

## The Waterfall Humanitarian Foundation Story

The Waterfall Humanitarian Foundation is not the laudable deed of large corporations or wealthy individuals. It is the modest effort of common individuals, most of them of middle class, some poor, and a few of them wealthy, who decided to help children and families at a children's hospital in a foreign country. They did not seek notoriety or even recognition.



The Waterfall Humanitarian story began in 1975, when several hundred young men and women, all between the ages of 19 and 30, were called to serve a proselyting mission in Argentina while the guerrilla war was raging in that country. Those were dangerous times, but trusting their safety to God, they went to work with a smile on their face, with belief in their purpose and conviction in their faith.

Their mission was to share their faith in the heart of Buenos Aires. Their youth and USA origins were not a plus in that culture. Rather, their nationality might have added a tinge of danger amidst the noise of bombs and machine gun fire exchanged between the army and guerrillas. This warfare did not deter them. It only meant that they had to work harder to reach the hearts of people.

The Lord added an interesting twist to the mix: A very young mission president and his wife, John and Nydia Harris, were called to preside over them, and be their leaders. John was only thirty years of age, and Nydia was twenty-six when they were called to this assignment. Some of the missionaries were older than they were.



The missionaries serving under the leadership of President and Sister Harris achieved amazing results, but all gave the credit for their success to the Lord, whose errand they were on. These young missionaries were taught and learned to work by inspiration to accomplish the will of Jesus Christ, the resurrected Lord, who had called them, and was leading them by the Spirit, the Holy Ghost. Learning to lead and guide their lives by the power of the Holy Ghost to accomplish the will of their Savior, Jesus Christ, was the greatest

lesson these missionaries learned while serving in Argentina—a lesson that they would not forget during the rest of their lives.



Because President and Sister Harris were young when called to lead and preside over the Argentina Buenos Aires mission, their assigned missionaries bonded with them quickly, and this mutual love and respect for each other has endured strong for the 47 years since that time of full-time missionary service.

Upon returning home from their missions, these missionaries married, earned college degrees, and pursued professions. All have experienced the normal ups and downs of the real-world in their personal and professional lives. Some became doctors, some experienced divorce, some overcame sickness, some became wealthy, some were elected to office, some were called to other missions, and some have passed away or have suffered the heart-ache of having their spouses or children die. Life does not spare anyone. During many of these experiences, these missionaries have remained close friends and rejoiced or mourned together.

One of the outstanding missionaries who served as a leader assistant to President Harris in 1976 was Gordon Duval. He was a man of great fortitude and good judgement. Eventually, Gordon became a lawyer and practiced in Utah.



It was in 2015 that John Harris was visiting Gordon Duval in his law office when he found out that Gordon was about to travel to Venezuela to meet with the Venezuelan Central Bank on the subject of certain sovereign bonds. Gordon asked John Harris, his former native Spanish speaking Mission President in Argentina, to come with him to Venezuela as a Spanish language translator with the bank executives at the prospective meetings. John Harris accepted and the trip took place from September 16-19, 2015. A few months after the trip, Waterfall Mountain International Holdings Limited, the company of which Gordon was a co-manager, was assigned sovereign bonds by the Central Bank of Venezuela. The bonds were earmarked for humanitarian and economic growth purposes.

The dream of Gordon Duval, and supported by John Harris, was to be able to lend humanitarian assistance with the future monetization of those bonds. But rather than wait for the future time when those bonds would actually be monetized,

Gordon Duval and John Harris felt that the humanitarian work had to begin immediately.



