

65 Years of Service celebrated

World Medical Relief celebrated its 65th anniversary with a gala evening filled with music, excitement and surprises along the way.

Guest arriving at Saint John's Armenian Church and Banquet Center found a lively reception with high-class entertainment provided by pianist Anita Sehra a Wayne State University student and a World Medical Relief volunteer. Serah studied piano from age 5 and soon thereafter started competing in and winning top piano competitions.

The official opening of the evening welcomed Fox 2 Detroit news anchors, Roop Raj and Sherry Margolis as Mister and Mistress of Ceremonies. Since Fox 2 Detroit has been a long time supporter of World Medical Relief, it was most fitting that two of its well-known television personalities were leading the night. For Ms. Margolis it was a bit of a sentimental journey as she was also the emcee for the 60th anniversary.

After the invocation by Very Reverend Father Aren Jebjian of Saint John's Armenian Church and the national anthem sung by Marilyn Hinton, Board Chair Michael Krause welcomed all.

During a delicious dinner, Venezuelan singer-songwriter Mariana Riskey captured the audience with her stunning voice. Riskey was the first Latin American woman to be nominated for the Outstanding World Vocalist Detroit music award. True to her Venezuelan roots, Riskey is also helping to address the urgent need of the people of Venezuela and is



From left to right: President & CEO George Samson, Roop Raj, Sherry Margolis, and Board Chair Mike Krause.
Photo: Percy Antonio.

working with World Medical Relief on a container shipment destined for the poor citizens of Venezuela.

While enjoying the music and the food, guests' interest was peaked by the many percussion instruments lining the stage. But before one could find out whether the instruments were merely décor or entertainment, emcee Margolis asked the audience to consider making a donation for the roof repair. Guests generously donated and over \$4,000 was raised in a short time.

CEO Samson then took the stage for a few words of gratitude to World Medical Relief's volunteers and supporters.

Find out about 2018 honorees on page 3

CEO MESSAGE

The 65th Anniversary Celebration was wonderful! I do not know about you, but my family and I had a blast.

It was also a great occasion to honor some of our most important supporters and I would encourage you to go to the website and read up on these honorees. Each generously contributes her/his special skills and/or resources in support of World Medical Relief's mission.



Ford Motor Company Fund

World Medical Relief is also blessed by consistent corporate and foundation support. Ford Motor Company Fund renewed its support for the local Affordable Prescriptions Program with a \$10,000 grant and the Dewey Marcks Foundation donated another \$10,000 for the local hygiene kit program.

I have to admit, 2018 was a particularly **challenging** year for World Medical Relief. The 16-foot truck that was used to pick up donations from the area hospitals broke down beyond repair.



Brad Wasserman—Implant Recycling - and sons on left, CEO Samson and Board Chair Krause on right. Photo: Percy Antonio.

And then the roof of our new headquarters started leaking. Upon examination, it turned out that major roof repair is needed.

At this point, we have raised almost \$20,000 for this crucial repair which is only a portion of what we will need to repair the whole roof. But with your support, we will find a solution to this hindrance to our operations.

Looking back at 2018, I also see improvements and a strong team with qualified and committed staff members. Most recently

we were joined by doctor Glenn Krieger who is supervising the medical supply sorting area. Eventually, he will play a major role in the expansion of the pacemaker program.

With the help of over 2,000 volunteers, World Medical Relief is also on track to ship a record high number of containers. These shipments reach areas of the world with the biggest needs, saving people's lives with the supplies and providing mobility with the durable medical equipment.

As you can see, the volunteer Saturdays for 2019 have been scheduled already. I hope you will join us, on Saturdays or week days, because only with your help can we relieve human suffering and save the lives of God's sick poor.

While World Medical Relief's 65th year of service is coming to an end, I want to express **my deepest gratitude** to you and **wish you a Merry Christmas, a Peaceful Holiday and a Happy and Healthy 2019!**

2019 Saturday Volunteer Dates:
January 5, 12, 19, 26
February 2, 9, 16, 23
March 2, 9, 16, 23, 30
April 6, 13, 27

Anniversary Celebration Continued

Samson closed his speech with the invitation to celebrate with great expressions of joy together and to play the instruments with gladness for a job well done.

Lori Fithian from Drummunity took over to lead the crowd to create some joyful “noise” with the instruments that were distributed among the audience.

Dr. Thomas Crawford gave an update on the pacemaker project. He was followed by Ms. Roberta Cottman, a local representative of the United Nations, who linked World Medical Relief’s work with the Universal Declaration of

Human Rights, Article 25, which describes the right to health care for all mankind.

President & CEO Samson was then surprised by the presentation of an award from Life for Relief & Development to honor World Medical Relief’s dedication and work to the benefit of mankind both in the US and around the world. The program then ensued with the award ceremony, followed by dancing and a drum circle.



