



# NOMMS NEWS

## Volunteer Profile | NOMMS History | Dominic Gargiulo

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### Warehouse Hours

**Our warehouse in Elmwood Industrial Park is staffed from 9 AM until 1 PM every Wednesday and Saturday, except for holidays. We accept medical supplies from anyone. Medicines must be in a sealed container. We offer medical equipment, such as crutches or walkers to anyone.**

### Volunteer Profile

#### HELP WANTED

We are looking for someone with surgical nursing skills, speaks Spanish & English, can repair wheel chairs and hospital beds, can build shelving, drives a forklift, can go on medical missions once or twice a year, can drive a 24 ft. truck, and can pack a shipping container. This is a voluntary position with no pay. We look forward to your response.

Anyone who's been on a recent mission, or been to the warehouse on a Wednesday or Saturday will certainly recognize our volunteer being profiled here - Ascencio "Al" Trevino! Born in Alice Texas, speaking Spanish and English his entire life, the family moved to Bucktown when he was 3.

Continued Page 3

### NOMMS History - PART TWO

*I became a volunteer in 2023, and have been on two missions to Puerto Plata. What a remarkable organization. People giving their skills and efforts to provide medical service to so many in disadvantaged communities. I wanted to know more - who started NOMMS? What were the early days like? I was put in touch with those who were there. This is their story.*  
Editor

We left off just prior to Katrina. The storm struck on August 31, 2005. At that time NOMMS was typically conducting one mission a year and shipping a few containers of medical supplies to needy communities. While the warehouse sustained minimum damage, we arranged to have the National Guard virtually empty the warehouse of our supplies and equipment. Those supplies were delivered to East Jefferson General Hospital to provide aid to the survivors of the storm.

The other Katrina effect was the cancellation of our spring Gala, and our fall Golf Tournament. (Those dates were swapped years later.) NOMMS was faced with not only refilling our warehouse but also refilling our bank account. Our dedicated volunteers and donors answered the call.

Over the next ten or so years NOMMS experienced steady growth and conducted one or two missions a year and a few container shipments of supplies and equipment. Most of the missions were to Nicaragua, but over time that destination became dangerous due to civil unrest. As 2020 approached NOMMS was planning a mission to Vietnam. That required a mountain of logistics and planning. Unfortunately COVID struck in the beginning of that year. The uncertainty of the pandemic made planning very difficult. The mission experienced delay after delay, and the significant unknown was, could we

Continued Page 4

## Dominic Gargiulo



Over the years NOMMS has been blessed by having talented, enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers to help pursue its mission. It's important that, from time to time we shine a light on those who offer so much. We will make this an ongoing feature of this newsletter. In this issue we'll focus on Dominic Gargiulo, our pediatric orthopedic surgeon.

Dominic works at Children's Hospital, and teaches at LSU Health Sciences. His CV is extensive. He received his doctoral degree from Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine, in Missouri and completed his residency training at Michigan State University. He then completed a fellowship in Pediatric Orthopedic Surgery at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. He has lived in New Orleans ten years and has been on four NOMMS missions, three to the DR and one to Ecuador.

Often Dominic will see patients he operated on during previous missions. By its very nature, pediatric orthopedics deals with young and growing patients. While an adult can have orthopedic surgery as a one-time event, a child will often require follow-up surgeries. Dominic's repeated missions to the DR has given him the opportunity to see former patients. A number of these patients suffer from cerebral palsy, which often causes bone deformation.

Proper bone growth requires stresses from normal activities. The neurological and muscular deficits caused by CP will often cause significant bone deformation. These deformations can be treated with orthopedic surgeries, by installing pins in the bones to straighten and support. An additional consideration is these CP patients are

children and as they grow, treatment must be ongoing. During a mission Dominic will use a C-arm X-Ray machine as he drives pins into the bones in a procedure called Hemiepiphysodesis or guided growth. The x-ray allows him to place the pins with exact precision. Additionally, during the



Former patient Rosemari and her mom visit Dr. Gargiulo.

last mission to Puerto Plata, Dominic treated two patients who had six fingers and six toes. He removed the extra digits, thus providing a more normal appearance for these children.

