

OP WALK TALK

-A PUBLICATION FOR THE FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF OPERATION WALK DENVER

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OPERATION WALK DENVER DEVELOPMENT BOARD

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A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

-Dear friends of Operation Walk Denver,

As 2006 begins, the activities of Operation Walk Denver are proceeding at a high energy pace. The first meeting of our Development Board was held in January. This is a talented group of individuals bringing wisdom and passion to the mission of Operation Walk Denver.

Our 2006 Fundraising Gala is set for September 30, 2006. Details will be coming in the next few months. I encourage you to **save this date** and tell your friends!

It is our hope that this year's gala will help provide funds to add a second mission in 2007. Due to the high costs of each mission, we are presently limited to a single mission each year. Under the experienced leadership of the Foundation's Director of Events, Laura Fitch, I expect a glorious and prosperous event. This will be a great way to learn more about the mission of Operation Walk Denver as well as meet the many dedicated healthcare team members who provide the care necessary for those in need. We are very dependent on the success of events such as these to provide funding for all future missions.

Imagine replacing 60 to 65 hips and knees within a seventy – two hour window. That is the time frame we will be working with during this trip to Panama. This will be an exciting trip requiring a lot of hard work. The team is ready and we are counting the days.

As with all missions, we bring 100% of the equipment necessary to provide high-quality care, from the first medicine administered to the final bandage applied. For months now the core team of Operation Walk Denver has been meeting bimonthly in preparation of our mission to Panama City, Panama April 19-26, 2006.

We met with the President and First Lady of Panama this past November. The First Lady donned scrubs and entered the OR to observe a knee replacement. She and the President of Panama visited some of the patients. They were grateful for our help and excited to have us come back again this year. We look forward to seeing them again in April and hope to take a short respite as a team for a private tour of the Panama Canal, thanks to our Panamanian friends.

As you can see from my comments above, the success of Operation Walk Denver is dependent on the tireless work of many dedicated volunteers who share my passion to help people afflicted with severe arthritis to walk free of pain. My appreciation for all their work is beyond words.

Sincerely,
Douglas A. Dennis M.D.
Executive Director



Panama 2005 Sets the Stage for Panama 2006

This past November Dr. Douglas Dennis and Jillian Neubart had the privilege of accompanying the Operation Walk California team to Panama City. In Panama, Dr. Saldana and Alfredo Maduro work hard to reach out to the patients in Panama City as well as the outlying cities. They brought in patients in need of total joint replacement that could not afford this surgery without our Operation Walk team.

The team completed 62 total joint surgeries in three days. The work was exhausting but the results were amazing! Just watching the smiles on the patients' faces made the long hours and exhausting schedule worthwhile.

During their stay in Panama City, Dr. Dennis and Jillian had the privilege of meeting the President,



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Meet the Team

James Boyle was born and raised in Queens, New York. He received his bachelor's degree in science at St. John's University in New York. It was then that he began to focus on medicine, obtaining his Physician Assistant degree at Bayley Seton PA Program in Staten Island. Once he realized that surgery would be his livelihood he opted to complete a postgraduate surgical residency at St Vincent's Medical Center.



In thinking back to that time James stated, "The most memorable part of my training was a rotation caring for the prisoners at Rikers Island Correctional Facility. I felt this was a population of patients without the resources to obtain quality healthcare and where the reimbursement factor was not an issue. Ironically, the patients I took care of there were the most appreciative group of any rotation." It would appear that the desire to care for those in need intensified for James during his rotation at Rikers.

James moved to Denver almost ten years ago. He has been working with Dr. Douglas A. Dennis ever since. When asked about Operation Walk, he replied, he first learned of Op Walk through Dr. Dennis. James was asked to go on a mission trip with the Operation Walk California team and the rest was history. The experience changed his life.

Following that trip, James said he regained the idealism that he possessed when he first decided to go into medicine, "the same idealism you may lose focus on as the years pass and as other governing forces limit your talents and decision making. The idea of providing patient care without distraction or outside influence." James loved the ability to take care of another human being with only the repayment of a smile, a handshake, or a simple gesture of appreciation. He said it was "the smile and hug I receive after taking care of a patient on an Operation Walk Mission trip that could be equated to the smile and hug I receive after putting a band aid on my 3 yr old daughters bruise. Pure, sincere appreciation."

It was this experience that attracted James to Operation Walk. As the Medical Coordinator for Operation Walk Denver, he puts in many hours planning for each trip. That might be why James is at the warehouse in the wee hours of the morning before he starts his day. It is also the reason why he leaves his family and leaves his "comfort zone" by traveling long distances away from the people he loves.

In a final thought James shared with me his heart for the mission:

"The real essence of Operation Walk can not be conveyed on paper. It is a personal mission that is embedded in the hearts and souls of each team member. Ask any team member, most will agree that they get more out a mission than the person receiving a corrected limb. I feel very strong about our Lord's guidance in life. Having the opportunity to use the gifts and/or talents that God has given us to help another person is the ultimate sign of love and loyalty towards Him."

Volunteer Committees Launched in 2006

Volunteer committees are being formed to bring awareness to Operation Walk Denver's focus on quality, compassionate care for people with debilitating joint pain and arthritis in developing countries. Men and women from all walks of life in Colorado united to form Operation Walk Denver's Development Board. The first board meeting was held January 25th.