Dr. Hany Saqr, MD PhD, CEO of Life for Relief on the left presented the award. Next to Dr. Samson is Ahmed Ysmal, Director of Operations of the Life for Relief international programs.



Gala guest Mrs. Benie Bounsana
Photos on this page: Percy Antonio.

2018 HONOREES

HUMANITARIAN EXCELLENCE AWARD

Welch Packaging - Nate Gregg

HUMANITARIAN SERVICE EXCELLENCE AWARD

Ascension Macomb-Oakland Hospital - Terry Hamilton

HUMANITARIAN GLOBAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

Implant Recycling - Bradley Wasserman

COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD

Fiat Chrysler Automobiles - FCA US LLC

OAKLAND COUNTY EXCELLENCE AWARD

Oakland County Commissioner - Janet Jackson

VOLUNTEER EXCELLENCE AWARD

Mr. Norm Kern

Mrs. Carmen Concepcion

Attorney Guy Sohoo

Honorable Mike M. Baydoun

Michael A. Krause

For a photo gallery, please visit
www.worldmedicalrelief.org/anniversary-gala

Miracle relief for Parkinson's patient

Josephina, a social worker advocating for oppressed women in the remote City of San Pedro, Negros Occidental in the Philippines, suffered a stroke at 44. It affected her legs, which she cannot stretch anymore, and she finds it difficult to walk properly.

In 2009, she first experienced the terrifying, uncontrollable body trembling due to Parkinson's disease. Parkinson's is known as a neurodegenerative disorder that causes people to eventually lose control of their motor skills. Patients suffer from episodes where they tremble uncontrollably.

Doctors prescribed Josephina four different medicines four times each day, which costs her family around PhP30,000 a month. Her husband earns a mere PhP10,000 per month and the family can barely make ends meet. Josephina tries to get by



Josephina's family tries to keep her comfortable by fanning her and holding up a magazine to read.

with a reduced dose of medication, which is not helping her at all. She said she loses hope whenever she feels her body tremble but she wishes to have a long life to see her children finish their studies.

Fortunately, the news magazine show "Kapuso Mo, Jessica Soho", learned about Josephina's condition and featured her in the television show. The heartbreak-

ing story went viral instantly and reached George Samson, the President and CEO of World Medical Relief.

After a quick internet search, World Medical Relief's staff contacted the production company of Kapuso Mo to find out how to contact Josephina. The internet can be most helpful sometimes and the production company responded within the hour.

A call to Josephina's family was disappointing because World Medical Relief did not have the Parkinson's medicines that were subscribed to Josephina. But as it often goes at World Medical Relief, Parkinson's medications were donated and dropped off the next day. With the help of Dr. Sheila Samson, who delivered the medication, Josephina now has a two year supply of the Parkinson's drugs, her trembling is under control and the quality of her life has already greatly improved.



Many years of research and preparation by the My Heart Your Heart team culminated in the approval by the University of Michigan Institutional Review Board to execute a clinical trial to evaluate the safety and efficacy of cardiac pacemaker reuse in low to middle income countries. Approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has been obtained for the export to Ghana, Nicaragua, Pakistan, the Philippines and Sierra Leone. In the latter country two patients already received a pacer. They are doing well and are ready for their two-month check up.

Their smile is my reward



Photo: Peter Tanaka

There is a Chinese saying that goes: “If you want happiness for an hour, take a nap. If you want happiness for a day, go fishing. If you want happiness for a year, inherit a fortune. If you want happiness for a lifetime, help somebody.” For centuries, the greatest thinkers have advocated the same thing, so does Aida Feijoo, a 70-year-old philanthropist, who believes that happiness is found in helping others and from an early age she felt the desire to help the less fortunate.

Aida, who is bright like glitter and bubbly like champagne, has a very optimistic nature. She never felt she was poor, even though she was one of fifteen children and her family lived in a one-bedroom apartment in Puerto Rico in the 1950s. She says her parents worked really hard to run the family. They used to go to a nearby farm to earn daily wages. At the age of seven, she realized that her parents needed a helping hand and joined them at the farm.

When she grew little older, she decided to become a nun but got married instead and soon became a mother of two. It was in the year 1967 when she reached the United States and started pursuing her dream. An artist by nature, she worked as a Manicurist and then opened a bakery.

While many of us harbor secret wishes or dreams for the future, maybe to build that dream house we’ve been drawing in our notebooks since childhood or retire early and travel the world, Aida always had a different kind of dream: To fulfill someone else’s wish. She would spend part of her earnings to buy gifts and toys for children whose families were struggling.

Aida says she was humbled to know that in a small way she could make those children’s day a bit brighter and when they smiled she was filled with an overwhelming amount of joy; so much so, that she had to hold back her tears many times.

Currently, Aida runs three missions in the Dominican Republic, a beautiful Caribbean nation that shares the island of Hispaniola with Haiti to the west. It’s known for its beaches, resorts and golfing. But it also has a history of storms powerful enough to wipe out entire islands.

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Aida says most of the time there is no electricity, and the conditions of roads are so bad that it becomes a nightmare to walk even a few steps. Homelessness is increasing due to natural disasters and the country is always at risk of earthquakes and hurricanes.

To improve the situation for the citizens of this beautiful but storm-prone island, Aida, along with other philanthropists, take care of over 100 people including 65 children and 12 families in various parts of the country. She makes sure that they get proper food, clothing, shoes and other basic requirement on daily basis. For this, Aida has spent nearly 50% of her income over the years and she makes sure that she only eats what she sends to the island.

While she was foraging for used shoes at a garage sale, Aida met a former financial director of World Medical Relief. They struck up a conversation and later Aida contacted World Medical Relief and requested medicines and basic medical supplies from the agency. Aida is now a “regular” and just requested more supplies.

When asked what she hopes to accomplish through philanthropy, she says she does not want any children going to bed hungry and that she does her best to serve mankind. “When I help someone and tell them I care for you and I see the smiles on their faces, that’s pure happiness,” she said. “Seeing that they know they are loved and cared that’s my reward.”



Local program director, Carolyn Racklyeft (left) and Diane Toqan. Photo: Josephine Jabara

Affordable Wound Care Supplies

Diane Toqan from Henry Ford Home Health Care, says, “we utilize World Medical Relief’s services a lot for our patients. Out of all the charities in Metro Detroit, World Medical Relief is one of the few that actually seems to serve the community with very little overhead”. At the time of the photo, Diane came for wound care supplies for a severely ill patient with 8 wounds. The patient, a retired nurse, who suffers from dementia, heart failure and Parkinson’s, is lovingly cared for at home by her husband of 40+ years.

Since the patient opted out of hospice care, all wound care supplies cost will have to be paid out of pocket. Diane brought a long shopping list for wound care supplies, all of which World Medical Relief could supply.

The bill was \$10.60, which would have been around \$350-\$400 in the regular store. “We love you guys!”, Diane says.

THE NEW TAX LAW - AND CHARITABLE GIVING STRATEGIES FOR YEAR-END

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA), which is the new tax law passed in December 2017, retains the tax deduction for charitable contributions. However, only taxpayers who itemize their personal deductions can deduct charitable contributions.

The TCJA roughly doubles the amount of the standard deduction to \$12,000 for singles and \$24,000 for marrieds filing jointly. Most taxpayers' itemized deductions won't exceed these new higher standard deduction amounts under the TCJA. In fact it's estimated that only 5% of all taxpayers will itemize their personal deductions, which means most people (95%) won't be able to claim charitable deductions on their tax returns. So, how can you continue to support World Medical Relief?

Below you will find some strategies on year-end charitable giving as suggested by the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan.

Be More Generous

This is a year to "be more generous." While there may be fewer incentives in the tax code, the charitable needs in our communities and the needs of the nonprofits serving those needs have not decreased. Nonprofits rely heavily on support from taxpayers. Consider giving as much -or more -than you did in the past, even if you can't deduct or if you end up with a decreased deduction. Consider sharing any additional income you have due to lower tax rates with those less fortunate. In effect, "be more generous."

Use the IRA Rollover

Those over the age of 70.5 years old can make distributions of up to \$100,000 from their IRA to public charities under a special provision of the tax code. Benefits include: (1) not having to report that distribution as taxable income; (2) having the distribution to charity count as part of your annual required distribution from your IRA; and (3) continuing to support charities you care about. While you can't claim an income tax deduction for the distribu-

tion, you don't have to include this income as taxable. This is a win for you and a win for the causes you care about. Note: an IRA rollover can support any public charity but cannot be used to support a private foundation or donor advised fund, or fund a planned gift.

"Bunch" Your Charitable Gifts

If the amount that you give annually to charity is not enough to itemize with the new tax law, or provides you only a marginal deduction, think about making two or more years of charitable gifts in one year so the total allows you to itemize your deductions. You may do that by making the equivalent of multiple year gifts to one or more charities -or you can make your gift to a Community Foundation donor advised fund and then recommend grants from that fund to the causes you care about over the coming years. Using a donor advised fund allows you to claim a deduction this year while recommending grants that result in a steady stream of annual support to those charities in the future.

Plan Now for April 15

Consider the new tax law before the end of the year, as you will want to take into consideration these changes before the tax year is over. Consult with your tax and financial advisor to find out the best way you can continue to support your favorite charity. World Medical Relief is looking forward to your support!





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World Medical Relief
21725 Melrose Ave.
Southfield, MI 48075
Phone: (313) 866-5333
Fax: (313) 866-5588
info@worldmedicalrelief.org
www.worldmedicalrelief.org



Founded in 1953, World Medical Relief's mission is to help the sick and poor, both at home and abroad, by collecting and distributing medicines, medical equipment, medical supplies and related materials.

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