Just a couple of months after the trip to Venezuela, John Harris received an email from Doctor Thamara Ortiz from the J.M. de los Rios, Children's Hospital in Caracas, a 240-bed hospital that was the leading institution of that kind in Venezuela. (Shown on the left.) The email said:

"I am ... a pediatrician as a second-year resident at the graduate pediatric endocrinology at Children's Hospital, "Dr.JM de los Rios. ..The situation is very serious... child mortality has increased and every day...worsens. ..We have patients with type 1 diabetes

who do not eat or only do it once a day when this illness requires 6 feeding times. They do not get in many cases the test strips for glucose tester, or have syringes. . . . Anything that you can do to help us give better quality of life for our patients would be appreciated." Thamara Ortiz, Resident,

At that time John Harris and Gordon Duval decided that the urgency of the situation for children in Venezuela was such that something had to be done immediately. John Harris decided to re-focus a 501 (c) (3) foundation he had organized two years before, to helping the children at the Children's Hospital, without waiting for funding from the monetized bonds. The foundation--renamed the Waterfall Humanitarian Foundation—had a few hundred dollars in the bank. If the anticipated funding came, it would be used, but there was no need to wait to perform good deeds with whatever resources could be found. The Waterfall Humanitarian Foundation began with a board of directors composed of three people: John Harris, Chairman, with Gordon Duval and John Buckley (shown on the right) as members. The belief that Gordon Duval and John Buckley were two of the most outstanding missionaries to serve under John Harris in Argentina brought credibility to the minds of hundreds of missionaries who had served with them in those difficult, yet glorious, days of Argentina.



Before any further steps were taken, John Harris contacted Dr. Thamara Ortiz in Venezuela. In the process of contacting her, he met Atty. Yvonne Sarmiento, who was a member of the same church unit of Dr. Ortiz and both served in the Relief Society. The parents of Ms. Sarmiento were living in Salt Lake City, Utah, and



John Harris had recently met them in Salt Lake at the building where he and his wife served as Service Missionaries. John Harris asked Yvonne (photo on the right) to represent the foundation in Caracas, and to get in touch with the hospital.

The request to her was to help sign a document between the foundation and the hospital in which the foundation made a commitment to furnish glucometers, strips, and lancets for the children with diabetes mellitus, and the hospital committed to deliver them to the children at no cost, and to train them on how to use them. The Letter of Commitment was signed on June 14, 2017 by executives of both foundations, the Director of Endocrinology of the hospital, and witnessed by lawyers representing both foundations.

The next step was to raise the necessary funds. Another of the missionaries who served in Argentina with Gordon Duval and John Harris was Dr. Dennis Lange, a retired Nephrologist residing in Los Gatos, California, where he organized, and eventually sold, several dialysis clinics. John Harris discussed with Dr. Dennis Lange what could be done and the idea of sending glucometers and strips was conceived. Dennis Lange donated \$10,000 to make the foundation a reality. Donations that came after were encouraged by the results obtained through his early donations. These donors, many of whom desire to remain anonymous, are the real heroes of this story.



In order to understand what type of glucometer and strips were to best to send to Venezuela, John Harris consulted with Dr. Scott Clements, of the Primary Children Hospital in Salt Lake City. He recommended to send TrueMetrix glucometers made by Trividia Health.. The Foundation negotiated the best price with Trividia Health and the first order of fifty glucometers, one thousand lancets, and 30,000 strips and strips was placed on July 29, 2017. The task ahead, now, and perhaps the most difficult was to find a safe way to send the supplies to the hospital.

After looking for ways to ship goods to Venezuela, the solution for shipping supplies came from Yvonne Sarmiento. She had heard of a small shipping agent in Salt Lake City by the name of Express Shipping International (E.S.I.), John Harris met Noemi Dargalaye—the owner and operator--, and decided to use that

shipping company. She was successful in sending that first shipment, and has been successful ever since, without losing a single shipment.



All shipments were sent directly to Yvonne Sarmiento, and she delivered the supplies to the Children's Hospital foundation. Any shipment sent directly to the hospital run the risk of ending up in the pharmacy of the hospital, to be sold to patients. The foundation of the hospital made sure that the supplies were given without cost to those who needed them.

The glucometers and ancillary supplies were given to children and their families. Yvonne Sarmiento, on her own, made sure to record the names and phone numbers of every child who received supplies, and pictures of the children began arriving at the Waterfall Humanitarian Foundation.

That first success in sending glucometers to the Children's Hospital was the crucial story that encouraged many more of the missionaries who had served with John Harris, Gordon Duval, and John Buckley in Argentina, and they began to send funds to



the Waterfall Humanitarian Foundation. From then on, shipments were repeated periodically.



