

CHAGAS DISEASE

Helping to bring health and healing to families

Bolivia



Chagas disease is a silent killer among the poor in Bolivia. It is transmitted by the Vinchuca insect, which thrives in adobe walls and thatched roofs, common materials used in Bolivian homes.

The parasite enters the victim's bloodstream and can live undetected for decades while quietly destroying their internal organs, especially the heart. If caught in time, Chagas can be treated.

With simple home renovations, re-infection can be prevented. However, the costs for medical care and construction supplies are far beyond the means of the people most affected. CBM's Chagas project provides both prevention education and treatment of the disease in partnership with local communities and agencies. Bolivian and Canadian volunteers are witnesses of God's love for the poor by being involved in the project, particularly through home renovations.



The key components of the project are:

1. Community education on the prevalence and danger of Chagas disease.
2. Blood testing campaigns in partnership with the Bolivian Ministry of Health.
3. Supervised medical treatment for children and youth through Doctors Without Borders.
4. Renovations of homes to make them Vinchuca-proof.

HOW THE PROJECT WORKS

A local selection committee decides on recipients based on their financial status, as well as the condition of their houses. A skilled builder then works alongside family members to plaster the walls and ceiling and pour a cement floor. The family is responsible for providing doors and windows.

Once the house is secure from the Vinchuca insect, the entire family is tested for Chagas. Those who have positive blood tests, undergo an ECG and chest X-ray to determine the level of damage to their heart. The project provides for medicine and treatment.

In the early stages, the person can be treated and damage to internal organs can be prevented. Later on, heart damage cannot be reversed, but proper health care can prolong lives. Those who have worked on their own homes often go on to help others. Each year the program gains more skilled builders.

Although the houses are small (just one or two rooms), some recipients use the space efficiently to create their own businesses. For example, one woman turned one of her two rooms into a small store.

GET INVOLVED

Visit us at www.cbmin.org for information on how you can support this valuable project through financial contributions and short-term mission opportunities.

- **\$4** provides a workshop for Chagas awareness
- **\$13** provides diagnosis and treatment for one person with Chagas disease
- **\$325** covers the cost of repairs of a single house

Your prayers and generosity are deeply appreciated.

In the event a particular project or program is oversubscribed or where local conditions prevent implementation, CBM will redirect your donation to where it is needed most.

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