

~ SIA ~

Selva in Action

A program of the Peruvian American Medical Society



2023 MISSION REPORT

Mission Dates: April 29-May 5

Location:

Village of Porvenir, Rio Momón, District of Punchana, State of Loreto (in the Amazon jungle, NE corner of Perú, about 30 minutes by boat from Iquitos).

Overview:

Villages Invited: 18 mestizo & 5 indigenous villages (Bora, Yagua, Jivaro, Alama, Cucama)

Patients Anticipated: 1,200

Patients Registered: **1,151 (This is more than double the number we had last year)**



Specialties and services provided:

Family/internal medicine, pediatrics, cardiology, infectious diseases, nephrology, gynecology, emergency, dental (restorations, extractions, cleaning, fluoride), psychology, wound care, distribution of 400+ pair of sunglasses and reading glasses, laboratory (including glucose, hemoglobin, & cholesterol checks, CBC, tests for parasites, malaria, TB), pharmacy, and workshops on first aid, CPR, the harmful effects of cell phones on children and adolescents, kidney disease, the importance of children's oral hygiene, and prevention of domestic violence and teen pregnancy.

2023 SIA Team (above):

~30 local staff (doctors, nurses, lab techs, pharmacists, dentists, logistics, translator, educators)

~26 volunteers – including:

- 15 PAMS members
- 12 doctors – 6 from Lima; 4 from the U.S., 1 from Nazca; 1 from Arequipa
- 4 medical students; 1 nursing student
- 2 teens - pre-med students
- 18 volunteers under age 40
- 5 volunteers between the ages of 75-87

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Pictured at right – **14 of the 15 PAMS Members.**

Front row: Dr. Fitz Arroyo, Dr. Anthony Ramos, SIA Medical Director Dr. Luis Espinoza, Dr. Antony Gonzales, and SIA “de todo” Franke von Engel.

Back row: Janice (RN) and Dr. Raul Felipa, Dr. Julieta Araoz, Dr. Emanuel Salcedo, Med Student Cristian Ramirez, SIA Volunteer Coordinator Aryn Yancher, Dr. Miguel Vasquez, SIA Program Director Anita Soluna, and Med Student Luz Quispe. (Missing: Dr. Lourdes Álvarez)



For the 2nd year, the children and friends of Dr. Raul and Janice Felipa honored them by perpetuating the Dr. Raul and Janice Felipa Mentorship Grant. This year’s recipients of the medical grant (pictured at left with Dr. Felipa) were San Marcos’ 7th year students Sandra Chavez (L) and Valeria Adrianzen (R). Recipient of the nursing grant was Rosser “Rose” Rios (pictured on the right with Janice Felipa).



Specific SIA volunteers also received full or partial grants from the following entities: San Fernando Chapter of PAMS, Peruvian American Interchange Society (PAIS - a U.S. NGO), Dr. Miguel Vasquez, and the SIA “Jovenes” Fund.

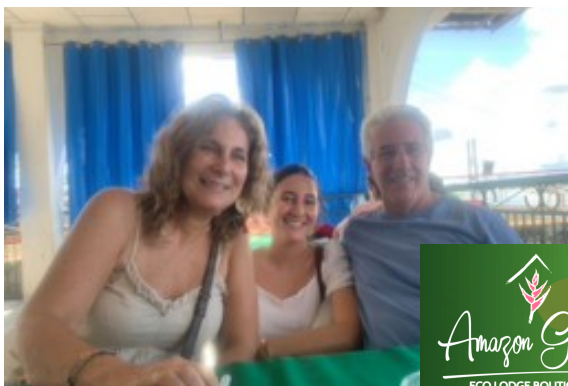
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Our partners and owners of the **Amazon Garden Ecolodge Boutique**, Ursula Vera, Juan Miguel Ibieta, and their daughter, Agustina, contributed immensely to ensuring the success of the mission. They are our hosts, logistics coordinators, mission volunteers, and community liaisons. They ensured that Porvenir was prepared for our visit, and helped to fund and build new bathrooms behind the village community center.



With their gracious assistance, SIA was able to form partnerships with the city of Punchana, the county of Maynas, the Air Force, the Navy, the Health Department, and dental distributor Pareja Lecaros from Lima. This was the first time in our 15-year existence that we received assistance from these entities.



