



#### PATIENT PROFILE

Child	María Gracia C.
Age	2 years old
DOB	July 15, 2013
Home	Piura
Diagnosis	Tetralogy of Fallot
Open heart surgery	Tetralogy of Fallot complete repair January 12, 2016

“These children can have a normal life. They can do – and become – whatever they wish. There may be some limitations, yes, but you can live with congenital heart disease. You can live with a different heart.”

– MARIA VICTORIA  
MOTHER OF MARIA GRACIA

#### THE HOUSEHOLD AND THE FAMILY

María Gracia is a lively, friendly two-year-old girl. She travelled to the San Borja National Children’s Hospital with both of her parents and her three-year-old brother from their home in Piura, a city in northwestern Peru about 600 miles from Lima. Always smiling, María Gracia has won the affection of all the doctors and nurses at the hospital, including every member of the Heart to Heart team.

#### CHILD’S DEVELOPMENT AND MEDICAL HISTORY

When María Gracia was born, one of her doctors heard a heart murmur. However, when her parents took her to see other physicians for routine check-ups, no heart abnormality was detected. María Gracia caught a number of colds, but it wasn’t until she suffered from a severe flu after her first birthday that her parents grew concerned about the possibility of a more serious health problem. Her lips and fingertips turned dark blue, almost purple. During consultations with several doctors, María Gracia’s parents received different diagnoses, increasing the family’s confusion and anxiety. All symptoms pointed to a lung or heart problem. Because specialized pediatric care is not available in their region, they were determined to find treatment in Lima.

Eventually the family was referred to the San Borja National Children’s Hospital, where the joint Heart to Heart-San Borja team examined María Gracia. San Borja’s pediatric cardiologists correctly diagnosed her cyanotic heart defect as Tetralogy of Fallot (TOF). Many children with untreated TOF have insufficient oxygen supply going to their bodies – leading to blueish lips, fingers, and toes. TOF affects nearly 10% of children born with CHD, and for almost all of them, timely surgical intervention ensures that they will lead normal and healthy lives.

#### CURRENT CONDITION

The joint pediatric team performed a complete TOF repair on María Gracia on January 12, 2016. The successful surgery now allows her heart to pump blood more efficiently to her lungs as well as throughout her body. After surgery, María Gracia’s tell-tale cyanosis vanished. She immediately looked healthy and rosy-cheeked. She recovered quickly in the intensive care unit and was full of energy in no time. Within several days, she was able to return to the pediatric ward.

María Gracia will need annual follow-up examinations with a cardiologist to monitor her heart function, either at San Borja or perhaps at a hospital closer to home. María Gracia is excited at the prospect of going to preschool when she returns to Piura.

*Based on an interview conducted by Adam Neville, Heart to Heart videographer, with the aid of Lucie Everett, Heart to Heart volunteer interpreter.*