

GOOD WORKS

Healing Hands volunteers offer surgery in needy countries

Area medical professionals team with the Minnesota Vikings' Madiou Williams

By Nancy Jones-Bonbrest
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After going on yearly mission trips dating back to the mid-1990s, four friends decided they wanted to do more.

So in 2007, they began their own non-profit, Baltimore-based Healing Hands Foundation. They focused on providing surgical care to underprivileged people and have since gone to Ecuador, Sierra Leone, Guatemala, the Philippines and Colombia.

"When you do something like that, you get hooked and want to do more to help," said Marco Avila, an engineer born in Ecuador who began volunteering on missions as an interpreter.

He helped form Healing Hands, an all-volunteer nonprofit, with doctors Jaime Flores and Dylan Stewart, and nurse Susan S. Connolly.

"You see these kids that don't have a chance, and you give them a chance," said Avila, executive director of the Healing Hands Foundation. "[After] the surgery, it changes their life completely. That just got to me, to my heart."

This year they'll travel to Sierra Leone and Guatemala. The group will need to raise \$125,000 for its mission to Sierra Leone in June, where it will send a team of surgeons, dentists, nurses, teachers and other volunteers.

Flores, a plastic surgeon practicing in Miami, provides surgery for cleft lips, palates, burn scars and other congenital deformities while on missions.

He said his love for volunteering came after he shadowed a doctor while still an undergraduate at the University of Maryland. That doctor volunteered his Saturdays at a free clinic in Washington.

His patients talked about how much they loved him for donating his time, and that was something Flores hoped one day others would say about him.

"When you go on one of these missions, it's that feeling multiplied by 100," he said. "These patients come from 16 hours away, 24 hours away, on horseback. They make it to you, and you do whatever is needed."

The group's mission is to provide high-quality surgical care for children with



PHOTO COURTESY OF MARCO AVILA

A container of donated medical and school supplies is loaded and will be shipped to Sierra Leone, Africa. Madiou Williams is in back in the middle.

complex congenital malformations and others in areas that lack resources and surgical expertise. This involves educating local surgeons and health providers to improve services in the area.

The organization also hopes to add Healing Hands chapters at these sites so they can raise funds locally and help with logistics. A chapter has already been formed in Guatemala.

This aspect is important, says Stewart, because it's a more sustainable contribution.

"We wanted to try and leave something long-lasting behind," said Stewart, director of pediatric trauma at Johns Hopkins Hospital. "It's developing relationships with doctors in these countries and helping them develop their programs, instead of thinking we can just come over and do it for them."

Healing Hands has grown from one mission a year to three, with the goal of five next year. Each mission takes about one year to plan.

Depending on the need, the nonprofit can bring specialized volunteers.

In Colombia, Healing Hands organized 90 volunteers with 14 specialties, including obstetrics, pediatrics and internal medicine.

"We go and figure out what is needed by

talking to the folks who are there," said Flores.

For the second year in a row, the group will team up with the Madiou Williams Foundation for its trip to Sierra Leone. The professional football player's foundation built the Abigail D. Butscher Primary School in Calaba Town, and the two groups will provide educational and medical resources during the trip.

Avila's wife, Donna, a teacher at Boys' Latin School of Maryland, will lead the educational component with other volunteer teachers.

"There is just a synergy between the two groups," said Williams, a Minnesota Vikings football player and University of Maryland alumnus born in Sierra Leone.

He said he is active with his foundation, attending all the missions to Sierra Leone, something he shares with the members of Healing Hands.

"You are talking about doctors who are extremely busy but take the time out to make a difference in other parts of the world," he said.

Already, organizers collected \$2 million in medical and school supplies that were packed up and are en route to Sierra Leone. They'll distribute them once they arrive in June.

For more information on the Healing Hands Foundation or to volunteer, go to thhfoundation.org. For more information on the Madiou Williams Foundation, go to madiouwilliams.org.

Man shot in Dundalk after parking in wrong driveway

A Dundalk man was in critical condition Saturday morning after police said he was shot by a neighbor — apparently after accidentally parking in the neighbor's driveway. About 9:30 p.m. Friday, a 45-year-old man parked in a driveway along the 7800 block of Fairgreen Road, according to Baltimore County Police. Another man, 55, the apparent homeowner, came outside and confronted the man, pulled out a handgun and shot him multiple times, police said. "He just pulled up in the wrong driveway," said police spokesman Lt. Robert McCullough. The victim was taken to Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center where he was in critical condition, McCullough said. The shooter barricaded himself inside his home, McCullough said. Police and hostage negotiators talked with him through the night until police were able to enter the home and take him into custody at 4 a.m. The shooter faces possible charges of attempted murder and first-degree assault, McCullough said.

— Jill Rosen

LOTTERY

Yesterday's numbers and recent drawings.

MARYLAND		Match 6, April 14	
Day Daily	443 Pick 4 0852	09 18 31 32 36 46	
Night Daily	587 Pick 4 5424	Cash 5	01 19 25 40 43
Bonus		DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	
Match 5	09 16 20 28 38/29	Day D.C. 3	970 D.C. 4 2961
Multi-Match, April 14	11 25 29 34 41 43	Night D.C. 3	336 D.C. 4 1459
Multi-Match: There was no winner in Thursday's drawing. Monday's jackpot is an estimated \$625,000.		Day D.C. 5	4 1 7 4 5
DELAWARE		Night D.C. 5	4 4 6 7 6
Day Daily	192 Play 4 2029	MULTISTATE GAMES	
Night Daily	898 Play 4 1727	Mega Millions, April 15	
Multi-Win, April 15	12 16 24 26 28 35	22 23 33 39 48 /29	
PENNSYLVANIA		Hot Lotto, Month --	
Day Daily	226 Big 4 4535	Powerball, Month --	
Night Daily	045 Big 4 1258	MegaMillions: There was one winner in Friday's drawing. Tuesday's jackpot is an estimated \$12 million.	
Treasure Hunt	05 13 20 24 25		

Maryland's news station



Coverage of the day's stories, breaking news and First Warning weather WJZ at 4 p.m., 5 p.m., 6 p.m. and 11 p.m.

