

**VENEZUELA RELIEF PROJECT  
REPORT: MAY 2019  
(5<sup>th</sup> Shipment)**

**Beneficiaries of “Venezuela Relief Project” are thankful that the program helps to save lives**

*by Elianeth Pineda*

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One of the communities that have benefitted from the Venezuela Relief program - ‘La Fortaleza’ Lutheran church in Maracay, Aragua State - asserted that it is common now for Venezuelans to have to debate between purchasing either food or medicine.

The shipment of medicine to this Caribbean country has brought “a bit of happiness” to the homes, according to Belkys Castellanos, a member of the aforementioned Christian family.

***La Fortaleza. Maracay, Aragua***



Seeking to maintain our commitment to this project which started in 2017, we recently concluded the fifth shipment of medications. In this shipment alone 1,015 people (685 women and 330 men) were benefitted, people who suffer from chronic illnesses and who “cannot obtain treatment” as stated by Elsy Vallardes, member of La Paz Lutheran church in Petare, a barrio close to Caracas.

The minimum wage in Venezuela is USD \$7.60 per month. Studies undertaken by the firm Ecoanalitica maintain that a minimum of USD\$100 per month is required just for food. Even though it puts their

health at risk, people prefer to try to bring “something” to the table to eat rather than attend to their physical problems.

Luz de Ernst, deaconess at Epiphany Lutheran Church in La Caramuca, Barinas and national coordinator of the Venezuela Relief Project, shared this: “We give thanks to God for the timely help that you provide, even though at times we mourn the death of people that we know and wonder if under normal conditions, that person would have had more possibility (of survival).

***Luz de Ernst (first on the left) with some of the beneficiaries at Epiphany Lutheran Church, Barinas***



***Images from La Paz Lutheran Church, Petare, Miranda state***



Lewis Antonio Carrillo now has an opportunity to keep his health stable. Though he is just a child, Lewis has a thyroid deficiency which requires that he take for life T4-Bagó, a medicine which he receives through our program. “He and his family are very grateful to receive the assistance and they send their greetings”, said Alcides Franco, pastor of La Reforma Lutheran church in Bolivar state where Lewis received his pills.

***Lewis Antonio Carrillo, the boy in the blue shirt, is one of those aided through our program and who desired to personally express his thanks. La Reforma Lutheran church, San Félix, Bolívar***



Like Lewis Antonio, several of the beneficiaries wanted to personally express to us their gratitude. They did so by means of letters, some of which were written by hand:

“I beg that God would fill you with blessings in my name and in the name of those people with critical health situations who are receiving the benefit of your labors”. Carmen Henriquez Rivero, suffering from fibromyalgia. La Epifanía Lutheran church, La Caramuca, Barinas.

“I am a person with health problems and I can’t work; for that reason this fills me with joy and I pray to the Lord that this program may continue.” Marlene Leal, suffers from chronic asthma. Cristo es el Camino Lutheran church, Barcelona, Anzoátegui state.

“My husband and I take medicine for hypertension and this lightens the load that we have since we also have to pay for schooling and food for our children.” Ana de Abreu, hypertension. Santa Trinidad Lutheran church, Caracas, Distrito Capital.

***Pastor Abel García with some of the beneficiaries. Cristo es el Camino Lutheran church. Barcelona, Anzoátegui state.***



Other cases were pointed out by the local coordinators who felt the need to highlight the importance of this relief project for the community:

Tito Chirinos is single and without children. He contracted a bacteria and is grateful for the shipment of medicine to combat it. Nueva Vida en Cristo Lutheran church, Yaritagua, Yaracuy.

Jose Rodriguez expressed his thanks for being one of the beneficiaries. Receiving the medication that he needs provides financial relief which allows him to purchase other basic necessities for his home. Nueva Vida en Cristo Lutheran church, Yaritagua, Yaracuy.

The Aguilera Palma family suffered an accident in their home when a bottle of cooking gas exploded. The accident left one person dead and caused horrific burns to another person. The treatment for the burn victim was obtained thanks to the medications received through the Venezuela Relief project. La Ascensión Lutheran Church, San Félix, Bolívar state.

