

SCALPEL'S EDGE

A GIFT OF LIGHT, HOPE AND SURGERY TO PERU

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" We are so grateful to all of you for doing this with us—it was a team effort. May God give us perfect protection to continue reminiscing and imagining, to give thanks and mingle with the precious people we love, at the divinely appointed times of palpable providence which grows our faith. **"**

—Peter A. Cole, MD



20 YEAR REFLECTIONS

BY PETER A. COLE, M.D. - *President, Scalpel At The Cross*

Three primary surprises shine bright for me as I reflect on two Scalpel decades: precious people, palpable providence, and perfect protection. All three weave and mingle so intricately as if to prove a master's design, and that is precisely the point of Scalpel At The Cross.

It certainly didn't start out this way. There was no grand vision to become what it has become. We started out with a simple family project, a place we could call home in the jungle to visit with medical friends who were interested to work in an Amazon hospital to help hurting patients who otherwise have zero hope. The primary principle was simply to listen and remain open to what God wanted to do with us.

It took the partnership spirit of Craig and Heather Gahagen to give the idea of a modest medical mission some life. This like-minded couple became closest friends, and resided in the jungle as missionaries on a two-plane aviation base owned by South American Mission (SAM) in the 1990's; the four of us were downright dangerous I would say.

Precious people.

It was a miracle that we captured a

chance to purchase some land from SAM to build a guest lodge to sleep sixteen, affectionately coming to be known as Jungle Bunks, directly inside the security gates of the compound. In fact half the land is under water half the year because of the Amazon rains which made it expendable for landing airplanes but perfect for us. The concept to sell to us had been blunted for years by those who would claim mission creep or loss of control, but a one-year window assignment of a SAM Field Director from a former hometown, gave us a green light to trigger the purchase; and we quickly plunged a flag into the ground.

Palpable providence.

Although we have endured confiscated medical supplies, attacks on team members by venomous snakes and wild monkeys, a fair share of Machu Picchu's revenge, over a dozen flat tires, terrifying tarantulas, flight cancellations, broken autoclaves and stolen equipment, by God's grace and mercy we have never lost a patient despite so many major reconstructive surgeries, and we have brought all our hundreds of American travelers home in one piece.

Perfect protection.

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20 YEAR REFLECTIONS

I am awestruck by the three Mission Directors who have blessed Scalpel At The Cross, each with more than five years of service. Lisa Schroder, Peggy Gasior, and Kara Rodriguez are amongst the most impressive people I have ever had the privilege to work with in my entire career in any space, and these women of great faith were there for Scalpel with top percentile sacrifice. Lisa had a relentless work ethic, was unafraid of very large visions, and her process orientation combined with strategic mind helped establish a strong foundation on which to build. Peggy is one of the most empathic and relational people I have ever known, and opened the doors wide to a younger generation of participants and leaders who would begin helping to write our future. With a blend of faith and courage to go far beyond her safety zone, she conquered the impossible. Kara, our current Mission Director, is simply larger than life, an extraverted and effusively positive face of today's mission, supremely detail oriented, and a marvelously talented fit for our expanding scope of ministry. I get to

call them all, dear friends.

Precious people.

Despite a model to date of occupying our guest lodge but two months a year, we've been able to avert the ever threatening phenomenon of squatting, the socialistic policy of the left-leaning headship of Peru, which legally protects invaders after occupying land or structure for more than a few weeks; and despite our all-wooden home standing on fifteen foot pilings above the high water mark, we've avoided disaster from fire and earthquake which frequent the region particularly in the dry season; and despite the density of Dengue and Malaria in the rainforest which is endemic, none of ours travelers has ever been stricken with the mosquito borne micro-organisms.

Perfect protection.

After fifteen years and twenty-five surgical campaigns, I had Peruvian leaders from the community approach me with an appeal to grow Scalpel At The Cross to meet ministry and healthcare gaps in the region; a light went on for me—we had profound

local credibility. This realization was underscored by the simultaneous offer of a local Swiss Christian Mission organization to practically cede new land to Scalpel At The Cross with one request, use it for expansion of our medical services.

