



Thanks: Margarite, who can now roll her R's, gives Dr. Michael Busuito a pair of slippers in appreciation for a job well done.



In action: Troy physician Michael Busuito and his nurse Jan Glovak, perform plastic surgery to repair a cleft palate on a child in Mexico.

## Healing help

### Plastic surgeon volunteers skills south of border

BY WENDY FIERMAN MITZEL  
STAFF WRITER

How do you change the world? According to Dr. Michael Busuito: one child at a time.

The Troy plastic surgeon and his nurse, Jan Glovak, recently traveled to Ciudad Camargo, Mexico, to perform volunteer surgery on 47 children with disabling cleft palates, burns and congenital deformities.

**The week was an adrenaline rush for the doctors. While the hospital in Camargo usually completed just two surgeries a day, the American team completed almost 10 every day.**

"This wasn't frivolous surgery," said Glovak. "There, if you have a cleft palate child, you hide them away. They see it as a burden from God."

Glovak and Busuito were gone for a week in November as part of a group of doctors with the organization Healing the Children. The nonprofit humanitarian organization provides free medical and surgical care to disadvantaged children in foreign countries.

The pair and three others from Hutzel Hospital in Warren flew to Mexico, taking their own equipment and supplies. Hospitals, pharmaceutical companies and other doctors donated money and supplies for the trip.

Glovak, a Farmington Hills resident, said the generosity of the people in the Detroit area was amazing. "It just took one phone call to explain what we were doing, and people gave whatever they could."

Busuito has volunteered his services to Healing the Children since 1988 by providing surgery to children flown into the United States by the group. This was the first out-of-the-country trip for both him and Glovak. He said the trip was an opportunity he couldn't afford to pass up.

"After caring for the kids here (in Mexico), I've found they (in Mexico) are so appreciative," Busuito said. "I thought this was a good opportunity to provide more good for children in a short period of time."

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JIM RIDER/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

**Back at work:** Troy plastic surgeon Dr. Michael Busuito and his nurse Jan Glovak (left) have returned to their normal duties after a week of volunteer surgery in Mexico. Office manager Debbie Miller helped organize the trip.

They performed several unexpected surgeries, so the supplies were sometimes limited, Glovak said. "So many things happen that you don't anticipate. It was almost like divine intervention," she said. "We had just enough equipment for every surgery we did."

In addition, Busuito explained the doctors often had to use the hospital's equipment that didn't always work. There were even times when they performed surgery by flashlight. Despite the working conditions, every procedure was successful.

"The kids would wake up in the recovery room in severe pain and under anesthesia and still shower us with thanks," said Busuito.

When one little girl woke up and was able to roll her Spanish R's, she could barely contain herself, said Glovak. "She would wake up, say 'thank you' and fall back asleep because of the anesthesia. It was so cute."

She and Busuito came back feeling grateful themselves after

witnessing the poverty and lack of resources in the town.

"Camargo is a very poor area. In Mexico they have no welfare system so the people provide for themselves any way they can," Busuito said. "Despite this fact they're very proud and grateful for anything you do for them."

"It really makes your problems here seem smaller," he said.

The trip wasn't all work and no play for the team. Busuito gave several lectures to local doctors. And the town's Rotary Club, which sponsored the hotel rooms, threw them numerous Mexican fiestas in thanks.

Because the whole experience was so gratifying, Glovak and Busuito hope to travel with Healing the Children to another country, perhaps Guatemala or Lithuania.

Healing the Children/Michigan can be reached at (810) 247-4814. Busuito's office is in the Columbia Center building, 201 W. Big Beaver in Troy.

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