Of all the donations received by the foundation up to June 2022, 92% came from missionaries who almost half a century before, had served with John Harris, Gordon Duval and John Buckley in Argentina. Those missionaries were now grandparents, many of them retired. Some had become doctors like Dr. Lange, others lawyers, like Gordon Duval and John Buckley, several were dentists, and others had been teachers, editors of magazines, or had formed their own companies like one with a lighting company in Hawaii and another with an employee benefit consulting company. Some were CPAs, bankers, or professors at universities. All of them contributed to the measure of their possibilities. Irrespective of whether the donation was

for \$10,000, or for \$20, they were all received with gratitude, acknowledged with a personal letter and receipt.

The website of WaerfallHumanitarian.org was designed by John Harris oldest son, and of his same name. This website was important to communicate the successes to the donors.



The Board of Advisors of the foundation was strengthened with the addition of Dr. Shandon Gubler, PhD, who became a trusted advisor in September 2018. Dr. Gubler had received his PhD. at Brigham Young University and had dedicated much of his life to academia. Both as Professor at BYU's Marriott Business School and at Utah Tech University he was nominated for the Distinguished Teaching Award multiple times. His acumen and support was

greatly appreciated.

John Harris was then alerted that there were no antibiotics at the hospital, making any infection a serious concern. The Children's Hospital Foundation sent a list of required antibiotics, including Azithromycin, Amoxicillin, Ampicillin, Levofloxacin, and others, in several presentations. There were difficulties in providing antibiotics, besides the high cost of any amount that could make a difference. The foundation did not know how to get the antibiotics in the USA to send to Venezuela, and sourcing from other countries like India did not provide the safe shipping processes already being used for the glucometers.

In June 2019, concerned about the lack of antibiotics, Atty. Yvonne Sarmiento set out on an adventure to obtain antibiotics in Cucuta, Colombia. The foundation sent money to Cucuta by Western Union—two small amounts of \$400 each so that she would not have problems cashing them. Apparently, sending more than that would have become subject of scrutiny.

Yvonne called the morning of Sunday June 23, 2019, to announce that she had received the funds, and she had gone to several pharmacies to buy antibiotics. She was keeping some cash to pay for duties, because people could bring a limited



number of packages from Colombia to Caracas but had to pay duties in route. The trip generally took 18 hrs. by bus one way. She called on June 24, 2019 to tell us that she was fine and safe back in Caracas. The trip back had taken 24 hours, because there were demonstrations protesting the lack of gasoline. Slowly passing through the demonstrations added hours to the trip. Then the bus broke down and had to be repaired. Ms. Sarmiento was very happy to report that she could bring safely all the antibiotics she had purchased. Shipments arrived and were delivered to the hospital.



The saga to bring antibiotics from Colombia had shown that the solution was not viable in the long term. At that moment, the President of the Children’s Hospital Foundation, Dr. Augusto Pereira, sent an email to John Harris saying that “There are specialties at the JM de los Rios, that do not receive help from anyone, and patients are getting worse every day. Such is the case of neurological patients, who suffer seizures and convulsions, and every time they suffer an attack brain

damage is caused.”

John Harris called Dr. Pereira and discussed the matter. Dr. Pereira explained that the Red Cross, the U.N. , and other international bodies sent antibiotics from time to time. He suggested that the Waterfall Humanitarian Foundation would better serve those in need by concentrating on aspects that the large international institutions generally ignored. Children with diabetes, mellitus, and epilepsy were some of those areas ignored by large organizations. The Waterfall Humanitarian Foundation in January 2020 asked Dr. Pereira to be a member of the Board of Advisors.

