

**Nurse** from page A7



Getting to know you: Jan Glovak photographed this group of children at an orphanage in Mexico during one of her former trips for Operation Kindness.

cried and said the girl never had a doll. That night, the nurse sent her husband out to buy a doll for the little girl.

Almost all children in the United States, regardless of socioeconomic status, who are born with a cleft lip or cleft palate have their lips fixed before they are 3 months old and they have their palate fixed by the time they're 1 year old.

"When I was in the Philippines in one day I operated on three people all in their 60s who walked around their entire lives with these severe deformities and never had been fixed," Busuito said. "It really gives you a sense of how lucky we have it here in this country."

Other medical volunteers going to Camargo include Dr. John Lange, a dentist from Grand Rapids; Peter Lapine and Dr. Kate Runyan from Michigan State University audiology and speech pathology department; and Sterling Heights resident Joanna Hegedus, a nurse manager at Hutzel Health Center. Warren and Martin McGrail, of Grand Rapids, who works as manager of the pediatric clinic at Devo's Children's Hospital in Grand Rapids.

**All jobs**

Tasks and jobs vary. If the garbage needs emptying, it gets emptied by whomever is available. "There's no 'That's not my job' by anyone. Whatever needs to be done, everyone does it," Glovak said.

The volunteers take one week, dipping into their work vacation time, to travel to Mexico and watch their efforts work miracles for people who don't have much. Most of the people seeking help live in cinderblock homes with-

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**Jan Glovak**  
—Farmington Hills nurse

out windows, drapes for doors and no running water. Luxuries, like telephones are rare. In fact, Operation Kindness announces surgical schedules through radio announcements because that's the easiest way to get the word out.

"When you come back, you look at the equipment we have with a totally different viewpoint," Glovak said. "You don't believe what we have and the abundance."

Operation Kindness brings everything they will need. "We get donations of supplies, like Band-Aids and even anesthesia," Glovak said. "The host hospital can't afford what they have, let alone supply 40 additional surgeries."

Busuito, a board certified plastic, general and hand surgeon, mostly works on cleft lips and palates, deforming burns, reconstruction work for people born without external ears, hernias and devastatingly gruesome physical marks.

"Children there are just as cruel as kids here in the States," Glovak said.

"They can be teased unmercifully. We know that by going there we can restore their function and their social acceptability. We've removed their stigma."

"With a lot of the kids if they have a major birth defect, they

think of it as a curse from God and they really do hide them away," said Glovak, who describes surgery as fun. "It's not work. It's solving a problem. It's like a jigsaw puzzle and you're helping to put them back together."

**Missionary work**

Glovak and the other volunteers had gone on missionary work with various organizations until they started their own nonprofit organization, Operation Kindness, last April in an effort to ensure that all the money would go to the children.

"There are no administrative costs," Busuito said.

If Operation Kindness didn't make the trip, likely these children wouldn't get the surgeries they need to eat properly, get nourishment or even suck through a straw.

"The definition of compassion is seeing a need and doing something about it," Glovak said.

The medical volunteers also try to teach the medical professionals at the host hospital and they distribute literature, in Spanish, regarding various treatments.

Regarding their own safety, Glovak said, they drink only bottled water and rely on the local medical people to tell them where to eat.

"We're very, very careful and we've been very fortunate, too," she added.

Anyone interested in helping may make checks payable to Operation Kindness. Donations should be sent to Macomb Community Bank, 16000 Hall, Clinton Township, MI 48038.

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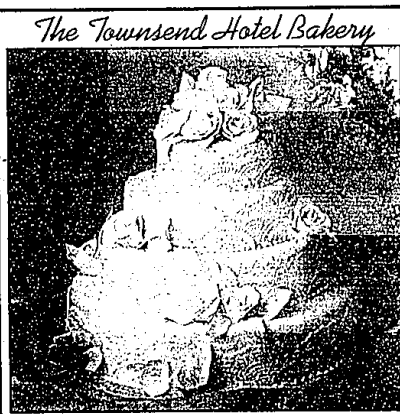


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