

Tita's Story, continued from p. 1

awesome it was to just spend time with the patients and the OpWalk team and help them.

I tried to talk with every patient there and learn from them. One that I really connected with was Yadira. She was such fun to talk with, and we're staying in touch!

I also made friends with many of the volunteers, and I plan to help again the next time they come to Panama.

They really changed my life. After this experience, being able to help people is really important to me.

Of course, every person I met and translated for inspired me. But when it was time for Tita to have her surgery, I'm not sure who was more excited — me or her.

Everything went well, and I was able to be there for her, like she's done for me so many times.

Then seeing her begin to be able to walk again was amazing! It took her a little over a week to recover from the operation, but now she can walk and the pain is nearly gone.

I'm looking forward to seeing her dance again soon.

This is all because of Operation Walk and people like you who are giving

Samuel spent several hours each day translating for the Operation Walk team and developed lasting friendships with several of them.



Special Invitation:

JOIN US THIS SEPTEMBER!
Walk of Dreams
GALA
Thursday, September 21, 2017
5:30 pm * Jet Linx Denver
For information on registration and sponsorships:
www.walkofdreams.org or 303-715-7627
Benefiting:
WALK
OPERATION WALK DENVER
restoring the joy of walking

to support their work. So, I want to say **THANK YOU.**

This means so much to me, to Tita, and to each person here who is walking for the first time in years, or even decades, because of you.

I'd like to ask you to make a gift to support Operation Walk Denver, so that they can restore the joy of walking (and dancing!) for more people like my Tita. **Your gift will make a difference.**

I know.

Because it made a difference for me.

OpWalk *talk*

A Newsletter of Operation Walk Denver

Connecting You to the JOY You Help Restore | 17.1

Because of You, Tita Will Dance Again

Thanks to the generosity of people like you, Samuel's grandmother can walk and dance for the first time in years.

Her knees were arthritic; her legs twisted. Every movement brought pain. Yet Samuel's grandmother still raised him since he was a boy, and is one of the most important people in his life.

by Samuel Valdelamar, Volunteer Translator, Panama City, Panama

My grandma (I call her *Tita*) loves to dance. But until just a few weeks ago, she was unable to even walk.



Samuel spends a few minutes with his Tita right before she goes in for surgery on both knees.

Age caught up with her bones, and she had rheumatoid arthritis. **She thought her dancing days were gone.**

This broke my heart, because Tita is one of my favorite people in the world. She raised me, she's still there for anything I need, and she's the

one person who can always cheer me up — even when she couldn't walk.

So, when my aunt, who works at the hospital here near my home, told us about Operation Walk Denver coming here to our city in Panama, we both got excited! Tita had been waiting for three years to try to get surgery on her knees. At last, she would be able to!

My aunt also told me that they were looking for volunteers to help translate. I was happy to do so. Not only did it sound fun to meet new people and practice my English, but *I would get to help the people who would be helping my Tita.*

I had no idea just how much I would enjoy it.

From the first day I went to help, the day before Tita's surgery, I loved it. This was the first time I'd done something like this, and I was surprised at how heartwarming and

continued on p. 4

In this issue...

Tita Gets New Knees, p. 1

A Message from Dr. Dennis, p. 2

52 Walk Again in Panama City, p. 3

Share the Care

A message from Dr. Doug Dennis

Since our very first mission trip in 2003, Operation Walk Denver has had the privilege of providing **1,503 free hip and knee replacements** for people with disabling arthritis and no access to the care they need.

We bring a staff of surgeons, medical doctors, physician assistants, nurses, and physical therapists that are responsible for the care of these patients. Our staff has a great deal of ownership and compassion that complements the tremendous amount of responsibility they have.

We coined the phrase “Share the Care” when we plan and organize our mission trips. By engaging the local doctors, nurses, staff, and even families of our host site, treating a patient becomes a joint effort amongst the residents of the country who feel ownership in the care of the patient. This results in the well-being of the patient being shared by the hearts of a multitude of people.

We have seen so many people “Share the Care” over the last 14 years. I remember operating in Guatemala and seeing the fire department donate their resources to transporting each of the patients home from the hospital. We have seen countless family members work alongside our team as translators while their loved one was a patient.

In Honduras, the physicians of the various departments in the hospital donate their free time to grill food for our team. In Panama, we have been blessed by another foundation, Fundayuda, whose entire mission is to make sure we have food and water available around the clock to keep our team nourished so they can continue their responsibilities. I have seen past patients continue to show up during our mission trips to donate their time and energy.

We have made many of these past patients “Ambassadors” of Operation Walk. They can be seen holding a trembling hand of a nervous patient and singing a joyous song when the patient is leaving for home. The Hilton Hotel in Honduras loaned 20 of their roll-away beds to the hospital when we ran out of hospital beds for the patients! This idea of “Share the Care” transforms our mission trip into a celebration that connects so many people to a common goal—the care of the patient.



Dr. Dennis “Shares the Care” with a patient in Honduras.