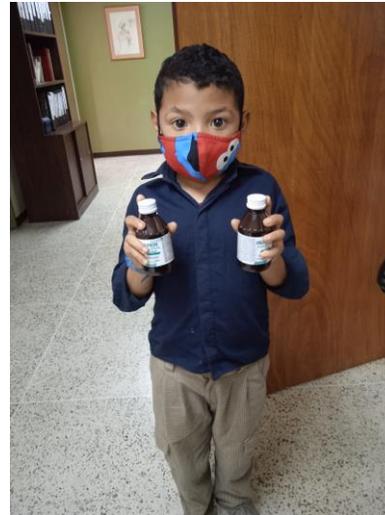
The foundation began considering how to assist children with epilepsy. John Harris consulted with Dr. David Renner of the University of Utah Hospital, who himself has charitable clinics in Africa. The advice of Dr. Renner was sobering: “If you decide to help children with epilepsy, you must prepare to sustain the effort in the long term, because interrupting the treatment can hurt the children.”The request from the Children’s Hospital was for the foundation to provide Valproic Acid.

The foundation could not obtain the medicines in the USA without a prescription, so the possibility of supplying from Colombia was researched, and a recommendation was made by Dennis Tenney, one of the friends of the foundation. Based on that recommendation the foundation designated



Luz Elena Gomez Parga, a very charitable person with a Bachelor and Master in Education, to be the Representative of the Foundation in Colombia. She had worked in School Administration for over twenty years. In business, she worked as Director of Operations for Nature Sunshine for Colombia, Peru and Ecuador. As a civic leader she has served in the staff of the Congress of the Republic of Colombia. She had dedicated much of his life to teaching and mending the life of families that have experienced abuse.

Luz Elena found the supply of Valproic Acid and prepared the first shipments from Colombia. Luz Elena felt deeply the need to help children, and that emotional burden created by the need to save the children she loved caused her to suffer greatly, with high blood pressure, and her life was constantly under threat. Her heroic efforts were successful, but buying and shipping from Colombia was a very expensive proposition. After several months Dr. Pereira suggested to use the Badan non-profit pharmacy in Venezuela—where he was a member of the Board. The shipping costs were totally obviated, and the price was substantially lower. From then on, the epilepsy medicines were supplied by the BADAN non-profit pharmacy. The valproic acid and Levetiracetam were bought from



BADAN from that time on a regular basis. Money was sent to the account of the pharmacy in the USA, and the medicines were delivered to the hospital in Caracas.



The supply of valproic acid and levetiracetam brought relief to dozens of children who did not have any way to stop their seizures. The efforts benefited the poorest and most

needed families who faced the terrible reality of epilepsy in their small children. The new commitment of the Waterfall Humanitarian Foundation represented a long-term commitment to help the



beautiful children and families who faced that stark and difficult reality.

The COVID pandemic had begun in February 2020, but the efforts of the foundation continued uninterrupted. The only difference was that from time to time, the foundation send rapid tests kits to Dr. Pereira, so that children could be tested and precaution put in place were they to be COVID positive. The rapid tests were secured by Paul Bell, a member of the Advisory Board.



Augusto Pereira President

Gordon Duval, one of the founders of the foundation and a member of the Board of Directors, died on January 25, 2021

The family of Gordon Duval received a letter from the Children’s Hospital that said:

“The entire board of directors and members of the Board of Trustees of the Foundation of the J. M. Children's Hospital, unite to express their deepest condolences to Dr. Gordon's family Duval, director of the Waterfall Humanitarian Foundation. We are extremely grateful for the assistance provided during the last years, it is by We join their grief and send them our most sincere message of support. Kind regards Dr.

Filling the position vacated by Gordon Duval was a great challenge. After much reflection, John Harris approached Carlos Amado, and he accepted to be a member of the Board of the Waterfall Humanitarian Foundation. Elder Carlos Humberto Amado had been a member of the Quorum of the Seventy of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from 1989 to 2015. He was very familiar with the humanitarian needs of Latin America, having served as president of the Chile Area, the South America West Area, and the South America South and Central America Areas. He also served as counselor in the Area Presidencies of South America West, South America South, Mexico South, Central America, and Mexico/Central America. In those positions he cared for the people of those countries and played a significant role in key humanitarian decisions.



In February 2021 Sharlene Wells Hawkes, former Miss America who had distinguished herself as a great humanitarian in aiding the veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces and preserving the memories of their devotion, joined the Advisory Board. At that time Michael Duval, Attorney, son of Gordon Duval, one of the founders, was also added to the Advisory Board.



