



# SpineHope

Transforming children's  
lives through spine surgery



## It's Happening! By Beth Felker

We're growing! Because of your support, this year we're starting a new pilot site in Latin America and also bringing select children to the U.S. for surgery.

In 2012, you helped to evaluate 115 children and provide 22 surgeries to children. Also, your support allowed us to focus on creating the non-profit infrastructure necessary prior to expanding services.

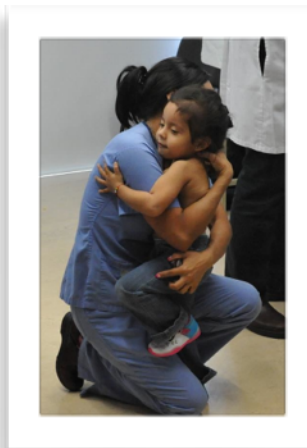
So now in 2013, in addition to providing 20-30 surgeries to children in Colombia, your support helps:

- Visit Belize and Costa Rica to assess a new pilot site partnership and treat more children,
- Hold at least one surgical trip to the new pilot site and provide 3-5 surgeries, and
- Bring 1-2 children to Austin, TX for spine surgery.

This year, you will touch over 130 children's lives and provide surgery to 20-35 children.

So, thank you for supporting the vision - that every child with a spinal deformity has the opportunity to have a normal life.

Thank you for transforming the lives of children worldwide and giving hope.



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## Successes & Smiles

In 2012:

115 children evaluated in clinic  
22 children received surgeries

Since 2001:

194 surgeries provided



## It's a Date

2013:

February 19-23: Visit Belize & Costa Rica

May 4-11: Colombia Trip

September 7: Annual Event in Austin, TX

November 16-23: Colombia Trip

TBA:

1st Pilot Site Surgical Trip

1st Patient to the US for spine surgery

# The Hope You Share

By Bridget Mortell

We first met tiny Estephania when she was just two and a half years old. She wore a brace that covered her entire torso and she couldn't walk by herself. Her mom helped her take a few steps, but her legs were too weak to support her little body. Immediately the collaborative surgical team, including Drs. Geck, Rinella, Uribe, Gonzalez, Herrera-Soto, and Kuhns, ordered a full range of images including X-rays, MRI, and CT-scans.

They discovered a very rare and unexpected condition. In addition to her prominent scoliosis, Estephania also had an extremely dangerous instability in the two vertebrae closest to her skull (C1 and C2). This instability between spine and skull (body and head) was impacting her ability to walk and, if left untreated, could potentially take her life.

The day after we first met Estephania, we performed her potentially life-saving surgery. Because of her specific condition (C1 was in front of C2), the space available for very delicate and specific nerve groups was drastically reduced. Thus, we carefully provided additional stability to her neck and increased the space her nerves needed to properly function and grow.

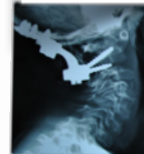
With this initial surgery complete, we scheduled surgery to address her scoliosis during our next visit. Six months later Estephania greeted us with a smile, having healed completely from her first surgery and walking much better.

Since Estephania was so young, we treated her scoliosis with growing rods – which help reverse and/or slow her scoliosis while allowing her spine and chest cavity to grow. Once she is fully grown, she will need a full spinal fusion. In the mean time, every six months to a year, we will operate to extend or lengthen her growth rod.

To date, you've helped to provide Estephania with six total surgeries, including one to potentially save her life, one to place her growth rod, and four to let her body continue to grow. Now her scoliosis is no longer visible, she walks without assistance, and she has been known to answer to Dr. Rinella's "dance off" challenges much to our delight.

Estephania just amazes us with her progressive physical change, gentle trust, and most of all her bravery. While the changes to her body are visible, the growth in her confidence and personality shine brighter and brighter. You have given her the opportunity to not only live, but also to physically grow and to thrive. You've forever change her life – and her family's life.

We hope Estephania's story and photos brightened your day and capture your heart – as token of thanks for the hope you've given her.



## Our SpineHope Team



### U.S. Surgeons:

Anthony Rinella  
Matt Geck  
Chris Bergin  
Sassan Keshavarzi  
Steve Mardjetko  
Mike O'Brien  
Craig Kuhns  
Jose Herrera  
Hooman Melomed

### Colombian Surgeons:

Juan Uribe  
Mario Germán González  
Jaime Barreto  
Luis Felipe Villota Luis  
Fernando González  
Mario Hernan Villegas

### Ecuadorian Surgeon:

Xavier Ramirez

### Casa de Colombia:

Margarita Lenis  
Adriana Gomez

### Neuromonitoring

#### Specialists:

Tanar Fulton  
Wynn Bridges Gordy  
Kim Helman  
Vanessa Jordan  
Jason Kerwin  
Sarah Kinsey  
Ethan Lauer  
Beth Lindstrom  
Bridget Mortell  
Laura Muncie  
Jessica Walter  
Jaime Schultz  
Jade Morris  
Enida Mezini

