16-Year-Old Ecuadorian Boy in Dire Need of Dialysis Treatments Thanks One of Nation's Leading Providers for Saving His Life

Bridge of Life-DaVita Medical Missions' program reaches out to patients in need of care worldwide

Bridge of Life-DaVita Medical Missions program is being recognized as life-saving by 16 year-old Juan Carlos and his family living in Guayaquil, Ecuador. Juan was in dire need of dialysis treatments for survival and was just days away from dying. This past December, DaVita -- one of the nation's leading providers of dialysis care -- helped establish a dialysis clinic in Ecuador's Dr. Roberto Gilbert Elizalde Children's Hospital. A high rate of Ecuadorian children suffer from kidney disease -- and the number only continues to climb. If a patient or family doesn't have money to pay for dialysis care in advance, then life-saving dialysis treatments are generally not available in Ecuador.

(Logo: http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20020729/DAVITALOGO)

This dialysis clinic is one of three DaVita has opened outside the United States in underserved communities to help care for those suffering from kidney disease and kidney failure. DaVita has provided technical support, equipment, supplies, training and thousands of employee (teammate) hours to build dialysis facilities in Cameroon and Ecuador. Partnership opportunities are continuing to grow throughout Central and South America, India, Pakistan, the Philippines and Sri Lanka.

Like Carlos, many of the patients coming into the Ecuador clinic have slim chances for survival without necessary treatment and care. In addition to suffering from kidney failure, patients often times have shallow breathing and abnormal swelling as a result of fluid accumulation throughout the body.

"Juan was only a few days from death," said Deanna Bradley, a DaVita nurse who volunteered for the Bridge of Life-DaVita Medical Missions trip to Ecuador. "As the hours and days passed, he continued receiving the needed dialysis treatments, and his prognosis quickly improved. Now, Juan tells me in his native Spanish, 'Thank you for saving my life' -- hearing those words made me realize the true meaning of our mission."

To facilitate employee (teammate) participation, DaVita covers each teammate's job duties/responsibilities while they travel abroad, and expenses are paid in full by the company, with contributions made by executives, vendors and private donations.

"Bridge of Life-DaVita Medical Missions brings lasting change by opening access to dialysis care and chronic kidney disease (CKD) education to countries where it's needed most," said Kent Thiry, DaVita chairman and CEO. "This program gives us an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of those we're privileged to touch."

Juan Carlos and his family continue to do well. He had a fistula placed in May and has become a great student of his diet. He is also back in school and hopes to someday become a doctor so that he can help those in need.

In thinking of Juan Carlos and the Bridge of Life program, Bradley adds, "Life just had a way of getting through. It was quite a team effort. And I'm willing to go again -- anytime I'm needed."

About DaVita, Inc.

DaVita Inc., a FORTUNE 500® company, is a leading provider of dialysis services in the United States, providing dialysis services for patients with chronic kidney failure and end stage renal disease. DaVita manages over 1,300 outpatient facilities and acute units in over 700 hospitals located in 43 states and the District of Columbia, serving more than 103,000 patients. For more information, please visit http://www.davita.com/.

About Bridge of Life-DaVita Medical Missions

Bridge of Life-DaVita Medical Missions focuses on efforts to improve the quality of life for those in underserved communities both locally and throughout the world. BOL in partnership with DaVita teammates establishes dialysis facilities, trains local staff, pre-screens local residents for chronic kidney disease (CKD) and works with local hospitals in underserved countries to provide quality dialysis assistance. For more information on Bridge of Life-DaVita Medical Missions' programs, please visit http://www.bridgeoflifemm.org/.

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