

# SCALPEL'S EDGE

*Scalpel* AT THE CROSS  
A Christian Medical Mission  
to the Peruvian Amazon

A GIFT OF LIGHT, HOPE AND SURGERY TO PERU

SUMMER 2022 | ISSUE 37

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Coming Down the Backstretch!
- A Farewell to Scalpel
- Introducing Maru
- Lupe's Story
- How Peruvian Leadership Turned the Miracle Campus from Vision to Reality
- Praises & Prayer
- Glorify God and Enjoy Him Forever
- Mission Vitals

“ Just like the thrilling pace of the Kentucky Derby, we at Scalpel At The Cross are charging hard these mid-summer months, and it seems we are positioning well on the track amongst the throng of challenges which we face in today's economy... ”

## COMING DOWN THE BACKSTRETCH!

*By Peter A. Cole, M.D. - President, Scalpel At The Cross*



Being an avid sports fan, I always look forward to the first Saturday each May to watch the Kentucky Derby. There is great hope while watching all the newscasts on the contestants, owners and trainers, and of course

the beautiful horses themselves. Amidst the hats and mint juleps, pomp and prizes, the wiry jockeys and regal beasts are primed for the great event as they approach the starting gate in anticipation of the gun. Although the thrill of

*Continues on page 2*

## COMING DOWN THE BACKSTRETCH!

“ This vivid picture keeps coming to my mind as the Scalpel Team is thundering hard into August on our run for the roses during the Capital Campaign for our Miracle Campus in Peru. Wow, just “WOW” is all I can say during this 2022, witnessing miracle after miracle as the mission approaches the backstretch of a glorious race to raise a million dollars by Christmas. ”

blastoff followed by thundering hooves is exhilarating, it is with a half mile to go at Churchill Downs that I turn the volume all the way up on my television, as the throng of thoroughbreds pounds to the final corner for the last quarter mile and the announcer belts out, “.....and they’re coming down the backstretch!” I am not sure I’ve ever had dry eyes during that moment in the race when I stand and wave with adrenaline pumping wildly through my body. “The most exciting two minutes in sport” is indeed a truism.

This vivid picture keeps coming to my mind as the Scalpel Team is thundering hard into August on our run for the roses during the Capital Campaign for our Miracle Campus in Peru. Wow, just “WOW” is all I can say during this 2022, witnessing miracle after miracle as the mission approaches the backstretch of a glorious race to raise a million dollars

by Christmas. There is so much happening now in the ministry, even as more and more people learn about our work “To Be a Lighthouse for Christ in the Peruvian Amazon” through our love-labor in orthopaedic surgery.

We are welcoming a tremendous new gift to our staff in Maru Burguete, who is our new Mission Coordinator to the Mission. You will meet Maru in this edition of The Scalpel’s Edge. After four years, we are saying good-bye to beloved Esteban Cardona, our Communications Director and Development Coordinator, who is beginning law school this autumn. We’ve been so fortunate to have Miss Elsa Bademan, a rising senior at Wheaton College, join the team this summer to drive our social media platform, help with website redesign, and provide donor coordination—Elsa’s an angel and Godsend and will continue with us part time throughout her senior year! Meanwhile, on the Peruvian side, our leadership team of five new members, who you will get to know further in this edition, is actively working and providing new direction for our medical ministry at Hospital Amazonico and our Miracle Campus. My son, Peter, has ably led the architectural design and building coordination for the campus, which has emerged overnight it seems, with dozens of moving parts in Peru. Can you believe that we have broken ground?! Praise God, and the images of bulldozers and building foundations are making it real, real! See and listen yourself to the recording of our groundbreaking on a steamy July morning in the jungle dry season. You can find the event on our website; it’s truly another in a chain of miracle milestones this year. All these things, along with three surgical campaigns allowing us to pray for and witness recovery of 63 patients; and we have yet another trip

scheduled for October! Further, we are getting ready for our Board of Directors and leadership team to convene at the end of August in Minnesota for 3 days to review, preview, recharge, reload and re-up for the end-of-year run to the exciting finish.

