

HTI August Surgical Trip
Clinica Ezell
August 1-8, 2015

Trip Participants: Surgeons: Brannon Hyde, Dwayne Fulks, Jack Hudkins, Michael Kohlman, Nathan Powell, Philip Strawther; Anesthesiologist: Stephen Harvey; Nurse Anesthetists: Gordon Corder, Carrie Hovater, Jackie McLean; Physician Assistants: Kelsey Young; Physician Assistant Student: Samantha Adcock; RN's: Patricia Corder, Kristy Cope, Natalie Franklin, Jennifer Hicks, Kasey House, Andy Risner, Megan Schindler, Lesli Shoemaker, Patsy Sikes, Elizabeth Tagatac, Michelle Young; LPN: Mike Caldwell; Speech Pathologist: Jason Fuller; Surgical Tech/PA Student: Christina Byler; OR Circulators: Nate Dickson, Shelly Fulks, Quentin Parker, Derrick Sikes; EMT: Glenn Irby; Nursing Students: Gincy Mathai, Taylor Meyers, Angie Molina, Stasia Spivy, Leann Tucker; Translators: Jackson Brunner, Kathleen Fuller, Alisha Hovater, Katie Young; Dental Assistants: Susan Jordan; Sterilization: Tim Franklin, Cary Sills; Compassionate Caregivers: Scott Brunner, Lizzie Fuller, Sophie Fuller, Shelby Gowen, Kristi Hilton, Maggie Hovater, Mikayal Hovater, Leigh Shoemaker, Savannah Shoemaker, Karen Sims; Team Leader: Rick Harper

It seems that most of our trip reports begin with airline issues and August was no exception. However, I'll be brief and grateful by saying that five of six flights with team members on Saturday were delayed or canceled...yet we were altogether by Sunday morning and were able to see patients, sort through inventory and prep the OR's on Saturday evening.

We had fifty-five on this team with eleven states represented and Kristi Hilton from Hawaii winning the award for furthest traveler. Six surgeons, four anesthesia providers, twelve nurses, five nursing students, two PA students, one PA, one speech pathologist and one EMT made up the healthcare providers who were supported by twenty-two others, servants all.

Sunday began with breakfast at eight, followed by a meeting with our recovery room nurses to work on a schedule. Others toured the property, marveling at the variety of fruit and flowers on display. (Avocados, oranges, figs, limes, lemons, grapefruit, starfruit, breadfruit, zapote, mangos, papaya, bananas, plantain, pineapples, coconuts, chocolate, macademia and almonds.) We worshipped with the Montellano church family and Carlos delivered a lesson on the woman at the well, reminding us that, *Jesus made an appointment with her and he makes appointments with us.*

Once worship was complete, we made our way to the dining room for our surgical orientation. Veteran, Jason Fuller, provided translation services for Dr. Sierra and by 1:00, the OR teams were eating lunch and readying for an afternoon of surgery.

We only completed one plastic surgery case on Sunday, but Drs. Dwayne Fulks and Philip Strawther examined and consulted with more than fifty patients that afternoon, the largest number we've ever had scheduled. If this pattern repeats itself and proves to be more than an aberration, we'll need to schedule a third plastic surgery trip each year. General surgeon, Dr. Nathan Powell and cardiac surgeon, Dr. Brannon Hyde were teamed up in one general room and general surgery partners from Kansas City, Drs. Jack Hudkins and Michael Kohlman in the other, good for eight cases on Sunday.

Twenty-two cases were on the docket for Monday, but it was overly ambitious and we moved two cases to Tuesday early in the day and completed twenty cases before breaking for a late supper. Sixteen general and four plastic cases. And while surgery was going on, ABC deliveries were taking place throughout the week, so two of our US volunteers traveled with Luis each day to help distribute food and staples to the families.

Optimism remained high on Tuesday and we began with five plastic and thirteen general cases on the schedule. Unfortunately, and only after much angst, we canceled one plastic case and scheduled her for February of 2016. Yes, that is several months off, but the surgery was not urgent and in order to provide optimal care, it was the right decision. Through Tuesday, our plastics team and completed four cleft surgeries and one major hand repair, along with a few other cases, a bit less dramatic.

Scott Brunner, caregiver, author, song leader and current CEO of the Georgia Pharmacy Association was with us this week, and on Tuesday, went out with Dr. Walter Sierra for his mobile clinic in Samayac. Scott was gracious enough to share his thoughts each day with a post on our Facebook page, so please take time to read...if you enjoy the writing of a gifted storyteller and author.

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Health-Talents-International/119070278114496>

(Plastic Surgery, before and after photos are on the next page.)



The results of a burn wound not properly treated. We were able to return function and form to the hand of this sweet child.



Sweetness personified!



Our goal each day is to be out of the OR by 6:00 PM, it makes for a better work environment, less fatigue for our OR and recovery crews and more restful evenings for our patients. However, we seldom achieve that goal before Tuesday evening when our teams have gelled and are performing at peak levels. *And peak level for us is almost twice the daily production of an OR team in the US.* Thus, it should not be a surprise when twenty-one patients are scheduled on Wednesday, our last full day of surgery. And we had all patients in recovery in time for supper together!

Thursday found us with seventeen patients scheduled, most of them were minor cases, eleven general and six plastic. The general rooms were empty before noon and we sent a large contingency to Lake Atitlan and San Lucas Toliman. The plastic room was done by 1:00 and mellow was an apt description for Thursday afternoon. By late that afternoon, less than ten patients remained in recovery as all others had been discharged. Eighty-three surgical patients for the week, with a few of those having multiple procedures. This was the third most cases ever completed in a single week, all patients were discharged on Friday. And one week later, they all returned for post-operative checkups with good evaluations. Praise the Lord!

We bid farewell on Friday morning to three on our team who returned to the US, while the remnant gathered for a team photo before heading off to Antigua.

Friendship, fellowship and faithfulness characterized this team, a common trait for those who make up the Health Talents family. Jesus does make appointments, with us and for us. For the 2015 August surgical team and those we served, that appointment was at Clinica Ezell in Aldea Montellano, San Migeul Panan, Suchitepequez, Guatemala.

