

## NADF HELPING THOSE IN NEED IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

This past July, the NADF received an e-mail from a young lady named Maria, who shared an unfortunate story about her extended family living in Guatemala. Apparently, in Guatemala, the hormone replacement medications needed to treat Addison's disease are not easy to come by, and when they are obtained, the cost is prohibitive, running as high as \$5 a tablet.

Maria's young cousin, Juan Miguel, had just been diagnosed with Addison's disease and was in need of life-saving medications. Because the NADF is a small, nonprofit organization with very limited resources, we were unable to help Maria and her family monetarily, but we were able to find other organizations to assist them. Executive Director Melanie Wong signed onto the internet, and searched for organizations that do philanthropic work in Guatemala, emailing various organizations the following e-mail (at the time of mailing, she didn't know the patient was a teenage boy):

"Dear Caring People:

Would you have or know of any resources that help adults in Guatemala? We have been contacted regarding a woman in this country who has Addison's disease and can't get her life-saving medications. Thank you for your time."

Almost immediately, NADF received a reply e-mail from the Health Care Coordinator and Board President of a wonderful organization called COTA (Children of the Americas) ([www.childrenoftheamericas.org](http://www.childrenoftheamericas.org)) stating that they may be able to help and asking for the name and dose of medication and a photo of the boy.

Melanie connected COTA with Maria, who fulfilled Coordinator/President's requests. Jody then reported that she sent the photos and prescription information that Maria had e-mailed to her to COTA's pharmacist, Mike Branstetter, and he was able to secure 300 days of medication for patient Juan Miguel, on the provision that Juan Miguel visit their clinic in Guatemala for a consultation.

The arrangements for the medication transportation and delivery were as follows:

"I am mailing the meds for the Addison's disease patient tomorrow. I am sending him enough to last 300 days. The meds will be sent to Dr. Jim Hines brother in Texas. His brother will arrive in Guatemala City Aug. 10th. I gave Dr. Jim the young man's name. Could you or someone inform his mother that he should not abruptly stop taking these meds. When they start getting low on the meds let me know in time so I could get them more. Maybe I can bring more down in January, 2009 during the medical mission. Let me know if they need more info. on any of this. Thanks - Mike"

A grateful Maria replied...

"First of all, a million thanks from me and my aunt. You can not imagine how she got when I told her. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. God bless you all a thousand times. Because of people like you, people like me get a better look of what life means. Believe me, from this point on, I will do anything to help the most needed (sic), that is my promise!!! I really can't stop saying thank you, thank you, thank you...Again a million thanks to all of you from the bottom of my heart."

And from Juan Miguel's parents to Mike Branstetter...

"Good evening, how are you Mr. Branstetter? At first, we want to introduce us as parents of Juan Miguel....

We are very grateful for you for having sent the medicines that our son needs; really there is no way of paying your precious generosity; this one has given us a lot of faith and hope for Juan Miguel's life!!! We are using a translator, to be able to use the words that express the eternal gratitude that we have with you; though really there are no words that could express the big, deep and eternal of our gratitude towards you. Now that we have your information, we can communicate with you and share with you about Juan Miguel's evolution with the medicine!

God Bless you Mr. Branstetter, from the deepest of our heart we give thanks to God for your life, and for the generous and compassionate heart that He has put in you. It is our prayer that the Lord continues blessing you and your family."

And as the "cherry on the sundae", NADF sent an introduction e-mail to Juan Miguel's parents:

"Greetings from the National Adrenal Diseases Foundation (NADF); a non-profit organization dedicated to providing information, education and support to persons with adrenal disease.

We were so gratified to hear that the Children of the Americas organization was able to assist you in getting vital medications for your son Juan Miguel. To insure that your son always has his life-preserving medications hydrocortisone and fludrocortisone acetate, please remember to re-order them early, always having at least a month's supply on hand.

Attached, please find a copy of our latest newsletter in PDF format (membership application on the back page). If you choose to join NADF, you will automatically receive a copy of NADF News® quarterly.

I have also attached several of our informational items for your edification (some of them in Spanish). They are all in PDF format, which is available for free on the internet. Please visit our website at [www.nadf.us](http://www.nadf.us) and read the information there on Addison's Disease. Take the liberty to make copies and distribute them freely (especially to Juan Miguel's physicians).

NADF has over 30 affiliated Addison's/adrenal support groups in the continental United States. Feel free to contact any of them at any time. (Their contact information can be found on the NADF Support Group Contacts page in the attached NADF News®.)

We have a specialty support group for the Parents of Adrenal Insufficient (Addison's Disease) Children. The contact person for that group is Dawn Illsley (607) 771-6746; e-mail: [dcillsley72@aol.com](mailto:dcillsley72@aol.com). Feel free to contact Dawn at any time.

We also have a Kids Pen Pal E-Mail Network, currently with participants in the age range of 9 to 17 years old. Let me know if Juan Miguel would like to sign on.

If there is anything else we can assist you with, please let us know.

Best of health and luck to Juan Miguel and your entire family.  
– NADF Executive Director, Melanie Wong

P.S. Juan Miguel has signed on to NADF's Kid's Pen Pal E-Mail Network!