Just like the thrilling pace of the Kentucky Derby, we at Scalpel At The Cross are charging hard these mid-summer months, and it seems we are positioning well on the track amongst the throng of challenges which we face in today’s economy, competition for resources, and relentless storms of counterfeit culture taking aim at our highest ideals. We can imagine turning that corner very soon though, and you can bet we’ll be coming down the backstretch at a sprinting pace. We have our eye on the prize, which is God’s glory through our efforts—nothing more, but what could be more? Please pray for our stamina, continued hope, and stronger faith as we tell our story day in and day out this fall season, that we will remain mindful of the apostle Paul’s encouragement, “Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it.” (1 Corinthians 9: 24) Indeed, thank you for the part you play, friends of Scalpel!✝



# A FAREWELL TO SCALPEL

By Esteban Cardona

It was the summer of 2018, and I was looking to transition away from a menial, labor-intensive job to one more closely aligned with my career path. I was in the throes of school, learning about corporate communications through the lens of Public Relations. Then Mission Director, Peggy Gasior, approached me about part-time work as an administrative assistant. I was intrigued more by the ethos of the mission than the job itself. I knew getting on the right bus was more important than getting on a great seat on just any bus. Looking back, I am floored because the bus, known as Scalpel At The Cross, blew away all my expectations. The relationships I have built because of this organization continually point me back to the Cross. As I step down from my position as Director of Development, Communication, and Patient Care, I want to share some points of reflection and an exhortation.

As I often do, I want to thank you. God has used you to further my life in ways unimaginable. Whether you have prayed, donated, or simply stayed in touch with Scalpel, you have made it possible for me to be a part of lightning in a bottle. When I first started, I was intrigued by the niche nature

of the mission. I understood the need for mission work in the remote village in the Amazon, however, I couldn't wrap my head around free orthopaedic care. How did God orchestrate a ministry so unique, thousands of miles away? Many of you are acutely aware of the origins of this ministry, but if not, I urge you to read the history on the website ([scalpelatthecross.org/the-history/](http://scalpelatthecross.org/the-history/)). Here I found myself in the middle of a God-orchestrated story with a chance to further the mission as a humble servant. I diligently went to work and found that the mission was on the cusp of tremendous growth. I am blessed to have worked with so many who, in one way or another, propelled me forward in my faith. In my short tenure we were able to increase donations and involvement from our partners. Witnessing the generosity of the least to the greatest has changed me and challenged me to grow in my personal journey of giving. I am honored to have been "in the room where it happened" at the inception of the Miracle Campus. The complete chronicle, while still underway, will undoubtedly be worthy of a New York Times bestseller, non-fiction novel. The response from the Scalpel community is a testament to the faith you profess. As I begin my next chapter, a return to the classroom setting for a postgraduate degree, I am filled with fuel and fire from a fulfilling four years serving Scalpel.

Now for the exhortation, if you'll indulge me. As we are told in Hebrews 12:1-3, I humbly ask you, "And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." Scalpel is in capable hands because He who orchestrated creation is sustaining the mission. However, let your involvement multiply. In this crucial phase of Scalpel's history, you, as a partner, have a chance to cement a legacy. You, through Christ, can make life-giving work possible. If yours is the gift of prayer, pray all the more. If yours is the gift of generosity, abandon reserve and increase giving. If yours is the gift of relationships, let many know

the good work at hand. If yours is the gift of serving, sign up for an upcoming trip. While my time professionally has come to an end with Scalpel, my heart remains. Thank you, and may God bless you and keep you. ✝



## Introducing Maru Burguete

By Dora Garcia

Maru is wife to Alejandro and mother of two young men, Diego and Leo. She grew up in Mexico City, but has lived in South Florida for the past 21 years. She is a dedicated soccer mom, happiest when she is cheering on her boys, traveling throughout Florida to watch them play. She finds peace at the beach, drinking a cup of coffee or doing Pilates. Over the years Maru has worked as a business manager in industry, a health specialist, and an account manager, to name a few; but the work she has always gravitated to is work that benefits the body of Christ. She has volunteered to translate the church service for her Spanish community for over five years, and has helped with an at-risk women's support group for the last two years. Maru lives her faith, always looking to help and make a difference in people's lives. She is an asset to any team!