We see similar “Shared the Care” efforts in Colorado. A great many of you have donated generously to our missions via our Walk of Dreams Gala and end of the year campaigns. Millions of dollars have been donated by orthopedic companies (Depuy Synthes, Zimmer, and Stryker), who have provided us with the necessary implants, and Porter Adventist Hospital, who has given us the remaining medical supplies.

Our team continues to hold fundraisers and collection drives for orphanages that we visit during our mission trips. We even have our children learning how to “Share the Care.” Jim Boyle’s children have raised money at school while Peggy Kettler’s grandchildren have held an art sale for Operation Walk. I am so proud of my granddaughters who continuously raise money via their multiple lemonade stands!

As we enter our fourteenth year of Operation Walk Denver, **I would like to encourage you to “Share the Care” with us.** Your continued support of our General Fund and Endowment will ensure the longevity of Operation Walk Denver for generations to come. You will become directly responsible for changing the lives of so many people who would otherwise have no hope of receiving the life-changing care they need.

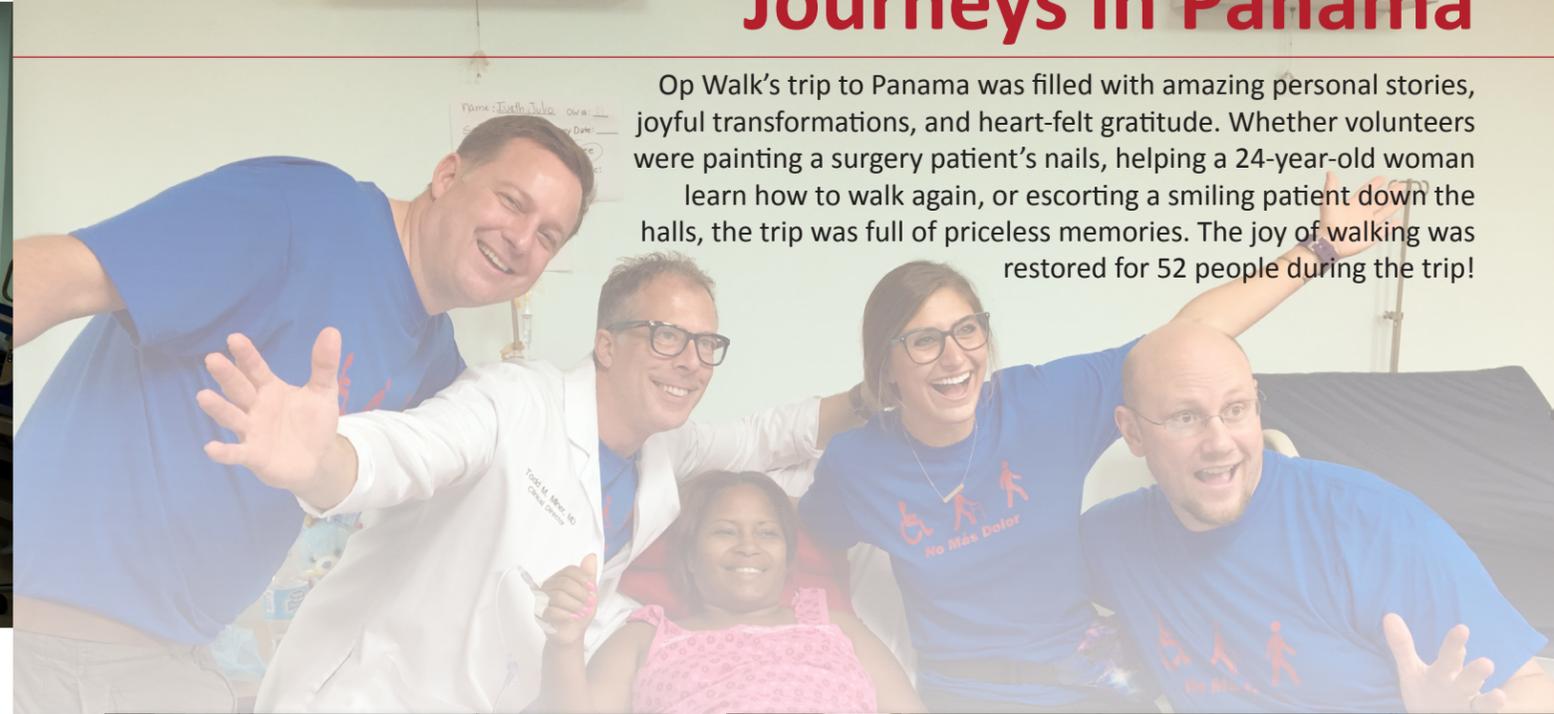
With Sincere Thanks,

Douglas A. Dennis, MD

Douglas A. Dennis, MD
Executive Director, Operation Walk Denver

Journeys in Panama

Op Walk’s trip to Panama was filled with amazing personal stories, joyful transformations, and heart-felt gratitude. Whether volunteers were painting a surgery patient’s nails, helping a 24-year-old woman learn how to walk again, or escorting a smiling patient down the halls, the trip was full of priceless memories. The joy of walking was restored for 52 people during the trip!



Building strength to take the first step.



Back on her feet for the first time in years!



The joy of walking—restored!



Performing the delicate operation.