



From the desk of Patty Webster Fall Update



Recipients of AP stimulus funds

Dear friends,

Amid these continued tumultuous times, I hope this note finds you and your loved ones healthy and safe. I am writing to share a quick update on Amazon Promise's continued efforts to support vulnerable communities in Peru—both in the fight against COVID-19 and our ongoing work to address the many other health challenges that remain.

The pandemic is continuing to hit Peru hard, with a fatality rate that is now the highest in the world per 100,000 population (Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center). In the jungle city of Iquitos, where the Amazon Promise office is located, the Regional Health Ministry estimates that over 4,000 people have died from COVID-19, including 21 physicians and countless other healthcare professionals. New cases are thankfully now stabilizing—and even decreasing—due to the fact that a large number of the population has already had the virus.

Since the country's shutdown in mid-March, we have been actively working to distribute PPE to health care workers and provide food aid to thousands in need. There is still a 10 p.m. curfew, a ban on large gatherings, and a large portion of society continues to suffer from the economic fallout of the pandemic, unable to buy food and pay for medical care. Most recently, [our team has been visiting impoverished families](#), particularly single mothers and the elderly, and distributing funds to help them buy needed food and other supplies. We are also providing care to those with post-virus issues and plan to do further food relief efforts in the near future.

Leaving No One Behind

While COVID-19 has demanded and inspired quick action, we remain committed to ensuring that those with other health needs receive attention and support. With a large portion of Iquitos health workers becoming sick from COVID-19 and the tragic loss of so many physicians, there's a shortage of doctors. Consequently, most people are unable to get the medical attention necessary and are turned away from the ER unless they're at death's door. Every day, many are reaching out to Amazon Promise, and we are personally accompanying these people to ensure they receive care, whether at the hospital or a more costly private physician office. Many people are arriving from the jungle in desperate need, and so we also provide funds for food, transportation, and lodging support. The situation is overwhelming. Here are just a few examples of how we are helping those in need:

- Amelia 33, came to Iquitos from her remote jungle community of Jerusalem on the upper Tahuayo River, suffering from Pre-eclampsia. She lost her baby, and almost her life, and the hospital sent her back to her village. She has had health issues ever since and was unable to travel on the river to return to Iquitos for several months because all river traffic was shut down. She arrived at the ER in Iquitos on August 30th and suffers from renal insufficiency and is now on dialysis three times a week. We are providing housing, food, and funding to pay for any testing or medications that are not included with her government health insurance.
- Handi, 25, lives in the remote town of Nauta, and was diagnosed with both lupus and rheumatoid arthritis five years ago. She has suffered from anemia, fatigue, weight loss and wasting, joint pain, hair loss, and at one time was unable to walk. In a low-resource setting such as Nauta, treatment options are limited, so we have brought her to Iquitos over the last few years for testing and treatment. Because of the pandemic, Handi has not been able to get her vitamins and supplements and her condition has worsened. However, we have been able to get her a box of supplies, nutritional support, and financial aid, all of which has helped her improve.
- Carlos, 42, fell off a roof in Belen and landed on his lower back and has damaged his kidneys and perineum. He was sent home from the hospital with just something for pain but had significant internal damage. His cousin, a neighborhood organizer who collaborates with Amazon Promise,



Amelia after going on dialysis



Handi in April and in Sept.

called us for help and we've been taking him to the hospital to ensure he's treated and seen by a urologist. We've had to pay for private specialists and medications. He has needed catheterization several times and was recently admitted to the hospital again for surgery to debride a severely infected open wound on his scrotal area that was also damaged when he fell.

- Jessy, 4 months, of the village of San Juan was born with a cleft lip during the height of the pandemic, and has trouble swallowing and cannot breastfeed. We are currently providing the family with formula, which is not covered by insurance, with the longer-term plan to send Jessy to Lima for surgery when she's older.



Carlos



Jessy



Community health workers with basic medical supplies for their communities - ready to return home (photo by Fernando Rios)

A team of Amazon Promise Peruvian staff members also completed a new comprehensive, WHO-compliant, community healthy worker (CHW) training at the Madre Selva Lodge on the Orosa River. Organized by Project Amazonas -- together with Wired International, which developed the program -- the 30-day training took place in September and October. Upon completion, all participants received a stipend, certification, and medical supplies. The training will prove invaluable for our staff, who are working every day to support rural communities in need. Thank you Project Amazonas!



These are but a few examples of the many patients who are seeking our care and support, all of which would simply not be possible without the support of community members like you.



Please consider making a gift today and help us continue to help the many people reaching out to us, day in and day out.

While this year has brought uncertainty and upheaval for all of us, I am deeply grateful for our extended community's compassion, resilience, kindness, and generosity. Together, we are making a difference and providing hope, health, and healing in these unprecedented times.

For more information about our work or ways to help, please visit our website at www.amazonpromise.org or www.amazonpromise.org/donate.

Thank you!