As the Waterfall Humanitarian Foundation became stronger and persevered in the achievement of its objectives, it was necessary to formalize its image to the public. Therefore, Fadoul Mazzawi, owner of one of the best advertising agencies in Israel, was invited to join the Advisory Board, and his first assignment was to come up with the new logo for the foundation, which was adopted in July 2021.

Also in July 2021 the Board of Trustees decided to increase the number of trustees to five, Both Dr. Dennis Lange and her wife Cynthia Juarez Lange, who had been so instrumental in creating the foundation through their donations, were added to the Board. Cynthia Lange once led the Fragomen’s High Tech law practice centered on immigration issues in the heart of Silicon Valley. She had worked to set up and manage worldwide immigration compliance programs. She is an Adjunct Professor at Southwestern University School of Law and has written numerous articles on business immigration law matters. She graduated from Southwestern University School of Law | J.D., 1985 and Brigham Young University | B.A., 1981, Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society. She was listed in Best Lawyers in America, from 2006 to 2019, and Who's Who Legal: Corporate Immigration, 2006 to 2019. Fluent in English and Spanish. Her experience with immigration was very important to understand and find solutions to the large number of refugees around the world.



The achievements during 2021 as reported by the Children’s hospital, even under the ordeal presented by the pandemic, were encouraging. The foundation had supported the efforts of six departments of the Children’s Hospital. It had received a 30% increase in donations in 2021 compared to 2020, and that had allowed to increase our help to the Children’s Hospital by 75%. The cost of

shipment had been decreased and the level of administration expenses was kept at less than 3% our donations. The following chart illustrate the level of activity in 2021.

Hospital report for Waterfall Humanitarian Foundation		Report of patients assisted and medical supplies delivered in 2021												
		Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Medicines and medical supplies	Glucometers			2		22						3	49	76
	strips	89	113	30	131	292	122			144	141	259	382	1703
	Vallproic Acid		1	13	47	97	47	36	18	7	24	50		340
	Levetiracetam		2	2	17	21	10	15	14		13			94
	Lancets				1	8	52			1				62
Patients Assisted		15	28	20	78	138	93	33	17	44	90	85	119	760
Summary		Hospital Departments supported:												
Patient assisted		760											Endocrinology	
Glucometers given		76											Neurology	
Boxes of strips		1703											Oncology	
Valproic Acid (tablets and syrup)		340											Urgent Care	
Levetiracetam		94											General Administration	
Lancets		62											Hospital Security	



In March 2022, Gordon Duval, D.O., a certified pediatrician who graduated at LECOM in Pennsylvania, and did his residency in Missouri, was also inducted to the Board of Advisors. His zest to help children was soon evident, as in March 2022, he traveled to Ukraine and delivered approximately \$60,000 of medicines and supplies in 21 suitcases, weighing 1,400 lbs. Delta Airlines waived cargo fees. 134 generous people donated approximately \$18,000, and the Mountain West, Central Valley, and Uinta Valley Medical Centers donated supplies. The Birch

Pharmacy participated by obtaining supplies at \$500 below cost. Dr. Duval was motivated by his genuine desire as a pediatrician to help as many children as he

can. This was a personal effort for him and family, and the Foundation helped with logistics in Ukraine.

In summary, by June 2022, the epilepsy medicines have been sent since 2019, and the glucometers, strips and lancets since 2017. With the last shipments, the foundation has sent 300 glucometers. About 250 children have received their glucometers, and 10 to 15 new children per month will receive them going forward. Dozens of children depend on the anticonvulsant medicines we are sending for epilepsy.

On July 12, 2022, an email was received from Dr. Pereira that said:

*Good morning dear Mr. Harris, first of all I send you an affectionate greeting . Attached you will find some photos of the deliveries made to patients of our hospital, only possible through the valuable collaboration of the Waterfall Foundation with the small patients of the JM de los Ríos Children's Hospital in Venezuela .*

*We express to you and your distinguished collaborators our profound gratitude for the donations that they so kindly made , and that they contribute quality of life to the children of the Hospital. We take this opportunity to subscribe to your pleasant orders in this your Foundation.*

*Dr. Augusto Pereira Gonzalez  
President*

The following were some of the pictures received:

