

# HOUSE CALL

SOUTH ORANGE COUNTY'S HEALTH INFORMATION RESOURCE

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## IRVINE PHYSICIAN FULFILLS DREAM OF A LIFETIME

On February 15, a young boy from Guatemala arrived in California with the hope of undergoing a surgery that would change his life.

16-year-old Miguel Angel Chuc Ortiz, a native Mayan Indian, was born with his right foot turned inward and back underneath his leg, a deformity known as a clubfoot. Because of his clubfoot, Miguel has never been able to walk normally, wear normal shoes, or play soccer—a sport he loves.

It was not until last October, when a group of doctors organized a trip to Guatemala, that Miguel had hope for a normal life. The doctors, including Victor V. Cachia, D.P.M., anesthesiologist Jay J. Rindenau, neurologist Bob Cleermans and pediatrician Annu Sharma, examined and treated more than 90 children in Guatemala.

Sadly, Miguel was not one of them. At the time of the mission, Miguel had a minor infection in his foot which made his surgery impossible. When told of the cancellation, Miguel was devastated. He believed he was missing his only lifetime oppor-



Dr. Victor Cachia and Miguel Angel Chuc Ortiz

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tunity to have his foot corrected.

Fortunately for Miguel, Dr. Victor Cachia and Dr. Jay J. Rindenau, did not forget him.

“We realized that if we don't operate now, the kid will never have a shot to walk normal,” Rindenau said.

“This young man has everything going for him, except he has an untreated deformity in his foot,” said Cachia. “By fixing this, it will allow him to enter into adulthood as a normal young man.”

When Dr. Cachia first told Miguel he wanted to bring him to California for the operation, Miguel did not believe him.

“I was surprised. I could not believe that a person that I did not know would be interested in me. I was not sure it was going to happen. Then I saw they were doing things to bring me here,” said Miguel.

With the support of En El, a organization affiliated with the Archdioces of Brooklyn, New York, arrangements for the necessary papers and a passport were made for Miguel and a plane ticket to California was provided.

Miguel arrived on February 15 and was brought into Irvine Medical Center three days later for a magnetic resonance image (MRI) scan, a procedure done in preparation for surgery.

Miguel was not frightened by the imposing MRI machine. His only comment was, “I don't know how to say thank you for what everybody is doing for me... for making my dream.”

On February 28, Miguel underwent surgery which lasted more than four hours.

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“The procedure went very well,” said Cachia, “we were able to realign his foot and transfer three tendons which will allow for movement.”

Dr. Cachia continued to say it would be at least 12 weeks before Miguel will walk including six weeks of complete immobility and six weeks with a weight-bearing cast. The doctor is not sure at this point, but a second operation may be required.

“After that there will be rehabilitation and physical therapy,” said Dr. Cachia. He added, “Miguel is recovering well. All signs are that the operation was a success.”

Dr Cachia performed Miguel’s surgery free of charge. Irvine Medical Center is also providing all services at no charge including hospitalization for one or two surgeries, diagnostic laboratory services, and imaging studies.

Donna H. Groh, Irvine Medical Center vice president and chief operating officer, said it is not unusual for the hospital to support doctors who perform charitable work by donating the costs of the treatment and care.

### **Learn How to Prevent Child Drowning**

A free, 30-minute video on the prevention of child drowning is now available through the “Choices for a Healthier Lifestyle” program at Irvine Medical Center. Don’t let a drowning tragedy happen to someone you love. Call Choices today at (714) 753-2151 to obtain your copy of the video.