

# OP WALK TALK

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

FALL 2006

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## NOT JUST "ANOTHER GALA"

Angie Moss - Board Member

We dressed up...the food was superb...the entertainment enjoyable and amusing...the presentation inspiring. So far, it sounds like any other gala.

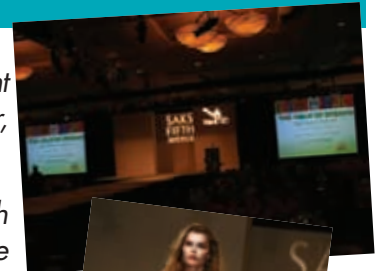
The people made this one different. The ballroom tingled with energy and enthusiasm. Although technically a fund-raiser, for the medical volunteers who have a heart for this organization and the lives it touches, this was also a celebration of success! The 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Walk of Dreams Gala raised enough money for a "return engagement" to Panama in January 2007. That is truly a "Dream" come true!

In the process, it was a magical evening. Seldom do you see orthopaedic surgeons modeling the latest designer fashions. And as you will read in the article, "A Changed Life," a highlight of the evening was the smile and pride on the face of Mirna as she sported high-fashion down the runway.

The bidding became lively for fabulous trips to many worldwide destinations as attendees made a commitment to the future of Operation Walk Denver. In fact, after being put on the spot, someone even inferred an additional, personal commitment... (you had to be there to "get" this inside joke.)

The Panama Mission Package was so popular that we arranged to sell two of them. Little do those folks know, how exhausted they will be, but how rewarded they will feel upon their return to the US.

Thank you to all who attended and to those who organized an extraordinary evening. For everyone unable to join us, we hope to see you next year.



## A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR



*Dear friends of Operation Walk Denver,*

Our Walk of Dreams Gala was a spectacular evening for all who attended. The generosity shown by over 250 people in attendance was heart-warming. We are now very close to meeting our goal of performing two Operation Walk Denver missions in 2007.

Watching our Panamanian patient from last November, Mirna, walk down the runway, with Saks Fifth Avenue models, without pain and a swing in her step was a highlight. Please see her full story on page three.

The success of the evening has assured that the Walk of Dreams Gala will become an annual event for Operation Walk Denver. In fact, we will be looking for donors and friends who would like to join our Event committees. We owe many thanks to all the volunteers, especially those from

# A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Continued from page 1)

the Rocky Mountain Adventist Healthcare Foundation, our Board of Directors, and the Operation Walk Denver team members who spent countless hours to assure the success of this event.

With the Gala behind us, we now focus our energy on planning our next mission back to Panama in January of 2007. It will be exciting to evaluate the progress of those patients we operated on during our most recent trip in April and to travel once again to help many more people disabled by arthritis.

Sincerely,  
Douglas A. Dennis, MD  
Executive Director  
Operation Walk Denver

## Meet Todd M. Miner, M.D.

– Operation Walk Denver, Clinical Director



Dr. Todd Miner was born in Detroit, MI. He grew up in Michigan and attended the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor for undergraduate studies. In order to pursue his medical studies, Todd moved to Florida to attend medical school at the University of Miami. He was elected to the AOA Honorary Medical Society. Once he completed his orthopedic surgery residency at the University of Utah

Medical, he spent an additional year of subspecialty training in joint replacement surgery at Rush Presbyterian Medical Center in Chicago.

Dr. Miner became a partner at Colorado Joint Replacement in 2002. He, with Dr. Dennis and their partners, are founding members of the Porter Center for Joint Replacement at Porter Adventist Hospital in Denver.

Dr. Miner has a deep passion for the Operation Walk mission and feels these missions "are the most rewarding work of my career". As Clinical Director for Operation Walk Denver, he helps direct the missions and has been a member of the surgical team on each of the yearly Operation Walk Denver mission since 2003. Todd has been involved in all three missions traveling to Managua Nicaragua, Trujillo, Peru and Panama City, Panama. Each country and the patients helped have made this mission unique, challenging and memorable.

Dr. Miner is an outdoor enthusiast. He enjoys skiing, cycling and triathlons for recreation.