Maru is the new full-time Mission Coordinator for Scalpel At The Cross. She can be reached at [maru.burguete@scalpelatthecross.org](mailto:maru.burguete@scalpelatthecross.org) ✝



# LUPE'S STORY

By Elsa Bademan

On the day of her surgery, two nurses rolled three-year-old Lupe into Hospital Amazonico. She wore a surgical gown with the arms cut off to fit her. I couldn't help but notice the stark contrast between the bright-eyed girl and the dilapidated stretcher that carried her. Because of limited space at the hospital, patients like Lupe spend hours being transported from place to place, inside and outside, waiting for surgery. Lupe's mother, also named Lupe, stayed close by her side.

Young Lupe had never walked a day in her life due to neglected bilateral clubfoot, a common-yet reversible-congenital foot abnormality. She only knew to crawl. In much of the world, as in Pucallpa, clubfoot is routinely undetected at birth and therefore goes untreated. This condition causes chronic pain and handicapping, which was severe in Lupe's case. The longer patients live with clubfoot, the greater the physical consequences may be for them as their deformities become fixed, and future treatments become more of a challenge. Here, as everywhere, people with visible deformities are socially stigmatized, encounter difficulties finding work, and may even be excluded from society due to culturally held assumptions about disability. It is only by the grace of God that Lupe was selected as a surgical patient for Scalpel At The Cross' June 2022 campaign.

In the operating room, Lupe underwent an amazing surgical intervention by Dr. Mark Hedrick. Meanwhile, Lupe's mother prayed with me. She was visibly working to trust God, to trust that He would protect and provide for her and Lupe. She admitted she was nervous, but continued to thank us at each opportunity she had to speak with us. I have never seen such a depth of gratitude, which surely when the time



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comes, will help little Lupe understand all of this as the act of God that it is.

Our Medical Coordinator, Isaac Mendoza, met with Lupe and her mom for a follow-up, two weeks after her surgery. Her legs are steadily healing. Under the close care



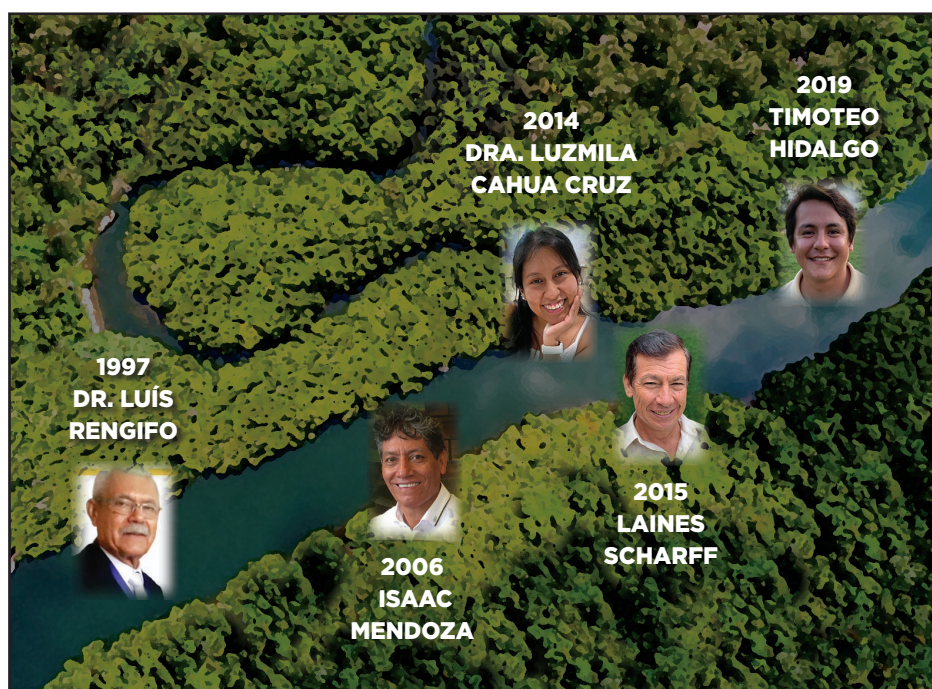
and guidance of Isaac, Lupe will be able to walk for the first time. And as she learns to do so, we pray that she will take her steps closely with God. May Lupe and her mother know that no moment of their patient pain is wasted or overlooked by their Heavenly Father. We can pray that this earthly healing will point Lupe to the one true Physician who is able to heal both body and soul to completeness. †

