

*"...the stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone." Mt. 21:42*

Spring 2025

*How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings of good things.... –Isaiah 52:7*

Dear Cornerstone Friends—

*Dr. Sarah Girardi visited Loma de Luz recently on a short-term mission trip. She wrote to us afterward about her experience and offered her reflections for use on social media. We gratefully accepted, and she wrote so beautifully and clearly, that we thought her reflections would be good to share in this newsletter (below). --Sally*



**From Dr. Sarah...**

I have just returned from Hospital Loma de Luz located on the north coast of Honduras, where I served my first medical mission. As I have never served before, I have nothing with which to compare the experience. But I doubt you will find many comparable mission opportunities.

I am a practicing urologist from New York. I have been in practice for close to 30 years. Although I love my current practice, I felt I had more to give. When looking toward mission work, I wanted to find an opportunity that allowed me to serve the underserved, where the doctor patient relationship is restored and unhindered by insurance coverage, authorizations, and the ability to pay. I was raised Catholic, so I looked for a Christian mission.

Hospital Loma de Luz met all of my expectations. A nurse midwife on staff prepared a clinic tailored to my strengths: female urology and male infertility. We saw patients on Monday and booked our surgeries together for the week ahead. Because I arrived in the rainy season and road conditions were poor, some of the scheduled vaginal prolapse patients could not make it to the hospital. Therefore, I made myself available to Dr. Jeff McKenney, the co-founder of the Cornerstone Foundation and Director of Hospital Loma de Luz. Although originally trained as a general, vascular and thoracic surgeon, he has mastered most surgical specialties out of necessity. Two thirds of his surgical volume is orthopedic. In one of the weeks prior to my arrival he had performed several C sections and postpartum tubal ligations, amputations, a vasectomy and a lymph node dissection for ovarian cancer. He does so with unusual humility. He clearly operates with a fundamental belief that we as surgeons are simply God's instruments; tasked with doing our best to provide excellent care, but humbled by the understanding that the outcome is in God's hands.

Each morning the physicians meet to pray together before starting their clinics. Each surgery starts with a prayer. Patients are patient and grateful. The staff is a close knit and welcoming community. The sense that there was something much greater than individual practitioners providing care permeated the environment and was deeply moving.

The accommodations for physicians is a short walk from the hospital, and also a short walk from the stunning beach where the Bay Islands are visible. A few simple forms were required to serve, and flights to Roatan, Honduras are available followed by a ferry or a brief flight to La Ceiba.

If your goal in pursuing a medical mission is to bring your particular gifts to an area of need, I would be surprised if you will find a hospital as sophisticated, or a community of health care workers and educators as dedicated as the missionaries serving at Hospital Loma de Luz.

--Sarah K. Girardi, MD

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## A Report From Dr. Jeff...

*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. --Ephesians 2:10*

In case you've read this newsletter for a while and it has never been quite clear, APAH is the acronym for the Asociación Piedra Angular de Honduras, the Cornerstone organization of Honduras. It is the Honduran non-profit NGO with which the Cornerstone Foundation (CF) of the USA supports God's work at Loma de Luz (LdL). The Directors and Officers of both the Cornerstone Foundation and of APAH (two distinct groups of dedicated professionals) serve without financial compensation for their time, talents, and efforts. Loma de Luz, which includes the Hospital, the School, The Foster Children's Home, The Agricultural Work, and Community Development--is the organization which carries out the ministry on the ground. These three organizations—CF, APAH, and LdL—though distinguishable, function together to accomplish, in covenant partnership, the "good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them"—the specific good works we feel God has called us to in Honduras.

At the end of last week, we had a conference for all of the leadership staff at Loma de Luz & APAH in Honduras. We were looking forward together to 2025 through the lens of the Core Values of APAH & Loma de Luz. The speaker for the conference, Pastor Javier Enrique Asfura, presented an inspired scriptural consideration of the Core Values established some years ago for this work—INTEGRITY, COMPASSION, EXCELLENCE, and STEWARDSHIP.

I had already been planning to present an accounting of our resources and uses in this first quarterly newsletter of the year, so, I had all of these Excel spreadsheets and graphs and statistics floating around in my head while I listened to Pastor Asfura. It was remarkable how these Core Values stand out as metrics of what the Lord has done through all of us ("us" definitely including donors) in 2024.

But enough words for now. Here are the numbers:

As you look at this graphic representation of the resources which God made available to the Cornerstone Foundation in 2024, keep in mind that...

\*The Cornerstone Foundation receives NO aid or support from any governmental agency nor any specific Christian denominational organization.