Elisa Linares and Liboria Narváz are poor and they both have illnesses which, if not treated, cause considerable deterioration in their health. Not having to purchase the medicine they need eases their worries a bit. Corpus Christi Lutheran church, Barinas, Barinas state.

Cruz Moya and her husband Carlos Gamboa received assistance via the Cagua mission, a group which meets in a locale in Cagua, Aragua state. The medicines that were sent for this couple were delivered to them in a hospital in the city of Maracay, where he was hospitalized.

“A visitor to our church requested Prednisone for her mother who is bedridden due to an injury caused by lupus and hypertension among other ailments. She was able to receive it and is very grateful because this medication has not been available in Venezuela for months.” Susana Peñalver, program coordinator at Cordero de Dios Lutheran mission. Caracas, Distrito Capital.

*Some of the beneficiaries with medicines received at Nueva Vida en Cristo congregation. Yaritagua, Yaracuy*



*La Ascensión Lutheran church, San Félix, Bolívar*



**Corpus Christi Lutheran church, Barinas, Barinas state**



***Cruz Moya shows the medicines that she and her husband received. The picture was taken at the doors of the Central Hospital Central of Maracay, en Aragua state, where her husband was interned.***



***At Cordero de Dios, in Caracas, they hold the envelopes that contain the treatments received.***



In the meantime, people from the various points in Venezuela which are included in this relief plan have expressed what it means to be reached by our hand of friendship:

“Thank you for your efforts. We can assure you that your great support will be well acknowledged by our Lord Jesus Christ.” Laura Restrepo, El Paraíso Lutheran church. Barquisimeto, Lara.

“Once again, a thousand thanks for your support, collaboration, and for the wonderful work that you are doing to help many people who are affected by the different problems that our country is suffering.” Jenny Vielma, ILUVE. Barquisimeto, Lara.

“We pray to our Lord Jesus Christ that He would bless each one of you for this beautiful labor and assistance on our behalf.” Kevin Guevara, Fuente de Vida Lutheran church. Puerto Ordaz, Bolívar.

“We give thanks firstly to our wonderful Lord Jesus Christ and to you for this opportune assistance and we pray to God for health, well-being, and spiritual growth for all of you in the name of our good Jesus.” Rubys Rossell, Core 8 mission. Puerto Ordaz, Bolívar.

***Pastor Miguelángel Pérez, president of the Lutheran Church of Venezuela, together with some of the beneficiaries at El Paraíso Lutheran church. Barquisimeto, Lara state.***



***Juan Vielma, ILUVE program coordinator, accompanied by the beneficiaries who display the medicines received. Barquisimeto, Lara state.***





*Photos from the Cristo Es Amor congregation in Barquisimeto, Lara*



*Fuente de Vida congregation. Puerto Ordaz, Bolívar*



***Rubys Rossell (center), working with volunteers to distribute the pills shipped to the Core 8 Lutheran mission. Puerto Ordaz, Bolívar***



In the same way, Cristo Vencedor Lutheran church in La Pica, Monagas state, assures us that having an alternative such as “Venezuela Relief” is a balm among so much calamity, seeing as a good number of those who go to a hospital return home without having received medical attention. Due to this, “some even cried when they received this valuable act of mercy,” emphasized pastor Félix Zamora, the leader of this Christian family.

Also, the brethren at Cristo Rey, a church located in the city of Maturin, capital of the state of Monagas, guaranteed that our program has contributed to people from outside of the church opening the doors of their homes and has managed to establish a connection which is strengthened by “the Word of God”.

***Beneficiaries at Cristo Vencedor Lutheran church, in La Pica, Monagas***



***At Cristo Rey Lutheran church in Maturín, they assure us that “Venezuela Relief” has also been an effective tool for evangelism.***



Every time, more Venezuelans are helped by our program. The following map shows the states and the number of communities in each state which has benefitted by the Venezuela Relief project.



We have already announced that we will soon be carrying out the sixth medicinal relief operation. People did not wait to express their joy. The representatives of various groups recognize the efforts that have been made from this side of the project to increase the frequency of the shipments to Venezuela.