

For Immediate Release:

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**Humanitarian Aid Agency Global Links Names Angela Garcia Executive Director
Co-founder Kathleen Hower Takes on New Role as Special Advisor**

(PITTSBURGH) March 1, 2018 – Global Links, a Pittsburgh-based medical relief and development organization, today announced that its Deputy Director, Angela Garcia, has been named the organization’s new Executive Director. She succeeds Global Links Co-Founder Kathleen Hower, who has led the organization since 1989, growing it from a grassroots organization to a recognized leader in both short and long-term medical relief. With significant intervention projects over the years in 17 countries including Bolivia, Nicaragua, Haiti, Honduras and Cuba, Global Links is expanding its mission and scope to also support the work of local safety net organizations in Western Pennsylvania.

Effective March 1, Ms. Hower will become Special Advisor to the Executive Director, and will continue to act as a champion, ambassador and fundraiser for the organization. As Global Links’ new Executive Director, Ms. Garcia will draw on her 17 years with the organization as an integral member of the leadership team.

Global Links partners with hospitals, healthcare organizations, senior care homes and the public to capture still-useful medical supplies, equipment and other materials that would otherwise be directed to U.S. landfills. Working with doctors, hospitals, and international health organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean, and with nonprofit and community organizations here in the U.S., Global Links carefully matches medical needs with materials, delivering meticulously planned shipments to serve the vulnerable and suffering.

In 2017 alone, Global Links recovered more than **300 tons** of medical materials and supplies that would have been discarded, provided more than **\$3.8 million** worth of international medical aid to healthcare facilities in seven countries, and provided support to **26 local organizations** in Western Pennsylvania, including Operation Safety Net, Dress for Success, Jeremiah’s Place and more.

As Deputy Director, Ms. Garcia’s accomplishments include establishing formalized systems to capture medical surplus from western Pennsylvania hospitals seeking an alternative to discarding materials no longer needed due to regulatory changes, upgrades, and new vendor contracts. Ms. Garcia’s efforts have greatly impacted capacity, including doubling the number of shipments delivered to communities in need, and the amount of surplus recovered. Ms. Garcia also launched new programs that respond to specific and urgent medical needs here in the U.S., the Caribbean and Latin America. These include [Breathe Hope](#), a program that makes it possible for parents and caregivers to donate used nebulizers (breathing machines), which are then

provided to individuals in communities where asthma rates are on the rise, but access to life-saving treatment is lacking.

Going forward, Ms. Garcia's focus areas will include expanding efforts to improve the health, dignity and mobility of Western Pennsylvanians in need. Internationally, Global Links 2018 efforts will include supporting indigenous communities in Bolivia; working in rural Nicaragua where maternal and infant mortality rates are disproportionately high due to lack of access to healthcare, pre-natal services and nutrition ; and helping to rebuild healthcare services in Cuba following the damage wrought by recent hurricanes.

"I am honored to build on the tremendous legacy that Kathleen Hower has established through the work of Global Links, and grateful for the trust she and the Global Links board of directors have placed in me to lead this organization forward," says Ms. Garcia. "Global Links was the first organization of its kind to focus on capturing surplus from within a hospital/clinical setting. As we work to ensure that no one dies or suffers for lack of what we throw away, we will continue to develop new partnerships and programs that make socially and environmentally responsible donation of materials and surplus possible for more organizations and individuals. From Pittsburgh to the world, there are so many opportunities to help our local and global neighbors. I am excited to lead Global Links into our next decade and to welcome all members of our community to build new bridges – and links – with us!"

Co-Founder Kathleen Hower Reflects on the Journey of Building Global Links

Reflecting on the organization that she co-founded after seeing the tremendous need for medical supplies in countries suffering the effects of poverty, natural disasters, and political unrest, Ms. Hower notes that she is most proud of her staff, Global Links' dedicated volunteers, including the board of directors, and the strong partnerships that have been formed with hospitals in the region.

"I feel a collective pride, because I truly believe that no one succeeds without the help of others, and without a strong team. Together we have been able to reach so many underserved communities around the world; I'm particularly proud of our 25-year-old groundbreaking Cuba program which is the largest U.S. donor of medical aid to the island."

Ms. Hower also notes key programs that have had life-saving impact, including Global Links' [suture donation program](#), which collects surplus sutures from U.S. hospitals and provides them to more than 20 countries where surgeries are often cancelled or delayed for lack of this critical surgical item.

On transitioning leadership to Ms. Garcia, Ms. Hower confirms that Global Links is being placed in capable hands.

"I have the utmost confidence in Angela, and know that she will continue Global Links' commitment to the highest standards of moral and ethical leadership as she guides the organization forward to a strong future," says Ms. Hower. "She has been an important support to our cause and to me for more than 17 years, and is familiar with every aspect of the organization. She has great ideas about moving the organization forward and I could not be more confident that under her direction, Global Links' mission and impact will continue to grow."

About Global Links

Global Links is a nonprofit medical relief and development organization dedicated to supporting health improvement initiatives in resource-poor communities locally and globally. Global Links collaborates with US healthcare institutions and the community to recover hundreds of tons of high-quality surplus medical materials every year that would otherwise be sent to landfills. These materials are shared with public health facilities around the world and nonprofit organizations in Western Pennsylvania that are providing care for their community's most vulnerable people. In addition to the support provided by partnering health organizations, Global Links' work is made possible by the financial support of funders and donors. For more information, visit www.globallinks.org.

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