### WALK OF DREAMS SPONSORS

*We would like to acknowledge our  
Walk of Dreams Gala Sponsors.*

*This list of the individuals, vendors and companies helped make our Gala an incredible success. Through their support Operation Walk Denver has been assured of two missions to developing countries in 2007!*

*Special thanks to the following:*

#### **Big Dreamer Sponsors**

*Dr. & Mrs. Douglas A. Dennis  
Depuy, a Johnson & Johnson Company  
Porter Adventist Hospital*

#### **Platinum Sponsors**

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John & Angie Moss  
Jerry Overgaard  
Porter Center for Joint Replacement  
Saltzman LLC/ Saltzman, Hamm,  
Nelson, Massaro LLP*

# Mirna – a changed life

Fifteen years ago, a poor, young woman in Panama suffered with a severe case of asthma. The doctors began to provide her with steroids in large doses, for an extended period of time. Unknown to this young woman or the doctors, although this was alleviating her asthma, it was also beginning to break down her bones and the connections in her hips.

She complained to the doctors even more when she became pregnant six years ago. She begged to have her baby delivered by C-section because the pain was too much. But her husband and the doctors did not understand the severity of her condition until she delivered her son. The birth caused so much damage to her hips, due to their weakened state, that she was no longer able to walk.



Since that time over six years ago, the doctors have had to tell this impoverished young mother that she would be confined to a wheelchair or stay in her bed for the rest of her life. Living in the projects isn't easy for anyone, with no running water and outdoor plumbing, but for a crippled young mother it was even more difficult. She needed help of family and neighbors to use the outdoor facilities, to dress herself and to get around her home. Her husband, her older children and her young son began to live their lives without her. Her marriage and her friendships suffered.

Then Operation Walk began to make plans to come to Panama. The doctor who had examined Mirna and her severe disability got her name placed on the list of prospective patients. A year ago in November 2005, Dr. Dennis traveled with the Los Angeles Operation Walk team to Panama. Mirna was selected to have her hips replaced. Typically in the United States, we have each hip done individually but for those fortunate few that Operation Walk can see, both hips are done at once. This bilateral surgery has to be done during one mission because it just might be now or never for those chosen.

Mirna was at last set free. On our return to Panama in April, Mirna came to the hospital for her follow up visit. On that first visit, she spoke with all the hopefuls as they sat in the waiting room waiting for word on whether or not they would be part of the final fifty people chosen to receive a new hip or knee. She came back the next day to visit the patients as they waited for their surgeries. Then she returned again to encourage those who had their surgeries and were now beginning physical therapy.



She smiled, she danced, she encouraged others and she inspired us. She inspired us so much that we flew her to Denver for our Gala. Her story was told in our video, and from the stage Alfredo Maduro, our Operation Walk Denver Panama ambassador, gave the details of her life-changing story.

Then Mirna stood on the stage and walked the runway dressed by Saks Fifth Avenue. Walking the long runway with a bounce in her step, Mirna smiled and waved. She looked out in the audience at donors and volunteers who had helped her and so many others in her country and around the world to experience at last, the joy of walking.

## The Operation Walk Denver 2006 DVD

is available to share with friends, churches, corporate sponsors and potential donors.

Suggested donation - \$5.00

Please contact Sandy Daniel at 303.715.7605 or attach a note to the remittance envelope.

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## OPERATION WALK DENVER PREPARES TO RETURN TO PANAMA

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Thanks to the generous gifts of grateful patients, donors and vendors, Operation Walk Denver will return to Panama January 20th through January 27th.

The First Lady of Panama sent a special video clip of thanks to our team, donors and Gala sponsor in hopeful anticipation of a return trip to her country. The team is being formed, the letters requesting help with medical supplies and prosthesis have been sent and travel plans are being arranged.



On the last trip to Panama, there were many patients that had to be turned away because of the time and facility limitations. It is the hope of Dr. Dennis and his teams that this trip will bring the joy of walking to another fifty or more very disabled Panamanians.

We have also begun to dream about where else in the world our second mission of 2007 will take us. We know that it is thanks to you that all this is being made possible. Thank you!