# HOW PERUVIAN LEADERSHIP TURNED THE MIRACLE CAMPUS FROM VISION TO REALITY

By Peter A. Cole, MHA

The mission of the Miracle Campus is to further the impact of Scalpel At The Cross (SATC) through the development of a clinical campus that supports the spiritual, orthopaedic, and socioeconomic needs of our patient population and the people who serve them. It is by intent that each of these three pillars advances a principle of strategic investment in Peruvian leadership, the core of which started with partners in the mission who played critical roles in the growth of SATC during various stages of its history. Originally introduced to our ministry by virtue of their career excellence and hearts for serving Christ, SATC Peruvian Leadership (Dr. Luís Rengifo, Isaac Mendoza, Laines Scharff, Dra. Luzmila Cahua Cruz, and Timoteo Hidalgo) has helped define a vision by providing locally-led insights into how SATC can best address the needs of patients and of the ecosystem of organizations that exists to empower them. As we walked the premises of the Miracle Campus, just weeks in advance of breaking ground for a historic event for the city and people of Pucallpa, we were struck by the giftedness of our leadership body and the divinely-placed roles of each in carrying out an impactful vision. The following section is dedicated to characterizing the stories, giftings and roles of each one of these incredible individuals:

## TIMELINE DEPICTION



### DR. LUÍS RENGIFO INTRODUCED TO SATC: 1997

**Areas of Excellence:** Deep network and understanding of Peruvian healthcare system; strong clinical expertise; affiliation with local University and Medical School; experience building surgical programs and administrative healthcare infrastructure.

**Known in Pucallpa For:** Chairman of Surgery at Hospital Regional de Pucallpa for 20+ years. Highly respected sage of the Pucallpan healthcare ecosystem with strong ties to governmental agencies.

**SATC Story:** Before SATC was founded, Dr. Rengifo welcomed Dr. Peter Cole into Hospital Regional de Pucallpa, turning over privileges for rounds, surgery and teaching of local staff. These repeated invitations ultimately paved the way for a SATC organizational presence.

### Role on Peruvian Leadership Team:

Professor Emeritus – Now retired from his position at Hospital Regional de Pucallpa, Dr. Rengifo brings decades of local medical leadership to a team seeking to make Pucallpa the destination for value-centered musculoskeletal care in all of Peru.

### ISAAC MENDOZA INTRODUCED TO SATC: 2006

**Areas of Excellence:** Extensive experience and network in key Pucallpan Churches and patient-care settings; training and expertise in Physical Therapy, Prosthetics & Orthotics; pastoral leadership with the ultimate servant's heart of gold; strong advocacy for the poor.

**Known in Pucallpa For:** Having a most remarkable testimony of salvation, being saved from an existence with the Shining Path anarchist movement; strong stewardship of the SATC reputation in Pucallpa through 20+ years of patient-centeredness and his role as a pastor at Mil Palmeras Church.