Palpable providence.

This is a tip-of-the-iceberg essay of a much longer play with many acts, casted by rich and talented actresses, ten thousand volunteers to which I often allude, a kaleidoscope of perfectly timed donations, glued together by beautiful new staff members and our passionate three kids. This twentieth year of Scalpel At The Cross, Nancy and I reach the 50% milestone of a forty year marriage; ministry and marriage, what better way to give thanks, serve others, follow our God? We are so grateful to all of you for doing this with us—it was a team effort. May God give us perfect protection to continue reminiscing and imagining, to give thanks and mingle with the precious people we love, at the divinely appointed times of palpable providence which grows our faith. ■



INTRODUCTIONS

BY VANNIA ENRIQUEZ



Introducing Yukiko Centeno.

Born in Lima, Peru, to Japanese and Peruvian descent, Yuki embodies a beautiful blend of cultural richness and creativity, the essence she now brings to the team as Creative Director.

Her journey in the world of graphic design began with a focus on advertising, collaborating with global brands before shifting her focus to local entrepreneurs. She holds a BFA in Graphic Design & furthered her studies in Branding Management. Her selfless heart for ministry infuses every project with authenticity and purpose. Her creative eye, nurtured through years of experience, breathes life into our mission, putting heart behind the brand.

For Yuki, contributing to Scalpel's mission as a lighthouse for Christ in the Peruvian Amazon region of South America holds immense significance, as it allows her to not only help her fellow Peruvians but also spread hope and healing in the name of Christ.

She is married to her husband of 18 years, Franco, and is the mom of two teenage kids, Lucca(15) & Akemi(13). Whether she's spending time with her family, serving at church, tending to her garden, decorating spaces, or exploring the mountains, Yuki approaches each endeavor with a spirit of intentionality and joy. We're thrilled to welcome her to our team, knowing that her unique perspective and unwavering dedication will play a vital role in shaping our journey forward! ■

BRANDING REFRESH

BY YUKIKO CENTENO - *Creative Director, Scalpel At The Cross*

When working as a designer in a creative role, I find myself often thinking about our Creator God and the beauty he so intentionally surrounded us with in this world to be inspired by. When I was entrusted with the job of giving Scalpel At The Cross a branding refresh I felt a very humbling responsibility. Changing a graphic that has represented this amazing organization for 20 years was not to be taken lightly. So I prayed for inspiration to come from the greatest artist I know, our Creator. I had the blessing to work alongside a wonderful team that gave me feedback to make sure we stayed true to the mission and vision of the organization. On the right you can see the outcome of that work. I hope and pray that the new vibrant colors and graphics will only help to shine an even brighter light to the work our team and volunteers are already doing with the people in Pucallpa for God's glory.

"This month in 2024, on our 20th year anniversary, I am eager to welcome you to our freshened new look and logo design. We are so excited to blast out of the gate with our new feel for Scalpel's Edge. A lot of planning, feedback and prayerful consideration went into modifying something we held so dear, our origin-logo, which we have ridden from obscurity to miraculous success filled with warm memories. Our name remains and its symbolism still applies, nothing to tamper with there! I often say that the status quo is a killer, and organizations that don't adjust will wither. Recalibration is healthy, it can bring people together, help focus, raise awareness, amend and align a ministry. We hope you like it."

Dr. Peter Cole, M.D. - President of Scalpel At The Cross



TWO DECADES TOWARDS ETERNITY

BY CHANNING COLE



The picture on the left depicts my inaugural journey to Pucallpa, at the age of six months old. As you can tell, I was a sizeable baby!

In the photos above, you'll find me at the age of 3, darting off and finding myself lost in a hut within the heart of the Amazon Jungle.

