

**TRIP REPORT  
JULY 1-8, 2023  
EYE/GENERAL SURGERY**

**General Surgeon, Hunter Jennings; Ocular Plastic Surgeon, Peter Truong; Ophthalmologists, Nathan Stevens & Vickas Khemsara; Anesthesiologist, Chuck McIntosh & Buster Herren; Dentist, Bob Huffstutter; Dental Hygienist, Jordan Anderson; Medical Students, Alexis Grace Jennings, Zachary White and Michael Truong; Physical Therapist, Cathy Collins; OR Nurse/Surgical Tech, Lesa Dale, Nikki Glass, Kelly Greenwood and Jeremy Maynard; Optician, Judy Sisson; Recovery Room RNs, Jim Adams, Alice Bush, Leslie Doke, Elaine Griffin, Amy Moore, Tony Eisner, Susan Thomas and Jake Volzer; Translators, Rita Sills, Anna Collins, Will Fitzhugh, Rita Huffstutter, Jason Kellerhalls, Jay LeBlanc; Caregivers, Hartley Carrol, Ellie Nicolas, Jenny Prevatt, Cary Prevail, Ellie Eisner, Ann Rockhold, May Stevens, Abi Stevens, Ava Williams; Sterilization, Victor Nicolas & Cary Sills; Chaplain, Dave Mellor; Team Leaders, Sheri Kretschmar & Susan Mellor; Video Crew Leader, Bode Teague; Film Crew, Zach Allen, Stefan Anderson, Dave Prevatt & Rusty Prevatt**

Don't you love a reunion? Many of the volunteers for this week have been on the July Eye trip for years. After the Covid sabbatical, the reunion was joyous!

The first timers were quickly incorporated into the team and we got to work. The plan was to remove cataracts and pterygium for the two eye surgeons. Dr. Truong would do plastics repairs to facial tissue and Dr. Jennings would take care of general surgeries that had accumulated since our last surgical trip. But, this was one of those weeks when God apparently needed to remind us that we are not in control! Our microscopes used for cataract surgeries (about 6' tall very expensive machines) had developed a fungus on their lenses. Sometimes Guatemala wins. The heat, humidity and inactivity rendered these vital machines useless. The lenses were actually etched and destroyed by this fungus.

Our Guatemalan director, Kemmel Dunham, called every rep and repair person in the country, but once the damage is done there's not anything to do. So, our two Ophthalmologists shifted gears and went to work on pterygium and screened for glaucoma. Sheri Kretschmar went from bed to bed and explained to each patient that their procedure would have to be postponed, but when the new equipment arrives there would be an eye team prepared to remove their cataracts. Each and every person was understanding and grateful that we would not risk their existing eyesight using sub-par equipment.



This little lady presented with a history of seizures. She had broken 17 bones over the history of her falls when a seizure came upon her. She is being evaluated and treated for the seizures, but the falls were addressed by getting her a walker which allowed her the stability she needed. She was one happy lady!



Families are strong in Guatemala. The relief of this son when his father successfully underwent surgery is obvious from this touching photo.



This is Maria with Alice Bush. She had surgery at Clinica Ezell when she was 8 and always wanted to return as a nurse. We're so grateful she accomplished that goal!

One of the more unusual cases was that of a lady who was blind in one eye and had been dealing with increasing pain in that eye for 3 weeks. She was examined by Dr. Truong who determined that the eyeball was badly infected and would need to be removed. He and Dr. Jennings teamed up for this surgery. Dr. Jennings harvested a little fat from the patient's body to fill the area vacated by the eyeball, so the eye would simply appear closed. After this delicate procedure, her headaches were gone and she is good to go back to her life without pain! Just a side note. We've only had an Ocular Plastic Surgeon on two of our trips. We love when we see God assemble a team of just the right people at just the right time!

Dental Hygienist Jordan Anderson offered a clinic to increase the skills of our dental workers. Each participant was eager to learn the new techniques and was awarded a certificate of this accomplishment.

Sheri summed up the week in her words: *"Early in the week, we knew that God had a much different plan than we did. I am not a big numbers person because it does not actually show how many hearts were touched and how many seeds are planted....but it is used to measure.*

*We completed 51 surgeries.....51, even with all of the canceling. That was painful and I hated it but what if those that return, have had time to think about something special that touched them, this trip!?!? I look forward to seeing them again in November.*



*After we had to cancel the cataracts, we saw 55 diabetics and completed eye exams. For example, Melva's dad had no idea he had glaucoma! Melva is one of the translators and she also has had surgery with us.*

*We saw 10 patients for physical therapy.*

*So that is a total of touching 116 patients and their families.”*

