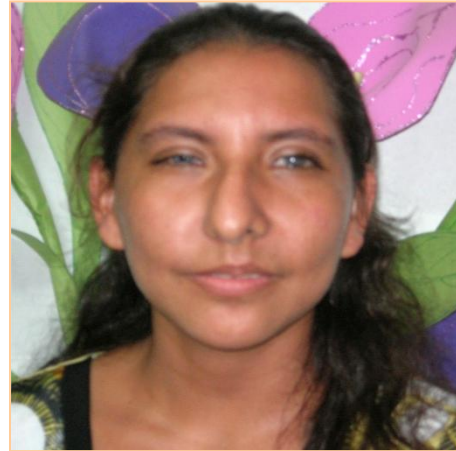


# Maria Elena Returns to Her Family

*By Jorge Luna*

Maria Elena Sanchez, 21, is originally from the rural area of Ahuachapán, in western El Salvador. She came to the Vicky Guzman Multi-clinic of ASAPROSAR accompanied by her sisters and dad. Maria lost her sight at age 8 and has not seen in 13 years. She never went to school, lived in very unfavorable conditions and came from a large family in which her father, a farmer was the only the person with a small income.



Maria sought help at the ASAPROSAR eye clinic on the recommendation of another doctor who assessed her case. At the multi-clinic in Santa Ana Maria was evaluated by Dr. Gerardo Lopez who recommended and completed a successful surgery for cataracts and corneal transplants. At 21, Maria spent years of loneliness living in a world that was restricted by darkness. When Maria first came to the eye clinic she saw no value in her life and believed she was useless. She was unable to perform chores and help her family but after surgery she discovered the eye could see and her life changed. Since then her surgery and with every post-operative appointment one can see her increasing self-esteem.

Maria says "I'm so happy to see again and slowly I can be a part of my family again. I cook and serve my family. I am so grateful and thankful that this incredible gift came at no cost. May God Bless you for helping! "