



## BACK IN ACTION

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### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### Curvy Girls 5th International Scoliosis Convention

June 23-25, 2023  
Long Island, NY

Greetings SpineHope Supporters,

I'm really excited to update you on the progress at SpineHope. Like many organizations, the COVID pandemic created significant challenges for SpineHope programs. Throughout, we've remained committed to helping children in need, and are now returning to and exceeding pre pandemic outcomes. Highlights since 2020 include:

- Arranging corrective spine surgery for 10 children and teens in the USA from under-resourced countries (Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guyana, Nigeria, the Philippines, and Ukraine);
- Performing 5 successful spinal deformity operations alongside our global outreach program partners in Ecuador;
- Scouting and launching a new global outreach program in Nicaragua, where we recently performed 5 successful spine surgeries alongside local partners;
- Evaluating 98 pediatric deformity cases;
- Raising over \$60,000 through fundraising events to support our US Program; and
- Offering a FREE online Education and Support Center, complete with helpful tips, educational videos and information for children and individuals living with complex spine conditions.

Despite COVID-related and geopolitical challenges, SpineHope is working hard to get back to locations to offer treatment to more children on an annual basis. We are grateful for our dedicated volunteers and generous sponsors and donors who helped us get through this challenging period. We are proud of what we have done and are excited about the future. Thank you for your continued support and belief in our life-changing mission!

Sincerely,

Dawn Deakin, Executive Director, SpineHope

# GLOBAL OUTREACH

## NICARAGUA



In collaboration with host spine surgeon Dr. Luis Osorio Canales, the Ministry of Health of Nicaragua, and the team at Fernando Velez Paiz Hospital that includes Dr. Zeyra del Camen Lopez Aguilar, Dr. Maria Virginia Garcia Almendarez, and Dr. Johana Lissette Galan Lopez, we are working together to build a pediatric spine program in Managua, Nicaragua. In addition to providing charity spine surgery and post-op care to children whose families do not have the resources to pay for costly treatment, this program will also offer training and education to surgeons, medical staff, residents, and medical students in the region on advanced surgical techniques and spine safety protocols.

SpineHope's May 7-13, 2023 inaugural surgical trip was a success! Thank you Dr. Luis Osorio Canales and team at the Fernando Velez Paiz Hospital in Managua for the warm welcome of our volunteer team. While there, SpineHope performed five corrective spine surgeries in four days and evaluated 28 patients with spinal deformities. SpineHope volunteers and staff included:

- Dr. Matthew Geck, Spine Surgeon
- Dr. Alec Stall, Pediatric Orthopaedic Surgeon
- Dr. Jorge Guerrero, Anesthesiologist
- Brandon Black, Medtronic Implant/Product Representative
- Whitney Scurlock, Medtronic Implant/Product Representative
- Bridges Gordy, NuVasive Neuromonitoring Tech
- Kimberley King, Clinic & OR Support/Translator
- Sophie Aliece Hollis, Clinic & OR Support/Translator
- Dawn Deakin, Team Leader/SpineHope Representative

Thank you Medtronic for donating spinal implants and product as well as NuVasive for donating neuromonitoring services for the week's spine surgeries. We are excited to be working together with the team in Nicaragua to help children in need for years to come!



# GLOBAL OUTREACH

## ECUADOR



After a long awaited return due to the COVID pandemic, the SpineHope team finally made it back to Ecuador, May 8 - 15, 2022, for a pediatric spine surgical trip. Dr. Matthew Geck and the SpineHope team worked alongside host spine surgeon, Dr. Hazem Nicola, the Hospital de los Valles, and the Fundación El Cielo Para los Niños, to help children with complex spinal deformities. During this week-long trip we were able to evaluate twenty-four children in an all-day clinic and performed five successful corrective spine surgeries. We also had the chance to follow-up with the surgical patients from our previous trip, all of whom have recovered well!

Thank you to the team of outstanding volunteers willing to donate their time and talents to make miracles happen:

- Brandon Black, Medtronic Implant/Product Representative
- Curtis Jackson, Medtronic Implant/Product Representative
- Kim King, Onsite and Clinic Coordinator/Translator
- Matthew Geck, Spine Surgeon/SpineHope Representative
- Sophie Aliece Hollis, Clinic Support/Translator
- Whitney Scurlock, Medtronic Implant/Product Representative
- Wynn Bridges Gordy, NuVasive Neuromonitoring Tech
- Dawn Deakin, Team Leader/SpineHope Representative

Thank you Medtronic for donating critical spinal implants, products, and equipment as well as NuVasive for donating neuromonitoring services for this week's spine surgeries. We are excited to be working together once again to build a sustainable pediatric spine program in Ecuador and look forward to getting back as soon as possible!