During the last mission he was visited by Rosemari and her mother. Dominic corrected her club foot during a previous mission. She is now walking nearly normally. That is the big pay-off on our missions, to see patients we have helped in the past.

## Support NOMMS



Scan this QR code to go to our payment page. Be sure to include information about the payment in the Note section at the bottom of the page.

## Volunteer Profile

Al was exposed to the world of medicine early in his life when his little brother, Gerry, was born hydrocephalic. At that time there was no procedure to treat hydrocephalus. The Trevinos were informed that a group of doctors at Charity Hospital were experimenting with a treatment, but so far the first two patients did not survive. They agreed to take the risk, or surely Gerry would not survive. Gerry Trevino was the first successful hydrocephalic shunt patient. Multiple surgeries later, Gerry lived a wonderful life and lived to be 67 years old.

Al graduated from SLU and soon after married his wife, Linda. He worked at several jobs, finally landing a teaching position at St. Martin's Episcopal School. He taught social studies and sciences and coached in the middle school. Linda was a teacher in the physical education department at STM as well. After about 10 years Al decided to pursue a different career and pursued nursing. In fact, medicine had always been in the back of his mind, in large part due to his brother's experience. Al received his LPN and worked for many years with the orthopedic group at the River Parish Hospital in LaPlace.

He left that job and was hired by Touro Infirmary as an orthopedic nurse. A nurse supervisor there encouraged Al to pursue his RN, which he achieved, graduating from Charity Nursing School. Al became the clinical supervisor in a medical-surgical unit at Touro. Among his highlights, Al was at Touro during Katrina, and that story could be its own newsletter article.

Al retired in 2011, and it was Lance Estrada, MD who encouraged Al to join NOMMS, which he did in 2017. Al's official position is Translator, although its not unusual to see him suited up in the OR. Al's knowledge and his ability to speak Spanish make him indispensable when it comes to interviewing patients and their families. He will explain the details of the surgeries, the post-surgical procedures and recovery.



Anyone who visits our warehouse in Elmwood will also see Al driving a forklift, packing boxes, collecting donated equipment and driving a 24 ft. truck, building shelving, and wearing a dozen other hats at NOMMS! Al has participated in five or six missions, and while he is no longer a licensed nurse, he is available to our medical staff to assist in the OR. **Thank you Al for all your hard work!**

Visit our web site for updates, photos, videos and information about NOMMS!  
[WWW.NOMMS.ORG](http://WWW.NOMMS.ORG)

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## NOMMS History

get back into the U.S. if we traveled abroad. The mission to Vietnam was eventually cancelled.

The next obstacle for NOMMS was Hurricane Ida, which struck on August 26, 2021. While the Elmwood warehouse survived Katrina, Ida was a different story. The warehouse roof was blown off and water saturated virtually everything in the warehouse. (Following Ida we now store supplies in plastic containers!) Fortunately our insurance covered most of the repairs.



In the years since Ida, NOMMS has experienced remarkable growth. Typically there are two missions a year, one to the Dominican Republic and another to Ecuador. Our container shipments to communities we support have increased to four or five a year, thanks in large part to Ken Landriault. Ken has a large number of contacts in Latin America. In addition to the container donations, we will also fill a container for each mission. Each surgical team must also pack



trunks with the supplies and instruments they will need on the mission. This process takes months, and those trunks are “checked baggage” on our flights to the mission destinations.



Our most recent mission brought 59 volunteers to Puerto Plata, DR. Our eye clinic set a record, seeing 2,046 patients and dispensing thousands of glasses.

From a very modest beginning in the back of a Vietnamese grocery store, to a small warehouse under the Huey Long bridge, to our current warehouse in Elmwood, the New Orleans Medical Mission has enjoyed remarkable success. All of this would not be possible without our many donors, supporters, and, most important, our volunteers.



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