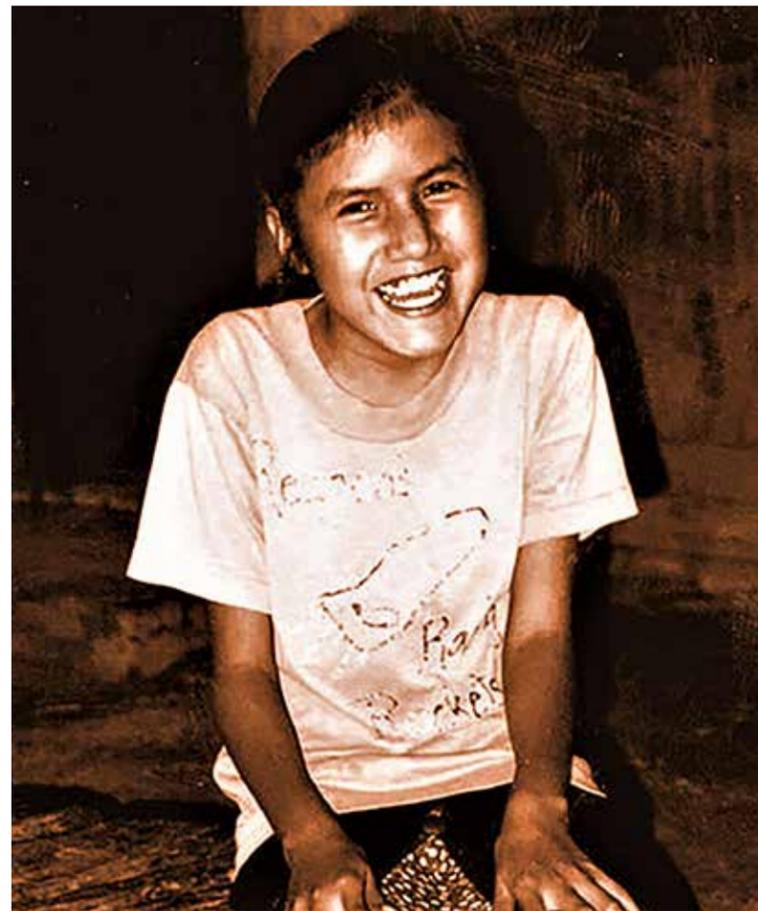


Rosa Vera FUND

“I can only hope to provide positive change for our precious patients and to impact their lives as much as they have improved mine.” — DR. LISA HUNT, M.D.

Sometimes change happens from big events, and sometimes it comes from a single little girl named Rosa Vera. Local pediatrician Lisa Hunt, M.D., was looking for a different way to do medicine. In 2010 she was involved in community health, helping underserved people in the valley. Her colleague, Jonathan Melk, told Lisa about a trip he had taken down to Bolivia as a medical student. He told a story of a little girl who had changed his life and changed the lives of hundreds of children in a small village called Montero.

Rosa Vera was born at her home in Montero, Bolivia, with a serious congenital heart malformation called Tetralogy of Fallot. As a daughter of a traditional, Quechua-speaking family with virtually no education or financial resources, Rosa didn't receive the routine surgery that has corrected the malformation in countless other children.



Rosa Vera

Dr. Jonathan Melk met Rosa in March 2003, after she had already developed advanced symptoms of her disease. Further evaluation confirmed a dismal future without major surgical intervention. With much effort, the good will of Bolivian professionals and with funding provided exclusively by Dr. Melk's friends and family totaling around \$3,000, Rosa was granted her opportunity for surgical correction. On May 7, 2003, Rosa had the surgery. To the sadness of everyone involved, she passed away in the final stage of her surgery — she was only 11 years old.

After the expenses of surgery and funeral costs were covered, there was still \$1,500 left. A decision was made to leave the money there to help other children in Montero in need of life-saving or life-altering care. Jonathan receives detailed reports from the Bolivian



Lisa Hunt, M.D.

doctors every single month about hundreds of children they help with that money. In honor of the brave little girl whose donations provided care to many other children — “The Rosa Vera Fund” 501(c)(3).

After hearing the story, Dr. Lisa Hunt knew that this was something she needed to get involved with and decided to head down to Bolivia to help. She promptly hosted her first fundraising event with her friends and family at her home, which she still continues hosting to this day. She joined the board of directors in 2012 and learned quickly how rewarding it was for her to practice pediatric medicine in a third-world country. She shared how difficult it was for children there with the lack of resources, but that it was an opportunity to practice pure medicine as you didn't have to deal with bureaucracy and challenges like commercial insurance plans.

Dr. Lisa Hunt's focus is on providing good quality care for underserved children. Hunt works alongside their Bolivian colleagues in the Villa Cochabamba clinic — seeing children, evaluating and planning interventions for the upcoming year. Her goals for the work trips are twofold: Entering a community with limited resources and finding ways to utilize donations to the fullest and investigating each tiny detail of patients' lives and attempting to “fill in the gaps” to make their lives better. These could be medical, social or even educational gaps that need filling — and no detail is too small to address. The nonprofit has committed to using 100% of all of the funding to support the project in Bolivia. They have a combination of allocations, from medication for the children, trips to visit specialists, imaging studies and any CT scans or MRIs that are needed. The funds support any type of ancillary items that they might need, like

clean water, so they don't catch an infection. In one case, a clean house was needed so the child could stay safe, so the charity replaced the flooring and walls. Essentially it includes anything the family needs to support the patient with a stipulation that the families provide a small fraction of the costs themselves, so they are invested and show up to the appointments.

Six years ago, they realized that there was a large expense being spent on transporting the children to all of their therapies. They agreed that it would be incredible if they had their own therapy center so they didn't have to go to the city to get these services. Their local partnering physicians offered to donate a piece of land, and they

used Rosa Vera funds along with some additional grants and donations to build their clinic. They now offer physical and speech therapy, as well as special education every day.

Between the eight board members who all fundraise collectively, the nonprofit reaches its goal of about \$60,000 a year. Dr. Lisa Hunt's local efforts are pivotal to the success of continuing the much-needed help for these children. If you would like to donate or learn more about the organization or volunteer opportunities, please visit <https://www.rosaverafund.org>.



Rosa Vera Fund Founder and CEO Dr. Jon Melk