This past January in the vibrant city of Miami, a place dear to our hearts, Scalpel At The Cross celebrated 20 years since its inception. In life, there are often one or perhaps a few events that profoundly shape an individual. However, for me it was not merely a single moment, but rather a blessed upbringing of engaging experiences alongside the startup of this foundation. I feel the impact being made, not just to others, but even more so on myself.

What began as a modest family project and a childhood jungle gym, blossomed into a living organism that is growing before our very eyes. Scalpel transcends purely human construction; instead, it reflects God's divine presence that works through a collective to showcase His boundless love.

Here are a few insights I've gleaned about Scalpel over its 20 years of existence. Scalpel embodies love through actions, not merely words. It strives to care for others holistically, not one dimensionally. SATC generates collaboration, with the intention to invest. This foundation underscores the importance of the church body, not solely the individual. Finally, Scalpel is dedicated to nurturing a sustainable model that empowers a community to live as God intends us to for eternity.

The goal has never been to make

Scalpel as big as possible. However, when a foundation operates with integrity, its mission naturally flourishes. This concept was beautifully displayed on January 26th at the Miami Gala Fundraiser, in a city that has played an instrumental role in cultivating Scalpel. Representing the largest SATC event to date, the evening showcased 8 months of diligent effort led by a Gala committee, building upon our Miami network as it progresses into the mission's stateside future.

I witnessed the team's creativity in action as it crafted overarching strategies to enhance donor impact by leveraging personal networks, collaborating with ministry partners, and engaging with the UMiami health system, among other approaches.

Some of the Gala highlights featured vibrant Peruvian cuisine and beverages, colorful displays, cultural markets, and captivating dance performances. Gathering from all over the world, in the same room were dedicated missionaries, influential business leaders, renowned medical icons, and motivated students, all joined together for a common purpose: serving Pucallpa! Among the audience were both longtime close friends and supporters of Scalpel, as well as newcomers encountering the foundation for the first time.

The program included a multitude of SATC representatives speaking about the miracle that has unfolded over the past two decades. However, not only did it look back to reflect on what's been done, but the show also strove to soak in the present moment, while painting a picture for what the future holds with a united effort. The night instilled hope as we think about the next generation of Scalpel.

Both my own story and those of numerous others who engage with the mission echo a similar sentiment. Serving Scalpel in any capacity begins with a desire to help people in a practical way, but as we continue to support, there's a quick realization that we've been more impacted than anything we've ever done ourselves. Personally, I find that to be a magnificent testament to the greatness of our God.

So here is my call, whether with your time, network, or money, be generous with the blessings you've been given, and discover just how much more you'll receive in the process. This January offered a remarkable glimpse into the astounding work underway, yet I firmly believe that God is only just beginning, and I am thrilled to be along for the ride! ■



MIAMI - FL | JANUARY 2024



We are so blessed to report
that the Miami Miracle Gala
raised upwards of **\$350,000**

Thank you!



IS THERE AN IMPACT?

BY TIMOTEO HIDALGO

Team Leader of Building and Construction in Peru

That was the question we tried to answer at the beautiful Miami Gala sponsored by Scalpel At The Cross. We had a great time and were able to see Scalpel's true impact on the lives of the people it helps.

But will there only be an impact on this world, will there only be an impact on our day to day life, or perhaps there is an impact on the kingdom of heaven? Throughout history, Christians took steps of faith with a single goal of bringing the gospel to the entire world. This often meant a partial or total dispossession of their material goods and, in other cases, a little more drastic, surrendering their own lives. Will that remain without just payment before a God and Father like ours? Those of us who hear the voice of the call to join in the work of God must be clear that nothing in the kingdom of heaven is left without fair payment. The just God will give to each person according to his work,

as stated in the letter to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 3:10-15), where the apostle Paul clearly expresses that each of us chooses what to invest in the kingdom and that on that final day, the Lord will give us a just reward. In Matthew 6:19-21, the Scripture encourages us to store treasures in heaven, where the Lord Himself keeps and secures our investments. It encourages us not to see treasures on earth as something to grasp but to set our sights on heaven. But this would lead us to ask ourselves the question: How can I invest in the kingdom of heaven? Many times, we think that we have nothing to offer to our Lord, but there is no thought further from the truth. Each of us has something to give to the kingdom of heaven, whether you want to invest it through your skills and time or in prayer for the advancement of the kingdom. You can go down the well or be the one to hold the rope of those who go down.