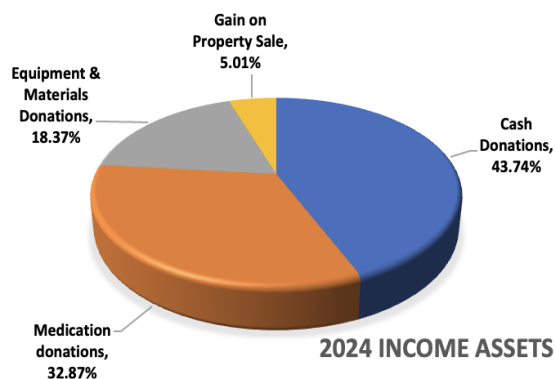
\*Cash donations to the Cornerstone Foundation come entirely through tax-deductible, free-will donations.

\*Medications and equipment and materials donations largely come from other Christian Non-profit organizations. The assigned \$ values of these donations come from these organizations and are cross-checked with standard references.

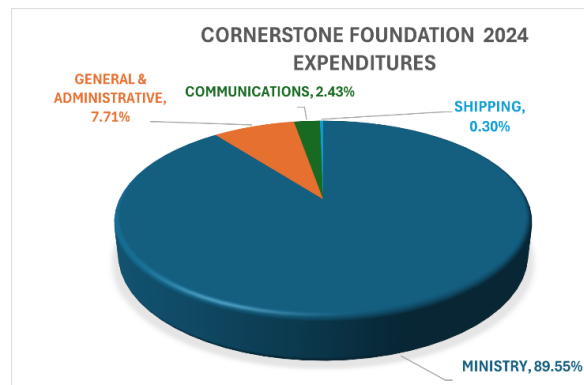
As you look at this next graphic representation--one of the utilization of the resources which God made available to the Cornerstone Foundation in 2024--you may want to know what "**Ministry**" means. It includes cash expenditures for missionary salaries and stipends, equipment and materials purchased for LdL (school and hospital supplies, IT supplies, etc.), plus donated equipment, materials & pharmaceuticals, as well as grant reimbursements from CF to APAH (these last are mainly for projects, e.g. construction, remodeling). The "**General & Administrative**" category includes things like the Office Manager and Administrator's payroll, property maintenance, payroll taxes, voluntary independent Annual Audit, the (US) office utilities, office supplies, etc.

"**Communications**" encompasses everything from website costs and newsletter publication and mailing to cellphone contracts and Missions conference fees. "**Shipping**" includes domestic (US) materials and equipment shipping costs, as well as international shipping costs. That is the Cornerstone Foundation resource utilization big picture.

### Cornerstone Foundation Income 2024:



### Cornerstone Foundation Expenditures 2024:



Now let's consider the **APAH/Loma de Luz part of the work.**

This is a graphic representation of the resources which God made available in 2024 to APAH/Loma de Luz through the initiative and daily hard work of many at Loma de Luz, the generosity of Cornerstone Foundation donors, and the sacrifice of time and expertise by short-term volunteer professionals. As you look at it, bear in mind that...

\*APAH & Loma de Luz receive NO aid or support from any governmental agency.

\*Significant additional income not represented here includes the salaries and stipends for national missionaries, and a number of foreign national missionaries at Loma de Luz (paid for directly by the Cornerstone Foundation--see "Cornerstone Foundation: Ministry Expenses" above).

From its inception, we have believed that the work should ideally become self-sustaining and that it is somewhat degrading and unhealthy to the recipient to depend completely upon handouts and to the donor to constantly pass out giveaways. Donations are sacrificial gifts to the Lord and should be treated as such. At the same time, we are not in the business of gathering and then hoarding resources. And, there are some who sometimes truly cannot pay anything, and we are called to care for them as well. (Matt. 11:29,30, John 6:12, Acts 18 and 20, Galatians 6, Colossians 3: 23-25, I Timothy 5:18, and more.)

That is why both Stewardship and Compassion are two of our four Core Values. So, at Loma de Luz we sell agricultural products at market value, and the proceeds go back into the ministry work. That is why we charge for medical & education services but at about 1/10 th of a comparable service in the private sector. It is also why we have an Indigent Patient Fund at the hospital for those who cannot pay anything, as well as Scholarships for select children whose parents truly cannot pay even the greatly reduced tuition.

Compassion and Stewardship together require a lot more work and intentionality than either standing alone. But, almost surprisingly, it actually works. The poor are cared for and are uplifted at the same time. The work pays most of its own way in bare bones expenses. And the Cornerstone Foundation supports the work mostly with capital expenses, projects, scholarships for students, stipends for a number of missionaries, and salaries for national missionary professionals. The work is also a faith-based work and also depends upon faith-based foreign missionaries. It clearly depends upon the faithful charity of donors. It is a complex community of partnerships with each partner playing their part in

**Stewardship** and **Compassion**, as we offer all we have to the Lord, striving for **Excellence** and walking in **Integrity**.

