgyzstan	Mali		Philippines	Sierra Leone	Ukraine	
Brazil	Ecuador	Haiti		Mauritania		Poland	Somalia	United States	

## AmeriCares Emergency Response Partners

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

<b>Amneal Pharmaceuticals</b>	<b>Daiichi Sankyo, Inc.</b>	<b>Medtronic</b>	<b>Teleflex Foundation</b>
<b>Baxter International Foundation</b>	<b>Elevance Health Foundation</b>	<b>Northrop Grumman</b>	<b>Vertex Foundation</b>
<b>Catalent</b>	<b>Envestnet</b>	<b>Novartis</b>	<b>Voya Foundation</b>
<b>Cencora</b>	<b>Horizon Therapeutics</b>	<b>Odyssey Group Foundation</b>	<b>Xylem Watermark</b>
<b>Chevron</b>	<b>Integra Foundation</b>	<b>Patagonia</b>	
		<b>PVH Foundation</b>	



**Philippines**

Eighty-three-year-old Estelita receives instructions for her medication from an AmeriCares Emergency Response team after Typhoon Doksuri damaged her community in August 2023.



**Liberia**

AmeriCares Senior Officer Damawah Saye trains midwives on care for newborns in Grand Bassa, Liberia. (Photo/Carielle Doe)



**Colombia**

Mirta, the regent pharmacist at the AmeriCares clinic in Arauca, Colombia, provides medicine prescribed by a doctor at the clinic, part of AmeriCares ongoing health support for Venezuelan migrants in Colombia. (Photo/Ana Maria Ariza).



**El Salvador**

AmeriCares family clinic in Santiago de Maria offers a wide range of medical care, including dentistry, for patients of all ages.



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