## HOW PERUVIAN LEADERSHIP TURNED THE MIRACLE CAMPUS FROM VISION TO REALITY

**SATC Story:** Following the former Medical Director's departure, SATC was in need of a local leader with the skillset to provide post-operative resources and outcomes tracking, while embodying the principle of Christ-centeredness for clinical care and discipleship. Having connection with SATC and its partner ministries for 15+ years, and seeking an opportunity to merge his unique clinical and pastoral skillsets, Isaac Mendoza was truly ordained for the Peruvian Medical Coordinator position, which he has executed for 5+ years.

**Role on Peruvian Leadership Team:**

Director of Clinical Campus Facilities and Security Chief – Having extensive experience with the SATC model, and a versatility of specialties in Physical Therapy, Prosthetics & Orthotics, and Pastoral care, Isaac will be an on-the-grounds shepherd of the Miracle Campus.

**DRA. LUZMILA CAHUA CRUZ  
INTRODUCED TO SATC: 2014**

**Areas of Excellence:** Resident-trained physician with experience in internal medicine; a rising star ahead of her time; future leader with strong relational skills and high multicultural adaptivity.

**Known in Pucallpa For:** Popularity and respect amongst multiple hospitals and clinical facilities; strong lineage in the medical profession; personal reputation for patient-centered care; history of loyalty with participation in every SATC surgical campaign over the past 8 years.

**SATC Story:** Dra. Cahua Cruz was introduced to SATC as a young medical student through her father's (Dr. Miguel Cahua) allegiance to SATC and her appetite for orthopaedic knowledge exchange. Dra. Cahua Cruz joined every surgical campaign since 2014, oftentimes traveling from residency

rotations in different parts of the country to join, and even completing a 6-week orthopaedic trauma fellowship with Dr. Cole at Regions Hospital in Minnesota. Dra. Cahua Cruz's salvation testimony began during her time in Minnesota and has grown alongside SATC teams and mentors at partner church, Mil Palmeras, to whom she attributes her faith walk.

**Role on Peruvian Leadership Team:**

Medical Director – Having worked with SATC teams for 8 years, Dra. Cahua Cruz is in charge of patient outcomes and the broader orchestration of SATC clinical management and excellence.

**LAINES SCHARFF  
INTRODUCED TO SATC: 2015**

**Areas of Excellence:** Extensive experience and network in Pucallpan ministerial, governmental agency and legal settings; charisma and influence; creative and visionary mind; gifted orator in all that he does as a pastor, lawyer, and mover-and-shaker.

**Known in Pucallpa For:** Network and acumen in the legal and pastoral context, as well as relentless grit to close loops, deliver results and see a vision all the way through to reality.

**SATC Story:** As a medical organization that has scaled in complexity and impact over the last decade, SATC has endured several circumstances in which it has needed a "Laines" to surmount challenges. Whether in commonplace legal due diligence, or larger-scale legal execution in defense or land acquisition, Laines has been a light for justice in a country historically undermined by corruption. In recent years, Laines has been instrumental in orchestrating the vision and partnerships for the Miracle Campus, extending his role from a specialized teammate to a strategic leader.

**Role on Peruvian Leadership Team:**

HR and Legal Affairs – As a hands-on leader with deep expertise in law, pastoral leadership, and strategic partnerships, Laines will be a crucial asset to executing what is his vision and passion: The Miracle Campus.

**TIMOTEO HIDALGO  
INTRODUCED TO SATC: 2019**

**Areas of Excellence:** Strategic and respected in business, with expertise in construction, architecture; trustworthy partner with strong calling to SATC and wisdom beyond his years.

**Known in Pucallpa For:** His longstanding familial allegiance to local ministry partners, his calling to his field of engineering and construction as a means to carry out his faith, and his ability to translate informed local risk assessment into actionable recommendations to key opinion leaders.

**SATC Story:** Timoteo was introduced to SATC as the "absolute must" partner for the planning and construction of the Miracle Campus and quickly proved to be nothing short of a Godsend, given his giftedness in engineering and design, facility in influencing multifunctional stakeholders, and trustworthiness in consistently delivering below budget point of project completion. Timoteo has been the embodiment of what it means to use one's gifting as a vessel to impact lives towards a greater purpose.