The enthusiasm of this group was encouraging. In fact, the Board has all ready looked at the strong need for committees to begin putting the word out. Donors, grateful patients and supporters of the Operation Walk Denver's mission are needed. Would you consider joining our committees?

Would you love to help people in Thailand, China, Nicaragua, and other developing countries receive the joy of walking? We could use help on our [Events committee](#).

We have a very special event in the planning process for the evening of September 30th. Right now help is needed with the event planning, finding corporate sponsors, and many ways to use your creative flair. We might just need the idea you have to offer.

We would love to have help with media and marketing contacts so that the mission of Operation Walk and Dr. Douglas Dennis' team can spread throughout Colorado. If you work with a radio station, a newspaper or magazine or have media contacts think about joining our [Media committee](#).

How about helping with a newsletter, the design layout, the articles, helping us find sponsors and even helping us add people to the mailing list? If this is an interest and you have the time and talent, join our [Newsletter committee](#).

Then, there is our [Major Gifts and Foundation committee](#). Another article in this Spring's newsletter talks about the cost of shipping the medical equipment and supplies needed to send by the team of doctors in a foreign country. Do you have corporate and foundation contacts? There are foundations that would be interested in supporting Operation Walk Denver's mission, but the research is extensive so your current knowledge could provide more information than future research could uncover. Would you like to become involved with this committee?

There are so many ways to become more involved. Your experience and expertise will go so far in benefiting people around the world.

Would you like more information? Please call Sandy Daniel at the Porter Hospital Foundation at 303-715-7605. She would be pleased to provide more information and to answer any questions. [Join a committee and see what can happen when we work together to bring the healing mission of Operation Walk Denver to the world.](#)

Dollar for Dollar

How often do you get your money's worth?

When you contribute to Operation Walk Denver, 100% of your donation goes to the expenses of the joint replacement and training mission to a third world country.

Those expenses are significantly reduced by several major in-kind contributors:

1. All healthcare staff and lay-volunteers contribute their time completely free of charge.
2. Johnson and Johnson Corp. provides many of the necessary prosthetic joints.
3. Rocky Mountain Adventist Healthcare Foundation furnishes, at no charge, administration and office labor support, fundraising expertise and legal assistance.
4. Porter Adventist Hospital donates support in many forms including drugs and medical supplies.

Your contribution covers the cost of shipping several tons of equipment and supplies to the mission country, coach-fare transportation for the medical staff and the cost of maintaining the volunteers in-country. In addition to the in-kind donations, each mission costs approximately \$80,000 in cash. (The shipping of medical supplies is the largest expense and equals close to 40% of each trips expense.)

We hope you see the value of this kind of personal involvement in a "people helping people" mission. Operation Walk is, dollar for dollar, the best use of your donation dollars. Please join us in supporting Operation Walk.



Total Joint Replacement – the why and how of it.

The ability to take a walk without pain is a freedom that most of us take for granted. When we begin to feel the minor aches and pains of worn out cartilage, we may not fully grasp the pain an arthritic knee or hip can create. Severe, debilitating joint pain can rob people of mobility and the basic joys of life.

Total knee replacement surgery has become increasingly common in the United States and most developed countries. The procedure involves resurfacing the worn out cartilage and bone of an arthritic knee with metal and plastic components. Just six years ago the average life of a replaced knee was just ten years. Advances in the implants used in total knee arthroplasty have lead to improved durability of the knee implants.

The surgical procedure involves pre-operative patient education, a two to four day stay in the hospital and typically several weeks of physical therapy. Advances in total knee replacement now include newer instrumentation performed through a smaller incision using computer-assisted surgical techniques. This enables patients to recover much, much faster.

The benefits of this surgery can be dramatic. One patient recently described it this way "*the knees are no longer hinges that move forward and back, these joints rotate fully and work precisely like a human knee, even through a golf swing or on a ski slope.*"

It is so incredible to watch as patients are restored to an independent, active life, enjoying cycling, golf, skiing and daily tasks such as playing with the grandkids and climbing stairs without pain. Mobility restores independence and people's overall sense of well-being.

Now it simply makes sense to provide the same improved mobility and joy of life to those in developing countries. You can help us provide this life changing surgery to those less fortunate!

Panama 2006

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Martin Torrijos, and the First Lady of Panama who actually viewed a few of the surgical procedures being performed. Their appreciation, of all that Operation Walk was doing for their countrymen, was so overwhelming they asked Dr. Dennis if there was a possibility for our Denver team to return.



We loved the country and people so much we could not resist. We will be returning in April 2006. Dr. Saldana and Alfredo Maduro have already sent us a list of 178 patients that need our help. We will be able to perform joint replacements on about one third of those patients, emphasizing our need to fund raise to support further missions back to Panama. The team has been set, the supplies are being compiled, the lists are being checked and reservations are being made. We look forward to seeing our friends in Panama, again. Each trip helps us take another step in our goals of visiting more countries to help more people in need. It is a blessing to be given this opportunity to help. We will continue in our efforts to change the lives of people with the help of volunteers, and the giving of companies, grateful patients and friends of Operation Walk Denver.