

**THANK YOU**  
FOR SUPPORTING US  
THROUGHOUT THE YEAR!



CardioStart International has been providing aid for cardiac patients worldwide for 36 years. We send necessary supplies, train medical providers, and perform surgeries with teams of specialists thanks to our donors and volunteers.

Over the years, CardioStart International has organized 113 mission trips with the help of 2,019 volunteers. A total of 1,745 patients have had life-saving corrective cardiac surgery! We have impacted communities worldwide with life-saving education, screening, and

treatment for cardiovascular problems, including rheumatic heart disease. Thanks to our donors, we can make a difference in the lives of those in need.

2023 has been an amazing year for CardioStart! Countless patients were served with the help of 52 volunteers in Ecuador, Ghana, the Dominican Republic- and we're still not finished with Nigerian missions in November, and echocardiogram training in Haiti slated for December.

[Donate here!](#)



## 2023 Mission Trip Summary

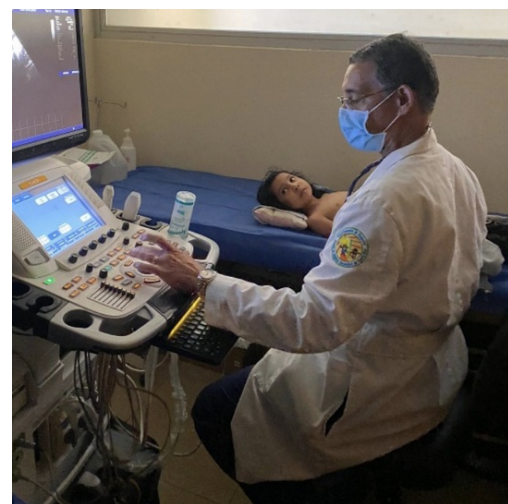
### Mission to Guayaquil, Ecuador

**March 5-17, 2023**

The trip to Ecuador was a pediatric mission trip serving a hospital in Guayaquil where the patient list is exceptionally long for highly specialized congenital heart surgery.

Services provided on this trip included repair of congenital heart disease in 16 children, screening, treatment, and education of many more children and families, and donation of critical ICU and OR supplies, including a heater-cooler which is an essential component of cardiopulmonary bypass procedures.

Additionally, CardioStart International provided further cardiovascular education and primary medical care to the local community. Meals were also served to participants in several locations, including homeless camps.



**Missions to Accra, Ghana**

**March 25 - April 1, 2023 &  
November 4-11, 2023**



The Republic of Ghana is in West Africa, and its capital city, Accra, is a large metropolitan area with nearly four million inhabitants. Despite its recent sizeable economic growth and influence, indigent residents do not have access to quality cardiac surgical care.

CardioStart strongly believes in partnership with other organizations that amplify our effect rather than duplicate it. For this reason, a robust collaboration with the UK-based group Arrhythmia Alliance / Hearts of Ghana has allowed us to continue our efforts in Ghana together.



Our medical teams provide adult cardiovascular care to patients in the region, expand access to cardiac surgical care, and provide educational forums for providers and patients alike.

This year our combined local and visiting teams successfully performed what is believed to be the first case of Deep Hypothermic Circulatory Arrest in Ghana, which is an advanced technique utilized for severe aortic surgical problems, the first beating-heart coronary artery bypass surgery as well as multiple valve surgeries and percutaneous procedures.



Together we are bolstering the fundamental cardiovascular program, and advancing what can be offered to their community for the future.

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## **Missions to Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic**

**June 19-22, 2023 &  
September 2-15, 2023**

A team of providers evaluated multiple patients with advanced heart disease in anticipation of an upcoming surgical mission. The team provided an echocardiogram and consultation, which was delivered to the patients & local providers. Education was also provided to medical students regarding diagnostic testing for patients with heart disease.



The second mission trip to Santo Domingo served pediatric patients. The CardioStart International team worked with the local hospital to provide care to patients who would not have been able to afford surgical interventions otherwise. In total, there were 13 surgical cases to repair congenital heart disease and six interventional cardiology procedures.



In addition to providing these life-saving procedures, the team also performed screenings for congenital heart disease in a local clinic. Dental cleanings, education, and fluoride treatments were also offered to families with children. Dental health is essential in preventing endocarditis, particularly in children with congenital heart disorders.



### Coming up: Mission to Abuja, Nigeria

**November 27 - December 2, 2023**



Abuja is the capital of Nigeria, with a population of 3.8 million people. The leading cause of death for residents is heart disease.

Many patients suffer from heart failure due to untreated hypertension, a problem compounded by multiple risk factors and a lack of access to medical care. Only 5% of the GDP is spent on healthcare in Nigeria compared to over 18% in the United States.

CardioStart will partner with ACTSON, the Association of Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgeons of Nigeria, for this important collaborative effort at the Federal Medical Center in Abuja.

### Coming up: Mizak, Haiti

CardioStart International has a new, exciting partnership with Haitian Assets for Peace International (HAPI) to create the [Haiti Heart Institute](#).

The mission aims to increase life expectancy in Haiti through medical training for local healthcare providers, preventative care, and treating patients with heart disease.

CardioStart's contribution will be the establishment of a one-year course in cardiac ultrasound (echocardiography) which will result in certification for clinicians. Tuition for students will be waived with a contract agreement to stay and work in the community for two years.



