ASH, LAVA, PYROCLASTIC FLOW

Guatemala’s Fuego volcano sits approximately 27 miles southwest of Guatemala City. The volcano is one of Central America’s most active volcanoes but its eruption on Sunday, June 3, 2018, caused more fatalities than any of those previously recorded at Fuego.

The fatalities were caused by what is known as pyroclastic flow, which contains a high-density mix of hot lava blocks, pumice, ash and volcanic gas. These flows move very quickly down volcanic slopes and are considered to be the most deadly volcanic event because they are impossible to outrun and can travel for miles. Volcanologists warned that if heavy rain were to fall on Fuego’s slopes, it could cause deadly mudslides carrying ash, boulders, and debris down the mountainside.

Several communities, including El Rodeo and San Miguel Los Lotes, have been wiped out, and rescue workers found homes covered in ash up to their roofs with the bodies of entire families huddled together inside.

APPROX. 12,800* PEOPLE EVACUATED AFTER ERUPTION

1.7 MILLION* PEOPLE AFFECTED BY THE ERUPTION

200°C - 700°C TEMPERATURE RANGE OF PYROCLASTIC FLOWS

*DATA FROM GOVERNMENT OF GUATEMALA
RESPONSE

The week after the volcanic explosion, Heart to Heart International had a team on the ground in Guatemala to assess needs and work in conjunction with partners in country to help those suffering the devastating consequences of this disaster.

Working with Order of Malta, the HHI team visited Roosevelt Hospital, the 2nd largest hospital in Guatemala. The hospital has the largest burn unit and paediatric burn unit in Guatemala, and most of the burn victims from the volcano not sent to the US or Mexico were transferred there.

Next the team visited Escuintla, one of the three provinces that was declared a red alert by the Government of Guatemala. The Hospital de Escuintla has capacity for 276 and triages the most severe patients and then refers them to other hospitals. This hospital cared for eight volcano victims, with the more badly burned victims taken to the US or to Mexico. Hospital de Escuintla is also a teaching hospital and teaches OB/GYN specialists. One of their biggest needs is disposables and consumables, such as hair nets, disposable boots, gloves, and scissors. They are also in need of patient gowns, as they have a critical shortage and most patients must be treated while wearing their own clothes.

Shelter Parroquia Santa Maria de Guadalupe is based in a church. The shelter has a capacity of 420 and has seen an increase in cases of diarrhea, respiratory issues and lice. Order of Malta has a doctor on staff at the shelter’s mobile clinic, which sees approximately 30 people per day.
Caritas is an HHI partner organization in Guatemala helping people who are housing victims of the volcano. It is often easier for people to agree to move in with a host family than to live in a shelter. Caritas provides basic Non-Food Items (NFIs) that are donated such as clothes and shoes. Caritas works with a regional social worker in each community to identify those families.

Working with Caritas, HHI visited their makeshift clinic in Alotenango, which is very close to the volcano. This clinic is in an unused space next to a church and across the street from a formal shelter. They have seen cases of respiratory, diarrhea and skin diseases post volcano and the greatest needs are for intestinal and respiratory medicines.

HHI was granted access to see the shelter, which is typically not allowed, and was able to see kids playing and talk with a woman who was living there. Clowns and games were brought in for children to play with. Many of those in the shelter use the clinic as it is across the street and easy to access. The shelter was in a school, which led to concerns about children not attending school if it is being used for a shelter. There is also great concern for the long-term relocation plan. The government currently plans on closing the shelter in early July; however, the prevailing belief is that people will not be ready in such a short time. The shelter hopes to remain open to provide families more time to develop a more permanent resettling plan.

**HHI shipments to partners on the ground have included:**

- Hygiene Kits
- Gloves
- Masks
- Blankets
- Medications
- Burn Cream
- Antibiotics
- Medical Supplies

**TOTAL VALUE OF SHIPMENTS TO FUEGO VOLCANO: $43,071.23**