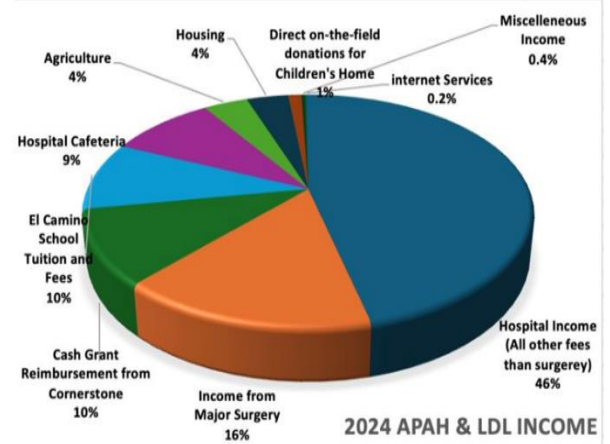
So, thank you for playing such an important part in the whole. God really is at work here.

God's grace,

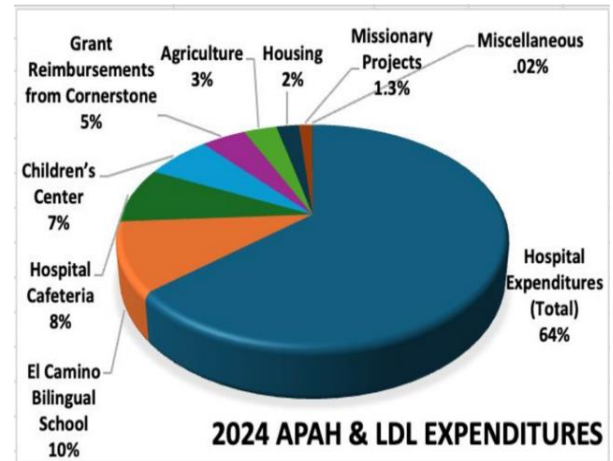


Jefferson McKenney, M.D.

### APAH & LDL Income 2024:



### APAH & LDL EXPENDITURES 2024:



**Note:** The dollar values represented by these percentages in the charts above--CF Income and CF Expenditures and APAH/LdL Income and APAH/LdL Expenditures—are available upon request to the Cornerstone Foundation Administrative Office at [cornerstone@crstone.org](mailto:cornerstone@crstone.org)

## News and Needs

**Osiris and Luis:** We are so pleased to announce the wedding of two of our Loma de Luz National Missionaries. Dra. Osiris Serrano is to be wed to Dr. Luis Benitez in the city of La Ceiba, Honduras on the 26<sup>th</sup> of April 2025. Dr. Benitez (formerly one of our Loma de Luz missionary doctors) is now just completing his first year of a Family Practice residency in Huntsville, AL. Dra. Osiris plans to join him there after the wedding.



**Roger Reeck:** A dear friend, Roger Reeck, passed away March 28<sup>th</sup>.

Roger was one of Cornerstone's earliest and most faithful friends. He served as a Wycliffe Bible translator in many countries and was also the father of Chrysti Reeck and Dr. Amanda Reeck, whom many of you have met if you've served at Loma de Luz. Roger's exceptional brilliance, matched with kindness and ebullient humor, will be sorely missed in this world. We are grateful for him, and we know he is a very welcome arrival on the other side. In the photo, Roger is holding a baby in Guinea Bissau who was named after him.

**Kelsey McKenzie:** Keep praying for Kelsey. He is undergoing dialysis daily, hoping for a kidney transplant in late April.

**Container:** Many of you prayed for us with regard to the arrival of our much-needed shipping container. After many administrative hurdles, government agency hurdles, and hurdles in the form of washed out bridges and terrible rainy-season roads, it finally made it—at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour. There it is (at the right), and there (also pictured) are just a few of its happy greeters. Thank you so much for praying!



**Lives Touched:** The article on financial reporting of 2024 represents lots of numbers. In fact, there are so many numbers represented that there was no graceful way to make a final report of the most important impact of all of those numbers—lives touched. So we decided to try to simply state it here at the newsletter's close.

In 2024, an excellent Christian education was provided to a couple hundred promising young students. A safe and sound Christian home has been provided for children without one. Some 600 major operations were provided with compassion and excellence for patients in real need of them. In 2024, more than 15,000 individual patient encounters were recorded between people in need and compassionate, knowledgeable Christian physicians and Hospital staff. Considering family members, donors, and those who have read a newsletter or heard about the work through social media or word of mouth, it has been estimated conservatively that this Christian work touched the lives of more than 50,000 people in 2024.

All of the generosity, sacrifice, and hard work, all of the compassion, excellence, integrity, and stewardship that is represented in the final analysis comes down to one number: 1 (THE number One—our Lord). On any day, with everyone doing their 100% best, it is still not enough. It requires His touch, the touch of the One who touched lepers and gave time to children, touched blind eyes and fed people in the wilderness. It could not have happened without Him.

*Thank you for the role you have played. And may the Lord—who is the pathway and the destination and the companion on the journey—grant you (and all of us) vision and joy.*

*--Sally Mahoney for Cornerstone*