Thinking about what we experienced at the Scalpel at the Cross dinner, we can really see the different scenarios where the Lord allows his children to serve His Kingdom. We saw those who, for many years, go down the well, dedicating their professional skills and their time to serve their neighbors, and at the same time, we had the opportunity to be part of those who remain to hold the rope through our prayers and contributions.

Nothing we do will remain without fair payment for those who love our Lord Jesus Christ. ■



PRAISES & PRAYERS

BY NANCY COLE

Director, Prayer Posse, Scalpel At The Cross



PRAISES

- Improved partnership with Hospital Amazónico during February's medical campaign to Pucallpa where we evaluated 84 patients who'd been triaged previously (due to the orthopaedic specialists in upper extremity on this team) and of which 39 were identified as potential surgical candidates, culminating in 30 highly complex, life changing surgeries delivered. Mil Palmeras Church co-labored in providing compassionate care to patients through prayer, gospel sharing, and discipleship connection to area churches. New with this campaign, and in response to a request from the Amazónico trauma team, Scalpel surgeons met with the Peruvian surgeons/interns prior to starting surgeries together, which allowed for greater understanding and patient review and translated into increased collaboration in our patient care model throughout the campaign. The hospital staff and local translators who partnered with us throughout the week also heard the plan of salvation at a luncheon we hosted prior to returning state side, during which time they were invited to accept Christ as their personal Lord & Savior. Team members were blessed, protected, encouraged, stretched, and deepened by this Amazon experience of "giving by going," and felt as though the blessings bestowed upon them by going far outweighed the sacrifices made to travel and serve.
- Outstanding March medical campaign to Pucallpa (under a new administrative lead) where we performed 23 successful surgeries. Our team of 17 volunteers from 5 states ensured every patient

received deserved care. Our clinic sessions provided medical evaluations to 70 patients.

- Exquisite January 26th Miracle for Peru Miami Fundraising Gala centering on magnifying the Lord's worth while building out our Miami headquarter's network. Dr. Ben Carson (accompanied by wife Candy), shared his riveting testimony of being raised in poverty by an illiterate, single mother with a third-grade education as well as the intricacies of his unprecedented triumph in successfully separating Siamese twins conjoined at the head and pioneering a procedure for children with unremitting seizure disorders. Carson's "against all odds" determination coupled with his profound faith in the Lord echoes Scalpel's own narrative of trusting God while leaning into complicated patient presentations amidst austere Amazonian conditions. Guests were touched by the fragrant aroma of Christ which permeated all aspects of our Gala Program. Donations of \$350K+ are still being generously given, thanks be to God!
- Build out of our orthotic/prosthetic/rehabilitation center advances amidst the rainy season and is projected to be completed this Fall, Lord willing!
- Expansion of our leadership team, and successful onboarding of a Director of Annual Giving, Program Manager of Operations & Development, Creative Director, and Media Consultant have helped add depth, breadth, and professionalism in meeting our

growth and telling the story of the impact of Scalpel's work.

- Successful travel to Curahuasi of Mission Director Kara Rodriguez for a better understanding of the Diospi model from an administrative perspective.
- Transitioning of German Prosthetist Daniel Müller and family to Pucallpa from Diospi Suyana Hospital this summer.