# US HUB PROGRAM



## PATIENT SPOTLIGHT

### LORIE JANE (LJ)

Lorie Jane “LJ” Resurreccion from the Philippines was cleared and received corrective spine surgery for severe adolescent idiopathic scoliosis on February 23, 2023. It was a success with no complications. Her surgeon, Dr. Matthew Geck of Texas Spine and Scoliosis, performed the operation at Ascension Dell Children’s Medical Center. She received custom Medtronic rods for this procedure. SpineHope is grateful to all who made this spine journey possible for her.

*“The Spinehope journey that I’ve been through serves as a reminder that I’m blessed and I’m capable more than I know. I’ve never imagined it would be possible to have this opportunity that made my life a lot better. I believe that there’s still kindness in this world and I hope everyone will experience it too.”* –LJ Resurreccion

Thank you 2022 WALK TALL fundraiser sponsors and donors! Your contributions raised the funds needed to bring LJ for this life-altering spine treatment.

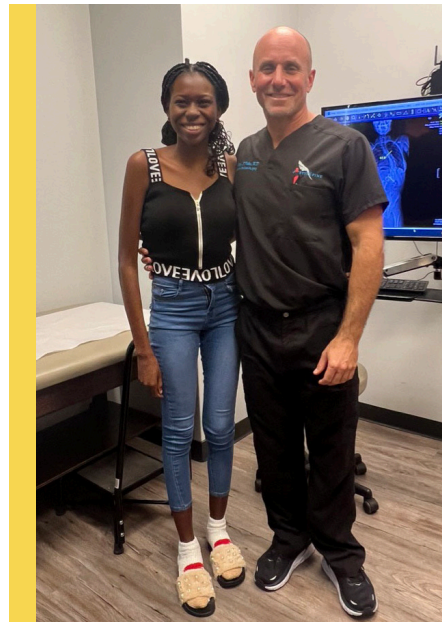


## PATIENT SPOTLIGHT

### TASHONA

Tashona Trim (17), traveled from Guyana, South America to Austin for evaluation under the SpineHope program. On November 7, 2022, Dr. Craig Kuhns of Austin Spine operated with spinal implants donated by ATEC Spine to successfully correct

Tashona’s severe scoliosis. This operation was her dream...she was tired of the pain, shortness of breath, and contending with other struggles related to having an 85+ degree scoliosis curve. Being from a country without any spine specialists, she is grateful to her sponsor, The Caribbean Children’s Foundation, and the volunteer heroes and organizations that made her dream come true in Texas.



## UPCOMING PATIENT

### BLESSEDCIFT AGU NIGERIA

“Diagnosed with Adolescent Idiopathic Scoliosis at age 12, BlessedGift has always been self-conscious about how she looks and what she wears. Oftentimes, she feels uncomfortable with how she looks and prefers wearing large-sized shirts and big dresses in order to make her curve not obvious to others. Most times, she feels constant pain in her back and this limits her physical activities. For example, at school she does not participate in sports activities that involve bending and twisting. Moreover, she cannot walk long distances for long periods of time as she will complain of back aches.

BlessedGift goes on simple errands. She does not sweep, mop, or wash the dishes. She spends most time reading and writing; writing is one of the things she enjoys doing most.

Sometimes, her mother misses official appointments in order to take her for X-rays and scans. Her siblings do the main house chores and even assist her when it comes to doing the laundry and the like. All these have made her hope for spine surgery. And all thanks to SpineHope, this dream is becoming a reality!

**“BlessedGift wants to become an orthopedic surgeon to change lives just as SpineHope is going to change hers!”**



She wants to be able to do things on her own and even extend helping hands to others. She also wants to be confident about how she looks and wants to also be involved in sports.

She believes that after the spine surgery, she will get better grades at school as she will not be thinking about her curved spine anymore.

BlessedGift wants to become an Orthopedic surgeon who will change lives just like how SpineHope is about to change hers!”

