



OPERATION ACCESS

*Operation Access is seeking volunteer physicians to provide surgical and specialty care for low-income and uninsured adults in Northern California. You determine the frequency of participation and types of cases you accept. National Volunteer Week (April 18–24) is very special for Operation Access. We wanted to take this opportunity to celebrate **our 2020 Unsung Hero Award honoree — Dr. Robert Haimson**. Below is a patient spotlight and testimonial illustrating the kind of impact these surgeries can have. Please get in touch with us to learn more about how you can get involved. Call 415-733-0052 or email info@operationaccess.org.*

Jorge, an active member of his congregation in Santa Rosa, has volunteered for years in his church's thrift store. A few years ago, during a hectic day picking up donations for a clothing drive, he fell out of the delivery truck. "It felt strange ever since," Jorge recalled. Volunteering at the church's donation center became very difficult; his knee would lock or buckle underneath him when picking up boxes or reorganizing displays. After a long day on his feet at the restaurant where he worked, Jorge would spend his evenings lying down — everything hurt. Whether sitting, walking, or reclining, the unbearable pain persisted. Jorge couldn't play with his daughters or walk his dog. Some nights, it was impossible for him to sleep. Despite the pain and exhaustion, he worked because his family depended on him.

Uninsured and unable to afford the cost of medical care, Jorge tried home remedies to heal his knee. He iced it, rested it, and visited a local "huesero," a traditional healer specializing in joints and bones, but nothing helped. Out of alternatives and his pain worsening, Jorge finally visited his local health clinic, where an MRI revealed a meniscal tear. Both he and his wife Maria were anxious at the prospect of needing to pay for the surgery. Maria felt guilty for pushing him to keep working despite the pain.

To Jorge and Maria's surprise, his primary care provider referred him to our program, and we matched him with Dr. Robert Haimson, an orthopaedist at Sutter Health in Santa Rosa. Jorge qualified to receive care at no cost to him. Jorge's successful surgery was performed at Santa Rosa Surgery and Endoscopy Center.

After surgery, he recalled, "Dr. Haimson was respectful and treated us so kindly. My knee is so much better." Jorge's pain has decreased significantly and he knows his knee will continue to heal. He has started picking up small jobs occasionally as a handyman and looks forward to getting back to work full time, volunteering at his church, and playing with his daughters. Jorge is thankful to everyone at Sutter Santa Rosa who helped him get better, especially Dr. Haimson and his team. Jorge said, "Thank you and may God keep you safe from this pandemic so that you can continue to do good and help people like me."