PRAYERS

- Based on the training & expertise of our volunteer surgeons, we plan to try and integrate educational exchange during all upcoming medical campaigns to catalyze knowledge and understanding of orthopaedics/rehabilitation as was done during our February campaign when a Scalpel surgeon presented on Trimalleolar Ankle Fractures for the benefit of our Peruvian surgeons/interns.
- May 17-25 and July administrative/vision trips with Dr. & Mrs. Peter Cole, and Peter Cole Jr. for oversight of construction projects, and development of strategy and Peruvian personnel to carry out our care delivery model, while scaling equipment and instrumentation challenges associated with ongoing build-out and outfitting of the Miracle Campus.
- Board meeting, June 6-9, in Oklahoma City. ■

JAN - DEC 2023 MISSION VITALS

4 Number of Trips

April | 6 Total Hip Replacements
July | 7 Total Knee Replacements

92 Surgical Patients

66 Team Members

\$1,059,500 Estimated Value of Care (1)

\$200,476 Estimated Value of Volunteer's Time (2)

\$497,154 Estimated Value of Medical Supplies Donated (2)

365 Number of patients evaluated in clinic



JAN - MAY 2024 MISSION VITALS

Number of Trips **2**

Surgical Patients **53**

Team Members **32**

Estimated Value of Care (1) **\$465,200**

Estimated Value of Volunteer's Time (2) **\$94,963**

Estimated Value of Medical Supplies Donated (3) **\$44,760**

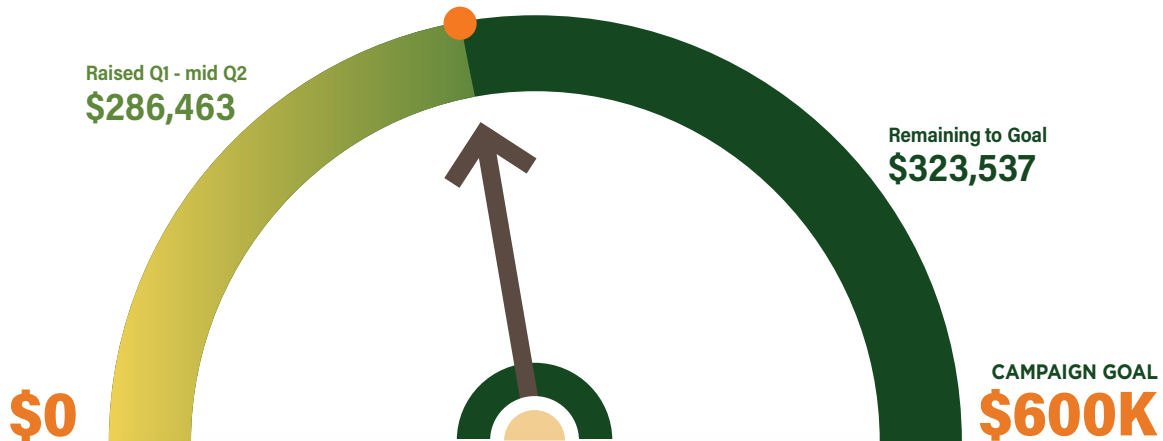
Number of patients evaluated in clinic **154**

Mission Vitals are reported to demonstrate objective estimates of contribution to patient care. This tool is only one measure of ministry vitality.

Scalpel At The Cross acknowledges and believes in the immeasurability of the Spiritual Impact of our teams' efforts in this domain.

We hope, rather, that the focus is appreciated in the reflections, anecdotes, and expression in the Scalpel's Edge editions which point to the incalculability of the Lord's hand at work. Spiritual Impact reports from each trip are available upon request.

2024 GENERAL FUND GIVING CAMPAIGN



(1) **Estimated Value of Care:** Value of Patient Care = Assigning dollar value to each surgical/clinical procedure performed, categorized by procedure type.

These values, though approximations, are conservative by U.S. standards.

(2) **Estimated Value of Volunteer's Time:** Opportunity Cost of Medical Professionals = (Daily Mean Income of Medical Professionals) x (Number of Days Spent on Campaigns).

(3) **Estimated Value of Medical Supplies Donated:** Value of Medical Supplies = Valuation Assessments provided by (Contributing Medical Device) + (Surgical Supply Company).



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