- The **Municipality of Punchana** donated gasoline to run our generators and our boats.
- The **Municipality of Maynas** provided food for the patients and volunteers each day and loaned us canopies to provide shade for the patients. They also provided gasoline for the villagers who traveled long distances (sometimes up to 8 hours) to receive services. Residents of the most distant villages spent the night in Porvenir so they would not have to be on the river after dark. Another function of the Municipality was to arrange for SIA to participate in radio and television programs. We were also seen and heard on several webpages, and we were interviewed by the Peruvian equivalent of National Public Radio (RPP-Radio Programas del Perú). After the mission, the mayor of Maynas presented SIA with a proclamation, recognizing our 15 years of service to the people who live along the Rio Momón.

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- The **Navy** provided one of their small clinic ships (called a buque) for us to use for exam rooms. We had 4 doctors and a gynecologist stationed on the (air-conditioned) ship. The ship also served as room and board for 5 of our local team members. Their women's association, Stella Maris, donated over 1,000 doses of antiparasitic medicine.

- The **Air Force** women's association, Virgen de Loreto, donated 350 reading glasses, baby

items/children's books and toys, 1,000 kilos of fortified rice (given to each family with children), amoxicillin, 1,400 doses of antiparasitic medicine, and brought 5 dentists to work with us for half a day.

- The **Health Department** (GERESA) and the **clinic at Bellavista Nanay** provided medicine, doctors, dentists, nurses, midwives, a pharmacist, and a lab technician.
- **Pareja Lecaros** donated almost all our dental supplies and hundreds of baby bottles, "sippy" cups, and baby spoons and plates.

After a short rain delay, the first day of the mission was marked by a formal ceremony that included a flag raising while the Navy band played the Peruvian National Anthem. Attendees included the mayor of Maynas-Vladimir Chong, the mayor of Punchana-Olmex Escalante, Navy Viceadmiral Javier Bravo, Air Force General Jorge Reátegui, Manager of the Bellavista Nanay Clinic – Dr. Yuri Alegre, and Commander of the Buque 2nd Lt. Alvaro Collado. They were each accompanied by several staff members.



Photo above (L to R): Dr. Luis Espinoza, Mayor Olmex Escalante, Mayor Vladimir Chong, Navy Vice Admiral Javier Bravo, Anita Soluna, Air Force General Jorge Reátegui, Dr. Yuri Alegre.

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In addition to the educational workshops, regular wellness exams, and dealing with high blood pressure, anemia, skin problems, and parasites, we responded to several emergencies, including:

- a child with convulsions and a 102+ fever. This child had recently received surgery to remove a brain tumor (he was treated and then immediately rushed to the hospital-30 minutes by boat and 15 minutes on land).
- a broken wrist
- a man who partially severed his thumb with a machete and required 5 stitches
- a case of TB
- a child who had a piece of metal pierce his foot from bottom to top

Also encountered were:

- at least two cases of partial paralysis
- two people who were unable to walk and had to be seen on their boat
- a significant number of eye issues (pterygium/cataracts)
- a significant number of adults and children with anemia
- many people taking medicine for hypertension
- a woman with a prolapsed uterus
- someone with possible polycystic kidney disease
- at least 5 pregnancies; one is 15-years old

A story worth telling (yes, there is a moral to this story)

In 2022, two Canadian, first-year D.O. medical students, Divya Patel and Didar Kalra volunteered with SIA. They worked in triage for most of the mission. One day, a pregnant woman was in triage. To make polite conversation, Divya asked her what she was going to name the baby. The woman said she didn't know. Divya suggested that if it was a boy, to name it Didar, and that if it's a girl, to name it Divya. This year, we were approached by a woman with a baby in her arms and she told us this story. Say hello to Baby Divya! We were in tears when we heard this story and we are looking forward to seeing Baby Divya in the years to come. One day, her children and grandchildren will hear the story of how she was named.



The moral: You never know how what you say or do in your life is going to impact the life of another. A kind word can brighten someone's day.

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If you are interested in impacting the lives of others, please consider getting involved by volunteering or donating to Selva in Action – www.pams.org/siamission.

Respectfully submitted,

Anita Soluna, M.S.
SIA Program Director

SIA welcomes all medical and non-medical volunteers.

For further information, please contact:

Program Director Anita Soluna at anita.soluna@gmail.com

or

Volunteer Coordinator Aryn Yancher at SelvaInActionPeru@gmail.com

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