There will be 24 'virtual volunteers' who will teach the one-year online curriculum divided into 24 sections. There will be 12 'boots on the ground' volunteers who will teach hands-on acquisition.

CardioStart has already [donated](#) two echocardiogram machines and an AED defibrillator for the training.

Please click the link below if you are interested in this important effort!

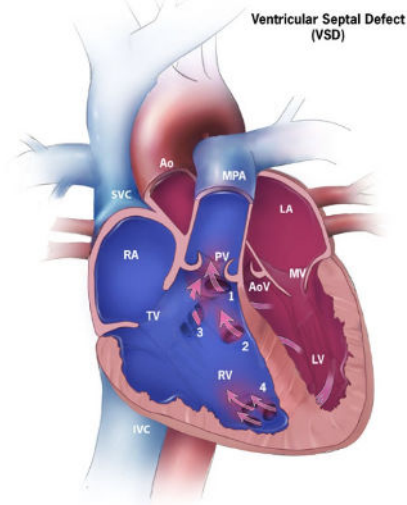
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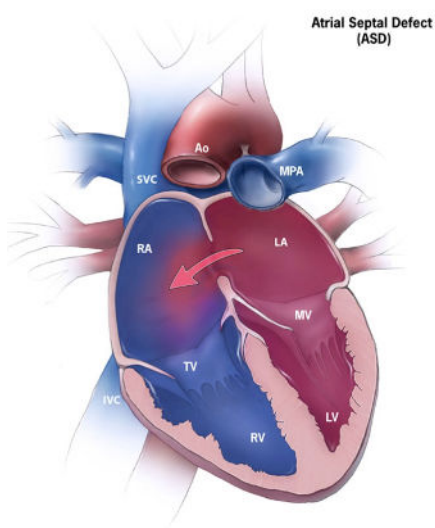
## Procedure Spotlight

CardioStart International commonly treats atrial and ventricular septal defects (ASD and VSD) during mission trips. These defects are holes between the right and left sides of the heart. Many times, these holes close on their own in the first years of life. If they are large, or have not closed by [two years old](#), surgery is usually needed.

Luckily, most patients only need one surgery to correct these congenital defects and the effect of the procedure is noticeable [immediately after the surgery](#). Sometimes ASD or VSD can be corrected in the cath lab, but other times open heart surgery is required. Unfortunately, these procedures are not available to many children in developing countries.

Even if these surgeries are available, there is usually a long wait list and high cost associated with correction of these defects. CardioStart International provides these surgeries at no cost to the patient. Part of the mission trips also involve educating local medical providers so they can continue cardiac programs after the teams leave.





### Atrial Septal Defect

Atrial septal defects occur when the heart's upper chambers do not close properly during pregnancy or shortly after birth. They are **second most common** congenital heart defects identified in children world wide.

In minor cases, children with an ASD can have no symptoms at all. More severe cases can cause difficulty breathing, lung infections, difficulty feeding, and fatigue. These more severe cases can place a strain on the heart and vasculature. As patients grow, they can begin to suffer from pulmonary hypertension, heart failure, atrial dysrhythmias, and are at increased risk for stroke.

### Ventricular Septal Defect

Ventricular septal defects occur when the lower chambers of the heart do not close properly. VSDs are the **most common** congenital heart defect globally.

When the heart pumps, blood from the left side of the heart enters the right side, increasing the pressure to the pulmonary vasculature. Symptoms are similar to atrial septal defects and can cause children to experience shortness of breath, frequent lung infections, and have trouble gaining weight. These children are also at risk for pulmonary hypertension, heart failure, dysrhythmias, and stroke.

(Photos courtesy of the Centers for Disease Control.)

## Fundraising Events



9th Annual Charity Fishing

## Tournament

**June 2, 2023**

This fun event was a successful fundraiser! The money raised helps CardioStart International continue its mission to provide free medical care and heart surgeries to people in need worldwide.

Breakfast started at 7 am, followed by four hours of fishing and the Awards Banquet with first, second, and third place winners.

## Save the Date!

The 10th Anniversary Fishing Tournament is on the calendar for 2024!

**June 6 & 7, 2024**

Save the date, you won't want to miss it!

[Learn more here!](#)

## Giving Tuesday: November 28, 2024

Giving Tuesday is a day dedicated to generosity. Everyone has something to give whether it is kindness, time, talents, or treasures. This generosity can transform local communities and the world. This November, think about how your gifts can impact the lives of others.

**Spread kindness.** Don't have a lot of extra spending money this holiday? Kindness is free! Spread kindness to your neighbors or a stranger. Does anyone you know need a helping hand? A phone call? A handwritten note?

**Advocate.** Can you advocate for more equitable healthcare around the world? Share CardioStart's website on your social media channels and spread the word about the good work being done here!

**Volunteer.** Give your time and talents to a local non-profit in your community or check out the link to see if a mission trip might be something you are interested in!

**Donate.** If you are in a position to donate, now is the time! Every donation matters, no matter how small. A donation of just \$10 can provide antibiotics to patients who desperately need them. Your donations will help cover the expenses of these crucial mission trips.

**Thank you** to everyone that gives of their time, talents, gifts, and treasures in the pursuit of a better world. We aim to ensure that every individual, regardless of their place of birth, has the opportunity to lead a life with dignity, good health, peace, and equitable access to healthcare.



[Donate](#)

Volunteer



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