-Agu Sunday C

Father, Agu BlessedGift Osarosemwen

# INTRODUCING THE EDUCATION & SUPPORT CENTER



We are proud to announce the launch of our new SpineHope website! Along with its updated design and improved online donation portal, we are also introducing a FREE education and support center with written and video resources for individuals living with spinal deformities.

Millions of children and teens worldwide suffer from debilitating spinal deformities. Most are in need of surgery, treatment, quality educational resources, and/or guidance on how to better cope with these conditions. Especially in low-income communities, access to quality spine care and educational resources is difficult or non-existent. Because spine treatment options are costly, conditions are oftentimes ignored. Many are told they cannot be helped and/or advised to look outside their country for medical care.

The negative impact this has on the children and their families (physically, mentally, emotionally, and financially) is enormous...and in some cases, crippling. In addition to dealing with physical pain and mobility issues, youth battle a variety of psychological challenges. We want to help as many youth and people we can, even those we cannot provide direct surgical treatment for.

So, we created this Education and Support Center to help educate youth and their families on spinal deformities/treatment options AND to offer helpful tips, videos, links, and resources to offer ideas on how to:

- Develop healthy coping mechanisms to battle depression and social out-casting
- Boost self-esteem, self-worth, and confidence
- Reconnect with the body/self in healthy ways to encourage positive body image
- Improve nutrition
- Increase mobility
- Help manage pain in holistic ways, and live fuller, healthier lives!



# SING FOR SPINEHOPE



## MARCH 2023

Thank you Long Island Spine Specialists (LISS) for organizing and hosting the incredibly fun karaoke night fundraising event—Sing for SpineHope—in New York! Impressive performances from Dr. Tom Dowling, Dr. Larry Mermelstein, Dr. Monte De Wal, Dr. Sushil Basra, Dr. Zach George, Dr. Rich Johnson, Bari Sue Mermelstein, Jon Block, LISS Staff, and other supporters helped to raise over \$8,000 for children with advanced spinal deformities!

**THANK YOU!**

## VOLUNTEER OR DONATE TODAY

Our mission and operations are driven by dedicated volunteers and the generous donations we receive. We need your support to help us correct spinal deformities, alleviate pain, prevent paralysis when possible, and improve the quality of life for underprivileged children around the world.

### WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Tax-deductible donations can be made securely on our website or by mailing a check to:

SpineHope  
P.O. Box 684261  
Austin, TX 78768

If you or someone you know would like to help, please contact us at:

[spineoutreach@gmail.com](mailto:spineoutreach@gmail.com)  
[SpineHope.org](https://www.spinehope.org)  
(682)-463-9082

Follow us on social media!

@SpineHope



## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

After undergoing her own spinal fusion surgery in 2012, Sophie Aliece Hollis began raising money for SpineHope when she was in high school. She joined the group's fundraising committee during the pandemic, assisting with the planning and execution of digital and in-person events as well as media and marketing strategies, including this newsletter. In May of 2022, Sophie Aliece attended her first SpineHope surgical trip to Ecuador where she offered clinic support and translation between the SpineHope team and the local medical professionals and patient families. This May, Sophie Aliece again accompanied SpineHope in the same capacity to Managua, Nicaragua where the team successfully operated on five young women, similar in age to herself when she received her own spine surgery.

*"I am in awe every day of the life-changing work that SpineHope carries out across the globe. After experiencing firsthand how intimidating and isolating spinal deformity can be, I am so grateful to this organization for all that it does to provide children with the care that they need and deserve."* -Sophie Aliece Hollis



## ABOUT SPINEHOPE

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Matthew Geck, M.D.**  
Co-Founder / Board Chairman /  
Co-Medical Director  
*Co-Chief at Seton Spine and  
Scoliosis Center*

**Hal Katz, J.D.**  
Legal Counsel  
*Partner at Husch Blackwell, LLP*

**Ethan S. Lauer, CNIM**  
Co-Founder  
*CEO of ImplantBase*

**Ryan Murdock, M.D**  
Co-Medical Director  
*Founder | CEO Thinks Works*

**Jason York, MBA**  
Treasurer  
*CEO/Administrator of Orthopedic  
Associates of Central Texas P.A.*



SpineHope is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to bringing advanced spine treatment to children around the world. SpineHope provides assistance to children of all backgrounds. We partner with various healthcare organizations, device companies, and medical professionals to provide state-of-the-art spine care to children not able to receive modern treatments for their spinal deformities or other complex spine disorders in their communities.

## SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT

In 2006, Celia Goode-Haddock made the difficult decision to undergo spinal fusion surgery. After seeking out countless doctors and various treatments for chronic back pain, Celia was referred by several different physicians to Dr. Geck. After successful surgery and huge pain relief, Celia began supporting Dr. Geck's efforts with SpineHope in the form of fundraising, volunteering, and spreading the word about the organization. She is shown here with Hub Patient Yolanda Adams, from Guyana, at a WALK TALL Fundraiser in 2019.



*"Dr. Geck is the best of the best. Additionally, he has gathered together the best team of physician assistants, nurses, office staff, and associated practices. I consider him my hero and recommend him to all who will listen."* -Celia Goode-Haddock, patient and proud supporter of SpineHope

Our goals are to reduce pain and improve quality of life for children with spinal deformities. To promote sustainable spine care and treatment for children in our global outreach sites, it is part of our mission to help educate and train local medical teams on advanced surgical techniques and spine safety protocols

SpineHope programs include our Global Outreach Programs, focused on coordinating surgical mission trips to under-resourced countries to perform pediatric spine surgery and offer training to host surgeons and local medical staff. Additionally, we offer a U.S.-based Program that brings children to the United States for charity spine surgery and treatment at no cost to the patient.



**LJ**  
from *The Philippines*  
SURGERY IN 2022

BEFORE AFTER

BEFORE AFTER  
Severe Scoliosis

**Claudia**  
from *Ecuador*  
SURGERY IN 2022

BEFORE AFTER

BEFORE AFTER  
Degenerative Scoliosis

**Edilzar "Sammy"**  
from *Guatemala*  
SURGERY IN 2018

BEFORE AFTER

BEFORE AFTER  
Severe Kyphoscoliosis

**Estefany**  
from *Guatemala*  
SURGERY IN 2016

BEFORE AFTER

BEFORE AFTER  
Severe Kyphoscoliosis

**Daveanand**  
from *Guyana*  
SURGERY IN 2022

BEFORE AFTER

BEFORE AFTER  
Severe Scoliosis - 2.5 Inches Taller

**Princess**  
from *Guyana*  
SURGERY IN 2020

BEFORE AFTER

BEFORE AFTER  
Severe Idiopathic Scoliosis

**Justin**  
from *Costa Rica*  
SURGERY IN 2017

BEFORE AFTER

BEFORE AFTER  
Severe Kyphoscoliosis

**Yomali**  
from *Sri Lanka*  
SURGERY IN 2019

BEFORE AFTER

BEFORE AFTER  
Severe Scoliosis

**Grigoriy "Little Grisha"**  
from *Ukraine*  
SURGERY IN 2020

BEFORE AFTER

BEFORE AFTER  
Severe Craniocervical Compression

**Chantal**  
from *Dominican Republic*  
SURGERY IN 2020

BEFORE AFTER

BEFORE AFTER  
Congenital Scoliosis

**Samathra**  
from *Guyana*  
SURGERY IN 2018

BEFORE AFTER

BEFORE AFTER  
Scoliosis Collapsing Spine Syndrome

**Rahsaan**  
from *Guyana*  
SURGERY IN 2017

BEFORE AFTER

BEFORE AFTER  
Severe Scoliosis

**Trixia**  
from *The Philippines*  
Surgery in 2021

BEFORE AFTER

BEFORE AFTER  
Severe Idiopathic Scoliosis

**Tashona**  
from *Guyana*  
SURGERY IN 2022

BEFORE AFTER

BEFORE AFTER  
Severe Scoliosis

**Suharshi**  
from *Sri Lanka*  
SURGERY IN 2016

BEFORE AFTER

BEFORE AFTER  
Severe Scoliosis

5 Inches Taller

**Kachell**  
from *Guyana*  
SURGERY IN 2018

BEFORE AFTER

BEFORE AFTER  
Severe Kyphosis

**Shemaiah**  
from *Guyana*  
SURGERY IN 2019

BEFORE AFTER

BEFORE AFTER  
Scoliosis

**Prisca**  
from *Nigeria*  
SURGERY IN 2022

BEFORE AFTER

BEFORE AFTER  
Severe Scoliosis with Increased Kyphosis

**Isaiah**  
from *Guyana*  
SURGERY IN 2018

BEFORE AFTER