**Role on Peruvian Leadership Team:**

Director of Engineering and Construction – Having already completed the design and execution of the campus perimeter, Timoteo is responsible for design and building of the Miracle Campus. ✝

# PRAISES & PRAYER

By Nancy Cole on behalf of the Prayer Posse

## PRAISES:

- Graduations of two of our board members, Peggy Gasior with her Master's in Mental Health Counseling & Danielle Ellerbe with her Doctorate of Nursing Practice. Heartfelt congratulations to these two scholars!
- Hiring of a mission coordinator to help offset the many demands of this season in Scalpel's growth.
- Three successful 2022 medical campaigns to date (February, April, June), and the Lord's provision in navigating challenging circumstances with COVID, customs and in-country strikes.
- Breaking ground on phase 1 of our Miracle Campus, including a 4,500 sq ft medical facility and a home for our Peruvian Medical Coordinator and family, with hopes of completing these structures before the dry season ends. This portion of our project is fully funded, PTL!

■ Our Peruvian leadership team: commitment to the Lord & enthusiasm over co-laboring with Scalpel to support their Pucallpa community, resourcing it with this much-needed rehabilitation campus.

## PRAYER:

- Continued healing for 63 patients who received surgery across our 3 campaigns in 2022. Prayer for their full recovery, for successful results both clinically and spiritually. Pray we might graft them into the local church body in Pucallpa for discipleship.
- Safety for our lead contractor, Timoteo, and his crew, who are building phase 1 of our Miracle Campus.
- Upcoming church mission committee presentation in St. Paul, MN, appealing for monthly support. Pray Scalpel remains faithful to God in stewarding ministry gifts well.



- Plans for a major Scalpel fundraiser this December 3rd in the Twin Cities.
- Miracle Advancement Trip, October 5-14, as we seek to advance the Miracle Campus, resources, relationships and ministry.
- Financial provision for phases 2 & 3 of our Miracle Campus buildout to include a chapel and hospitality-education center.
- Annual Scalpel Board meeting retreat (August 25-28) on Lake Alexander in Cushing, MN. ✝

# GLORIFY GOD AND ENJOY HIM FOREVER

By Bob Korljan

The first question of the Westminster Shorter Catechism asks the question: "What is the chief end of man?" The answer: "To glorify God and enjoy Him forever." Many have found this question and answer to be both helpful and profound. Much could be said about how we glorify God—but for today let's just focus on how we enjoy God—here and now.

Please read these verses: Romans 11:33-36. This passage is often called a doxology--a "saying of glory."

We ascribe to God words of praise describing his character. His wisdom and knowledge, shown in His judgements and ways, are deep and unfathomable. Paul, after writing deep truths in the book of Romans, praises God for his character. Referring to this passage, John Stott writes, "Paul's horizons are vast. He takes in time and eternity, history and eschatology, justification, sanctification, and glorification. Now he stops, out of breath. Analysis and argument must give way to adoration."

The key for us to enjoy God more is to reflecting on God—His ways, wisdom, and knowledge, and how different they are from our own. There is much we do not know about God, things He has not revealed to us (Deuteronomy 29:29 speaks of this). But the Apostle Paul is caught up in praise, not for the things he does not know, but for the things he does know. Verse 33 starts with an exclamation, "Oh!"

To give praise to God implies that we know God—and we only know God in part—for now we see in a mirror dimly (1 Corinthians 13:12). However, while we only understand in part, we still can know God truly. He has revealed to us everything we need for life and practice.

Your church can help you know God better through prayer, fellowship, Bible study, preaching, witnessing, and partaking in God's ordinances (baptism and the Lord's table). However, we must apply this knowledge to our own thinking and devotion to God. In Philippians, chapter 2, we are exhorted to "work out our own salvation in fear and trembling." Paul speaks to Christians, not telling them that their salvation is based upon works, but exhorting them as Christians to take their growth in the Christian life (sanctification) seriously. Like them, we must also glorify God and enjoy Him forever in the same way. ✝

# 2022 MISSION VITALS



**3**

Trips: Jan.,  
Apr., Jun.