### Patient Care Technicians:

Pat Battle, PCT  
Deborah Caruso, RN  
Arica Costello, RN  
Kathy Harley, RN  
Maricela Kolbeson, CNRA  
Edith Martinez, RN  
Elise Sanders, RN  
Tina Tran, RN

### Instrumentation

#### Representatives:

Brandon Black  
Chris Finlen  
Curtis Jackson  
Jim Julian  
Jessica Manning  
Tom Morrone  
Sean O'Leary  
Matt Page  
Cory Pomon  
Michael O'Sadnick  
Ryan Switz  
Chris Ryan

### Physical Therapists:

Nate Whitney  
Efoa Guobadia



Thank you!  
Saturday September 8th, 2012  
Chicago, Illinois

During our last event, you gave nearly \$70,000 - almost twice last year's event total of \$40,000 - to transform children's lives.

You are helping expand services to more children - with a new pilot site in Latin America and bringing select children to the US for spine surgery.

Thank you - for helping to create a world where every child with a spinal deformity has the opportunity to live a normal life.



## Hear All About It By Jaime Schultz

When great talent is gathered together, you can expect that there will be some fan-fare from time to time. Our dedicated team of surgeons have often been recognized for their talents and accomplishments, and the last few months were no exception. Here are highlights about our co-founders:

In the fall of 2012, our very own Dr. Tony Rinella received the Walter P. Blount Humanitarian Award from the Scoliosis Research Society (SRS), in recognition of his outstanding service for those with spinal deformities.

The Blount Award is a humanitarian award given to an individual who provides outstanding service for those with spinal deformities, and recognizes their generous actions stem from of a sense of service to larger social and professional goals. A plaque was awarded and the recipient's name announced at the SRS Annual Meeting, which was held in Chicago on Sept 8 at the Sheraton Chicago Hotel and Towers.

Dr. Matthew Geck was recognized by Becker's Spine Review as a Spine Surgeon Leader to Know and included his practice, Seton Spine & Scoliosis Center in Austin, Texas as one of the 55 Practices to Know.

In addition, Dr. Geck has been recognized for his work with minimally invasive techniques to correct scoliosis curvatures. Articles on Dr. Geck's accomplishments can be found at <http://beckersorthopedicandspine.com>.

Further, Dr. Geck presented two research projects at the International Meeting for Advanced Spinal Techniques in Turkey in July 2012: 1. Occipital-Cervical Instability in Morquio-Brailsford's Disease (MPSIV): A cohort of 16 patients treated in the SpineHope/ Casa de Colombia global outreach clinic and 2. Posterior, Single Approach, Two or Three Incision Mini Open Correction and Fusion for AIS.

# Mission of Hope

Excerpt from Efosa Guobadia's website *PT Haven*

Today was our last full day in Colombia, and it was mainly a day of leisure, yet it was a very special one. We took a bus tour through downtown Colombia to see a few of the sights. It is a great ride as I continue to be fascinated by Cali, and I know that this is a place that I want to return to in the future.

We stop for lunch in a beautiful apartment in the city. While taking in a wonderful view from the balcony, we all have a chance to finally catch up about the past week as we enjoy a delicious lunch accompanied with refreshing sangria.

While eating, Dr. Sassan Keshavarzi asked me the natural question that arises during a trip of this nature: "Efosa what does a trip like this mean to you?" I began to talk about service, and doing in your heart what feels right and true, and being part of the ripple of good waves that happen everyday across the world to combat the bad that we are too often reminded of.

Yet even as I was speaking I knew that although it was all true to me; it wasn't enough or it wasn't the whole truth. My scope was limited by being in the present. Therefore I had no idea how it would affect the future which holds just as much of the truth as the past and the now. And I knew that if I was being honest with myself I would know "what a trip like this meant to me" as I lived my

life from then on as I encountered various situations both high and low. I knew that if I could remember the strength and smiles of even a few of those kids that I would be okay.

*The message that I was taking home is that extraordinary things are possible if we are willing to come together and do the ordinary things with all of our heart.*

That's what SpineHope ... really embrace(s) at (its) true foundation and are what they will always be about.

*It reminds us that we can make a difference...*



## Get involved!

### Want to give Hope?

Donate online or contact us:  
[www.SpineHope.org/donate](http://www.SpineHope.org/donate)

### 1st Austin, TX Event

Want to help?  
 Please contact us!

## SPINEHOPE

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[www.facebook.com/SpineHope](https://www.facebook.com/SpineHope)



## Thanks to our Partners!

### Colombia Partners:



### Hope Partners:



the Ira Kaufman Family



Foundation