BEFORE AFTER  
Severe Scoliosis

**Yolanda**  
from *Guyana*  
SURGERY IN 2019

BEFORE AFTER

BEFORE AFTER  
Severe Scoliosis/Tether

# THANK YOU

## TO OUR CURRENT VOLUNTEERS

### SPECIAL PROJECT, MARKETING, CONTENT CONTRIBUTORS & PATIENT ADVOCATE VOLUNTEERS

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Jessy Faulkner - Immigration Attorney and Patient Advocate

Angie Gold - Patient Advocate and Events

Sophie Aliece Hollis - Patient Advocate, Marketing, and Content Writer

Danielle Vernon - Video Content Contributor/Producer (PT, CEAS III & ScolioAustin)

Elaine Tvrdik - Video Content Contributor/Producer (Camp Gladiator Personal Trainer and Nutrition Coach)

Tommy Schwegmann and Karla Suárez - Video Content Contributor/Producer (Go Dance Studio Austin Dance Instructors)

Anne Grady - Video Content Contributor/Producer (Speaker, Coach and Writer at the Anne Grady Group)

Grandma Sparky - Video Content Contributor/Producer (Author)

Sheryl Lynn - Video Content Contributor/Producer (Founder of Joyely)

Precious Paledi - Video Content Contributor/Producer (Scoliosis Support Botswana)

Sandra Dee Robinson - Video Content Contributor/Producer (Founder, Media Trainer/Writer/Producer at Charisma on Camera, LLC).

Ingrid Villarreal - Patient Advocate, Content Writer and Translator

Natasha Simon - Patient Advocate and Hub Patient Support

Courtney Battaglia - Patient Advocate and Content writer

Martine Loevaas - Graphic Design

Skylar Saba - Website Support (Groove Street Creative)

### U.S. HUB PROGRAM VOLUNTEERS

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Matthew Geck, MD (Spine Surgeon) at Texas Spine and Scoliosis

Craig Kuhns, MD (Spine Surgeon) at Austin Spine

Ryan Murdock, MD (Spine Surgeon) at Central Texas Pediatric Orthopedics

Tory Meyer, MD (Pediatric Surgeon) at Dell Children's Medical Center

Curtis Jackson and Whitney Scurllock at Medtronic

Wynn "Bridges" Gordy at NuVasive, Inc.

Participating Anesthesiologists at US Anesthesia Partners (USAP)

Elena Ruiz, MD (Pediatrician) at Bee Caves Pediatrics

Jessy Faulkner (Immigration attorney)

Ingrid Villarreal (Patient Advocate/Support/Translator)

Angie Gold (Patient Advocate/Support)

### 2023 NICARAGUA SURGICAL TRIP VOLUNTEERS

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Matthew Geck, Spine Surgeon

Alec Stall, Spine Surgeon

Jorge Guerrero, Anesthesiologist/OR Translator

Erika Henson, RN/OR Translator

Brandon Black, Medtronic Implant/Product Representative

Whitney Scurllock, Medtronic Implant/Product Representative

Bridges Gordy, NuVasive Neuromonitoring Tech

Kimberley King, Onsite Coordinator/Translator

Sophie Aliece Hollis, Onsite Support/Translator

### U.S. HUB PROGRAM VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATIONS

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ARA Diagnostic Imaging

Assure Neuromonitoring

ATEC Spine

NAPA - Austin Anesthesia Group

Austin Spine

Bee Caves Pediatrics

Children's Cardiology Associates

Central Texas Pediatric Orthopedics

Dell Children's Medical Center of Central Texas, a member of Ascension

Medtronic Spine USA

NuVasive Spine Foundation/NuVasive, Inc.

Pediatric Critical Care Associates

Pediatric Specialty Services

Seton Children's Ear Nose & Throat Center

Seton UT/Southwestern University Physicians Group

Smiley Group

'Specially for Children, Children's Hospital Subspecialists of Central Texas

Texas Spine and Scoliosis

Thomas Law Firm, PLLC

US Anesthesia Partners (Formally Capital Anesthesiology Association (CAA))