

News

Group Seeks Donations for Nicaraguan Mission

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Ines Allen dreams about boxes.

That's because she's been packing up medical supplies and medicine practically every day for a month now, in preparation for her group's trip to Nicaragua this summer.

Allen, founder of the International Medical Alliance of Rancho Mirage, will join a contingent of more than 60 medical professionals and volunteers who will take over a small clinic in Somoto to provide medical treatment for the indigent. They leave July 29 for 10 days.

The group needs donations to help cover the cost of shipping what is estimated to be more than \$1 million in donated supplies.

Last year, it cost \$15,000 to ship all the equipment to Ecuador, their previous destination, Allen said.

“We'll get there. Miracles happen all the time,” she said of the shipping costs. “I'm ready to help people. I just want that day to come.”

A shipment of surgical equipment that included lights, an anesthesia machine and a cauterizing machine have been shipped out in advance of their arrival, but more than 100 boxes still remain and are sitting in three storage units in Palm Springs.

“All of it together will be three tons,” Allen said.

The brown boxes of all different sizes include syringes, sutures, walkers, crutches and prosthetics.

“We're writing grants and trying to see if people want to partner with us,” said Tracey Allen, Ines Allen's husband and co-founder of the alliance, which is in its 10th year of organizing the medical missions.

The group also plans to send over three portable dental systems that were purchased with a donation of \$5,500 from six dentists in Diamond Bar and the Irvine area.

In addition to donations needed for shipping costs, the group is needs children's multivitamins and women's prenatal vitamins, she said.

“Every child that gets seen, even if there's nothing wrong with them, gets a 30-day bag of multivitamins,” said Gillian Cross, president of the Rotary Club of Cathedral City who will make her second trip with the group. “It's something we all take every day and don't think twice about it. It's a huge thing to these parents. It's so important,” she said of the vitamins.

The rotary club, which has collected 500 stuffed animals for Nicaraguan children, is helping round up enough vitamins for the trip.

“If people go out and buy some (vitamins), I can pick them up,” Cross said.