

HTI August Surgical Trip
Clinica Ezell
August 2-9, 2014

Trip Participants: Surgeons: Dwayne Fulks, Jack Hudkins, Michael Kohlman, John Little, Ralph Marrero; Anesthesiologist: Stephen Harvey, Kendle Yates; Nurse Anesthetists: Gordon Corder, Carrie Hovater; Cardiologist: Quinton Dickerson; Physician Assistants: Halson Ault, Kelsey Wall; RN's: Brittany Clayton, Patricia Corder, Lacey Cross, Natalie Franklin, Jennifer Hicks, Sheri Kretzschmar, Lauren Moore, Jodi Pilot, Patsy Sikes, Marnie Snarr, Kate Spellman, Megan Twohey, Dana Williams; LPN: Mike Caldwell; Speech Pathologist: Jason Fuller; Surgical Tech: Mollie Beth Green; Dental Hygienist: Keaton Smedley; OR Circulators: Shelly Fulks, Molly Koch, Derrick Sikes; Nursing Students: Taylor Meyers, Larissa Pinczuk; Translators: Kathleen Fuller, Rita Sills, Wendy Stetzinger, Caleb Thomas, Alex Yates, Heath Yates; Dental Assistants: Susan Jordan, Lea Sills; Sterilization: Jared Corder, Tim Franklin, Michaela Hendley, Cary Sills; Compassionate Caregivers: Hope Daley, Sarah Daley, Ann Dickerson, Sophie Fuller, Shelby Gowen, Julie Ann Harper, Alisha Hovater, Matthew Little, Selma McGregor, Karen Sims, Morgan Smith, Emily Stetzinger, Joelle Whitlock; Trip Chaplain: John Mark Hicks; Team Leader: Rick Harper

I began our 2012 August trip report by stating it was the largest team we'd ever assembled and I am now able to say the 2014 trip was the largest with sixty-one North American volunteers. God continues to bless HTI with great interest in our ministry and the opportunity to introduce his servants to medical evangelism.

A few on our team arrived in Guatemala City on Friday, the best option when Saturday connections times are too short. Others arrived on United and were soon followed by a sizeable number on Delta. Only Larissa Pinczuk's luggage failed to arrive on time, but she was reunited with her personal belonging on Tuesday.

Thanks to the United Airlines priority status for ten on this team, we were able to bring twenty-four additional bags of supplies. Upon arrival in Montellano on Saturday evening, we opened and inventoried each bag in the dining room before placing the supplies and medicine into intermediate storage for use that week. While this was going on, our surgeons and translators began seeing the two-three dozen patients waiting for exams. Following supper, a brief orientation ensued and it was off to bed.

Following a leisurely breakfast and a time of worship with the Montellano church family, we met with Dr. Walter for a surgical orientation before lunch, then it was time for surgery to begin. As the OR's began receiving patients, our nurses and caregivers met with nurse, Rosario Poncio, for a recovery room orientation. Rosario detailed the role of our Guatemala nurses and nurse aids so that everyone knew their role. We were well-staffed with such a large group and it made for pleasant days, even when surgery finished a bit late.

Our plastic surgeon, Dr. Dwayne Fulks, arrived knowing in advance that we had a patient from June who needed a mastectomy and everyone was hopeful that the cancer would be maintained. Sadly, it was quite far along and we had to deliver some tough news to twenty-seven year old Marlene and her husband. We will work within the Guatemala healthcare system to assist in Marlene receiving chemotherapy, but even then, the best case scenario is five or so more years with her family. Marlene was prayed over, prayed for and loved by all!

We completed three general, two plastic and two ENT cases on Sunday afternoon and early evening, a great start to the week.

Fourteen cases were scheduled for Monday, three each for ENT and Plastics and eight General. Our two physician assistants, Halston Ault and Kelsey Wall, opted to assist with surgery on Monday and since Kelsey specializes in plastics in Tulsa, she would assist Dr. Fulks each day. Halston went out with mobile teams and assisted in surgery, whereas Dr. Quinton Dickerson, cardiologist and HTI board member went out each day with one of our three coastal physicians. Surgeries went quite smooth with only two of three rooms working a bit late on Monday. Nevertheless, the OR's were empty in time for our evening devotional time with John Mark Hicks as he focused on various Psalms each evening and each morning.

Tuesday found us with another fourteen cases as we began to hit our stride and it appeared we'd finish the day earlier. We quickly got on the phone and began calling patients who were scheduled for future trips and worked a few more into our schedule. Dr. John Little and Dr. Ralph Marrero, both ENT surgeons, were making their second trip with HTI, but this was their first time to work together. Working as a duo, allowed them to alternate OR time and see patients throughout the day. Much like our plastic cases, it is not uncommon for ENT cases to take 3-4 hours per case and one would take the better part of the day. Working around all of the facial nerves is painstakingly slow and necessarily so.

(Before and after.)



We had a surprise visit by Spiderman, aka RN, Kate Spellman, who is also a standup comedian. She not only worked tirelessly in recovery, but lightened the mood and brightened eyes with her impromptu performance. Though we must confess, a few patients were surprised to learn Spiderman was a girl!



It was a bit unusual scheduling, but Wednesday turned out to be our largest day of the week with seventeen cases. Four more plastic cases, three ENT and ten generals for the day. Our ENT and plastic room both finished early and we were able to bounce general cases between all three rooms and get caught up before the day got away. We even had a few of our caregivers go into Chicacao for ice cream that afternoon, always a treat.

We purposefully make Thursday a lighter day as fatigue has usually begun to set in for many, yet Thursday would prove to be a full day for our plastic room and a half day for ENT and general. Six plastic and three in each of the other rooms and week total of sixty-five.

A good number of our team traveled to San Lucas Toliman for a meal overlooking Lake Atitlan and all were safely gathered together for a final supper meal before 6:00 PM. We began our devotional outside, but rain interrupted our sharing time and we moved back into the dining room. Veterans, rookies, children, parents and grandparents shared special moments of the week and we made plans for our departure on Friday morning. One more adventure for the week, Antigua and all that makes it so lovely.

Two photos to follow and our August 2014 trip report comes to a close. To God Be The Glory!

Derrick and Patsy Sikes are long-time ABC sponsors, or padrinos as they are known in Guatemala, and one of their annual highlights is to visit children they sponsor. The grin on Patsy's face says it all!

