

Health Talents International

March 4-11, 2023, Harding Mobile Team

Trip Participants: **Physician Assistants (PA-C):** Julia Copeland, Nicole Mount, Sarah Tipton **PA Students:** Megan Froiland, Anna Kate McGimsey, Mallori Mueller, Alyssa Stark; **Harding Under grad Students:** Olivia Leach, Sydney Reynolds; **Historian and Caregiver:** Ken P'Pool; **Team Leader:** Rick Harper

She returns to Chichi!

The year was 2007 and Nicole Reece, now Mount, and Mary Madill traveled to Guatemala as medical evangelism interns while PA students at Harding University. Today, Nicole is the Clinical Director of Harding's PA Program and Mary, the Program Director. They were trailblazers then and have honored Health Talents over the years by sending new students our way, or in this case joining them. In the photo to the right, Nicole is reunited with Gaspar Chan, who opened his home to a stranger for eight weeks, a stranger who soon became family.



Sarah Tipton, now practicing with Mercy Net Orthopedics group in Ozark, MO, returned for her third trip, and the second as a PA-C. Megan Froiland and Anna Kate McGimsey, veterans from the 2022 trip, found their way back as second-year students. Lord willing, this will not be the last for our PA students or Premed students, Olivia and Sydney.



We began our trip on Saturday, landing in Guatemala City that evening and made it through customs without a hitch, then took the shuttle to Hotel Barcelo. After a good night of rest, we departed for Chichicastenango on Sunday morning, arriving around noon. Lunch was followed by some tourist time in the local market and worship with the Chichi church family that evening.

Smiles and hugs greeted us before worship began, and these sweet children would not say goodbye without a group photo...and more hugs. Adorable is an apt caption!

Clinics commenced on Monday morning, and everyone had an opportunity to pitch in. Julia, Nicole, and Sarah, as well as our Guatemala physicians, mentored the students and helped them hone their consultation skills. None of this would be possible without gifted translators as most of the patients spoke Quiche as their first language.

Our team treated their hurts and their pains, listened to their symptoms and their pleas, prayed with them and sometimes cried with them. No one left unchanged, no one left unloved!



If you watch the news or go to the grocery store, you know that inflation is taking a toll on family incomes in the US; alas the same is true in Guatemala and with their primary food source, the food that fuels their labor. Corn!

The Meadowbrook Church of Christ reached out to Health Talents about a 'Christmas project' for their church family. Meadowbrook, a supporter of Health Talents since the 70's, is deeply committed to Health Talents and one of our most treasured church relationships. I suggested they try to provide each family in our ABC Program with an extra bag of corn, a 100-pound bag. They exceeded their goal, collecting more than \$50,000 and the funds were sent to Guatemala in February...and March became the month for delivery. And a perfect time for retired architectural historian and long-time member of Meadowbrook to join in the fun!

Ken P'Pool joined the delivery teams, visited the families in their homes and in one home, met the ABC child sponsored by Larry and Paige Stowe. (The family below and on the right, three generations on a small plot in the mountains, will consume 100 pounds of corn per week.)



Delivering the corn revealed two things to me. I am not as young as I used to be and photos like this confirm my hair is either thinning or I am growing more face!

Over the course of four clinic days, we traveled to Lemoa, Mactzul Segundo, Mactzul Sexto, and Chiche. We found ourselves at the foot of the cross, exactly where we chose to be!



The Harding PA Mobile team is in the books and our hearts. Please consider joining Health Talents and make memories of your own.

Rick Harper