

HEALTH TALENTS INTERNATIONAL

Surgery Clinic Trip Report

May 3-10

Team Members: Surgeons: Drs. Mark Crane, Benny Cleveland, ***Damon Simpson, Mark Williams***; ***Resident: Dr. Micah Fritsche***; Anesthesiologist: Dr. David Crasto; CRNA's: Rachel Boone, ***Allen Gould, Nina McClain***; Physician Assistant: ***Erin Watrobski***; Nurses: Lisa Bartee, ***Caitlyn Becker, Ginger Boone***, Barbara Burg, Lesa Dale, Dave Farrow, ***Lauryn Glasser, Courtney Goddard, Peggy Hood, Stephanie Johnson, Phyllis Klagges, Jessica Miller, Monica Poehner, Caitlin San Roman***, Misty Vance, Julie Williams, ***Jessica Wilson***; Nursing Student: ***Jillian Braga***; Sterilization: Guy Martin, Cary Sills; Caregivers: Betty Cloud, Brenda Grant, ***Terra Hardcastle, Vienna Pearson***, Leea Sills, ***Callie Ann Starkey, Shelby Yoder***; Translator: ***Lauren Bryer, Darren Crasto, Dan Eggenschwiler, Tom Grant, Madison Nolen, Chelsea Peterson***, Rita Sills; Trip Leaders: Rick Harper, Dave Mellor and Susan Mellor.

(First-timers listed above in bold, italics.)

This was our inaugural May surgical trip as we were to run three OR rooms, all general and pediatric urology cases. "Spoiler Alert" it was a resounding success...read on for more details!

We had team members on multiple airlines, multiple flights over the course of multiple days and everyone arrived safely and with their luggage. No small feat in this day of air travel. Our bus departed within an hour of our arrival and we made it to Clinica Ezell before 5:30 that afternoon. We had plenty of time to unpack, inventory supplies and begin seeing patients before supper with one exception. Dr. Mark Williams, our pediatric urologist, saw patients well past 8:00 that evening, patiently examining each child before enjoy a bite of supper. This was Mark's first trip and he was quite pleased with the large number of children we'd scheduled for surgery this week and has already committed to returning in May 2015.

Sunday morning was leisurely as normal, a relaxed pace in an attempt to allow everyone to adjust and rest before worship and the beginning of surgery that afternoon. Dr. Nehemias Lopez delivered the sermon that morning and spoke on the choices we make, we can choose to fail, quit or pursue success. As children of God, he has enabled us to succeed in pursuit of His will.

Following our morning worship time together, Dr. Walter conducted our surgical orientation with the help of translator, Darren Crasto. Darren had joined us at the invitation of his brother, Dr. David Crasto, an anesthesiologist and second trip veteran. Following orientation and quick lunch, surgery began. While the first three cases were being done, veteran HTI nurse Rosario Poncio conducted a special orientation for our nurses and caregivers in the recovery ward. We had two veteran nurses in recovery and a treasure trove of young nurses, most from the Ethos Church in Nashville, a church plant by the Harpeth Hills Church of Christ. Lisa Bartee and Barb Burg were the veterans, with Barb agreeing to serve as our charge nurse. Tally for the day, five urology and seven general cases.

(Caitlyn Becker, Jessica Wilson, Caitlin San Roman and Jessica Miller shown below.)



Dr. Benny Cleveland, surgeon extraordinaire, had arrived on Sunday afternoon and quickly assumed the role of OR choreographer, scheduling patients in each of the three OR's and moving surgeons from room to room in the most efficient manner. And when helpful, bringing his fifty years of surgical experience to assist or move things along. We completed twenty-two cases on Monday, six urology and sixteen general. And we began to be concerned that we would run out of patient beds if we kept up that pace. With fifty beds, four of which are for post-op only, and patients arriving the day before surgery we must exercise restraint and not over schedule for the day.

Since this was a long day of surgery, our devotional period consisted of singing to our patients in the recovery ward and a brief time of prayer...likely the most moving and inspirational devotional time we enjoyed together all week.

Side Note: This was the first trip for a few others, Dr. Damon Simpson and Erin Watrobski, and the second trip for Lesa Dale. All three of them came to Health Talents through their shared work in Kenya with Dr. Al Jones, a veteran of more than a dozen trips to Guatemala. Al was not on this trip, but he blessed us by inspiring these three to join the Health Talents family of volunteers.



(RN, Julie Williams, working with her husband, Dr. Mark Williams.)

Our pace slowed down a bit on Tuesday with one urology and thirteen general cases, one of which topped the adorability charts. Vanessa is a quite the charmer...just ask Lisa Bartee!



Wednesday, was a bit heavier with fifteen general cases, more than manageable running three rooms and two rooms were finished by 2:00 and the last one around 4:00. We could have quite easily done a few more cases on Tuesday and Wednesday, but sadly, we had three patients scheduled who had inoperative breast cancer, one being a male, and a couple other patients needed care we were unable to provide.

We closed out the week with nine general cases on Thursday, seventy-two for the week. An absolutely wonderful week with all patients free of complications. We bid farewell to Darren Crasto on Thursday morning and we'd lose three more, Lisa Bartee, Dr. Benny Cleveland and Dr. David Crasto on Friday morning.

I suspect many of our "first-timers" will become annual volunteers and many more will add Health Talents to their future plans. For sure, we all left with new friends, sweet memories and a renewed desire to serve our Lord.