**\$796,200**

Estimated Value  
of Medical Care



**63**

Surgical  
Patients

**\$113,889**

Estimated Value  
of Time Donated



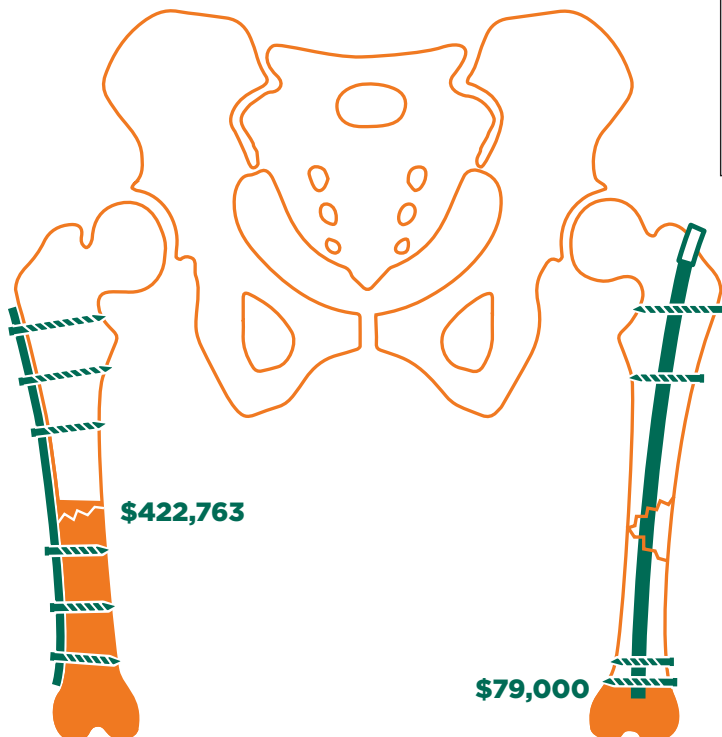
**40**

Team  
Members

**\$254,966**

Estimated Value of  
Medical Supplies

## MIRACLE CAMPUS CAMPAIGN



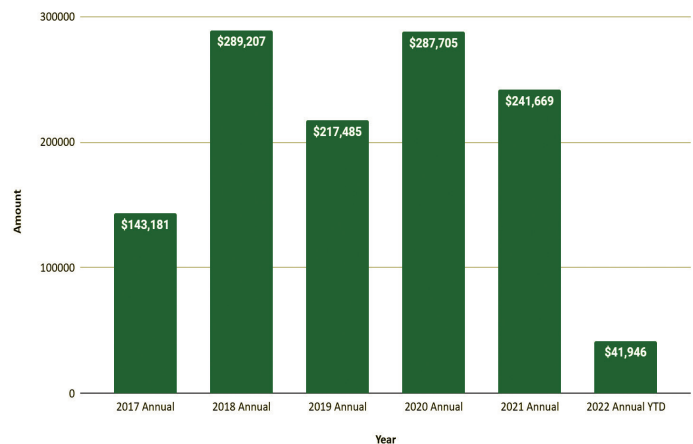
**\$422,763**

**\$79,000**

**\$1 Million**  
**2022**  
**CASH GOAL**  
Donations

**\$1 Million**  
**2023-24**  
**PLEDGE GOAL**  
Commitment

2017-2022 General Fund Annual Giving Summary  
(totals shown include Board giving)



Online giving is easy  
and convenient at:

[giving.ncsservices.org/scalpelatthecross](https://giving.ncsservices.org/scalpelatthecross)

Email us at:

[info@scalpelatthecross.org](mailto:info@scalpelatthecross.org)

Contact us at:

P.O. Box 558436

Miami, FL 33255

786-405-9958

[www.scalpelatthecross.org](https://www.scalpelatthecross.org)



SCAN ME