



“Martina Pavančić is the best scrub nurse in the whole [wide] world.”
 –William Novick, M.D.

BY JEREMY COURTNEY

That wasn't the exact quote; the original was much more colorful and forceful! But the point is this: your financial investment in our Remedy Missions has helped us secure an amazing nurse for the operating room who is an incredibly capable administrator, leader, problem solver, and educator. In a pinch, she has the ability to play the role of Teaching First Assistant (to the lead surgeon).

We're in the middle of Remedy Mission V, and even though most of the medical team turns over every mission with volunteers from all over the world, Martina is also on Remedy V. She has put in more hours of surgery and training across Iraq than any other single foreigner from anywhere in the world.

Martina was a recipient of this type of “humanitarian aid” or training back in her home country of Croatia when Dr. William Novick of the

International Children's Heart Foundation landed for a proto-Remedy Mission in 1993 and began training Croatians like Martina to be the remedy for their own children.

To hear Dr. Novick tell the story, Martina was very skittish and intimidated in the early days as a trainee in Zagreb, Croatia. “She would prepare the table incorrectly in the early days and I would send her home at the end of the day crying.”

After more than 15 years working alongside Dr. Novick in one form or another, it now takes a lot to make Martina cry. And she certainly knows how to prepare an operating room. If anything, Martina now sends others home crying and may well be the most intimidating force in the O.R.! I've personally left the O.R. more than once with my tail between my legs after crossing her sterile field or speaking too loudly

in a way that distracted the training and surgery underway!

Once, in South America, an unexpected set of circumstances required Martina—a nurse—to walk a local surgeon through a highly complex surgery step-by-step “just like Dr. Novick does it.”

She knows her stuff!

Get a picture in your mind of Croatia in the early 1990s. Underdeveloped hospitals, atrophied education systems failing to adequately feed into the workforce, political in-fighting, limited access to medical supplies and resources, ethnic & civil war, and the world’s collective eye watching to see what would happen next.

It sounds like today’s Iraq!

The most inspiring thing to me about Martina is the way in which she epitomizes the ethos of our Remedy Mission approach. To simplify:

1. she needed training and resources
2. she received training and resources in her home country and helped save thousands of lives
3. she now travels the world training others and providing resources so they can serve their own children.

The trainee has become the trainer; the aid recipient the reciprocator; the beneficiary the benefactor.

That, in my opinion, is preemptive love. Maybe she would have amounted to nothing in the medical field. Maybe she didn’t have the stomach for it. Maybe she didn’t look the part. Maybe Croatia was a bad bet back in the day. Maybe the problems seemed too intractable.

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Preemptive love gave Martina wings. And Dr. Novick’s preemptive love in 1993 is still creating shockwaves around the world today any time Martina scrubs in.

Will you invest today in tomorrow’s “Martina?”

Martina was able to learn, and now teach, because someone invested in her! Now you can

invest in local nurses just like Martina by donating to our medical training program! ●

Jeremy Courtney is the founder of Preemptive Love (www.preemptivelove.org)—a coalition leveraging life-saving heart surgeries toward peace in Iraq. Follow his work on Twitter @Jeremy_Courtney.

