

HTI August Surgical Trip
Clinica Ezell
August 6-13, 2016

Trip Participants: *Surgeons: Brannon Hyde, Dwayne Fulks, Jack Hudkins, Michael Kohlman, Nathan Powell, Philip Strawther; Anesthesiologist: Stephen Harvey; Cardiologist: Quinton Dickerson; Nurse Anesthetists: Gordon Corder, Todd Holt, Carrie Hovater, Jackie McLean; Nurse Practitioners: Natalie Franklin; RN's: Elizabeth Beazley, Barbara Burns, Betty Claxton, Patricia Corder, Kristy Cope, Lacey Cross, Mary Grace Diggs, Bettye Green, Sarah Hayden, Jennifer Hicks, Danelle Holland, Sheri Kretzschmar, Ashley Malloy, Lesli Shoemaker, Patsy Sikes, Joslyn Smith, Kate Spellman, Stasia Spivy; LPN: Mike Caldwell; Nursing Student: Tori Naylor; Speech Pathologist: Jason Fuller; OR Circulators: Jared Corder, Kevin DeHoff, Shelly Fulks, Matt Hayden; Translators: Ed Aguilar, Kristi Burns, Titus Dauck, Alisha Hovater; Intake/Discharge/Translator: Rita Sills; Dental Assistants: Susan Jordan; Sterilization: Cary Sills; Compassionate Caregivers: Sarah Daley, Ann Dickerson, Lisa Fuller, Sophie Fuller, Lynda Graves, Abbie Holt, Maggie Hovater, Mikayla Hyde, Melissa Kile, Rebecca Pittard, Harriette Shivers, Savannah Shoemaker, Kasey Sizemore, Natalie Whitlock; Trip Chaplain: John Mark Hicks; Team Leader: Rick Harper*

I awoke Saturday morning a little before 3 AM to more than a dozen flight alerts informing me of mechanical trouble and delays on various flights and by 6:30 AM, most issues seemed to have been resolved. However, the Nashville team members on United returned to the gate after taxiing to the runway with brake issues and their flight was canceled. No cause for alarm, we are accustomed to overcoming travel challenges and though the day was long, our six wayward travelers arrived in Guatemala City a little before midnight and took the shuttle to Hotel Barcelo.

Every person and every bag was accounted for and in country by midnight!

While the Nashville six were making connections on Saturday, three on our team of sixty traveled to Chichicastenango to spend a few days with our highland team and fifty-one of us traveled to Clinica Ezell. Once we unloaded luggage and settled into our rooms, we began the process of inventorying more than 1,200 pounds of medicine and supplies. Our surgeons and translators split up into three exam rooms for consultations, scheduling eight surgeries

Sleep came easy and the late evening rain made for a cool first night; and the sound of hand-patted fresh tortillas greeted us on Sunday morning.

The patio coffee club, the early risers, began congregating around 6:00 AM Sunday morning as first-timer, Todd Holt, joined regulars Mike Caldwell, John Mark Hicks and Carrie Hovater. Todd, a CRNA from Columbia, TN brought his daughter, one of twelve family pairings this week. (Kate and Ed don't count just yet...they are only engaged.) We had father/daughter; husband/wife; brother/sister; sister/sister; father/son; mother/son and grandparent/grandchild combinations. Breakfast consisted of eggs, beans, fresh fruit, tortillas, juice, coffee and conversation!

Worship began at 10:00, the Nashville six arrived in time to join us, and Carlos delivered the sermon using Romans 12:1-4 as his text, challenging us to present our bodies as a living sacrifice and reminding us that it is our spiritual worship. The singing was joyously loud, with the emphasis on joyous.

Following worship, we reassembled in the dining room for our surgical orientation. We gave veteran translator, Jason Fuller, a break and asked Kristi Burns to translate for Dr. Walter Sierra. (Dr. Walter's daughter, Andrea, was with him this week and she brightened his week and all who encountered her.) Once orientation was completed, our OR teams lined up for lunch and in short order, three operating rooms were readied for surgery. Six hours later, seven general and one plastic surgery had been completed, along with more than fifty consultations.

ABC deliveries were scheduled this week and Monday was day one for volunteers joining Luis Razon, our ABC Coordinator on the coast. A few team members went out with Luis, others with our mobile teams and a few others begin wrapping lap sponges and x-ray sponges for sterilization. All the while, our OR crews were busy with fifteen general and five plastic cases that day. (Surgeons Mike Kohlman and Jack Hudkins, aka Muscle Mike and Jack the storyteller.)



For our plastics team, Tuesday was a repeat of Monday with five cases alternating between cleft repair and palate repair. Dr. Philip Strawther, one of two plastic surgeons left around 2:30 that afternoon to visit out work in the Guatemala highlands, leaving Dr. Dwayne Fulks to handle the balance of cases on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Our two general rooms completed another fourteen cases, bringing our total to forty-seven after two and half days of surgery.

(Dr. Fulks with circulator and baby girl, Shelly. Shelly graduated from high school in May and is off to college in a few weeks, the last to leave the nest.)



John Mark Hicks, author, teacher and all around good guy served as our trip chaplain this week. Each evening we looked at different aspects surrounding the raising of Lazarus from the dead. We explored Jesus' response, his being stirred by the events and faith of Mary, Martha and his other disciples. May we all be stirred to action and greater levels of faith and service.

After a one-year hiatus, Spiderwoman reappeared to entertain adults and children alike. She is now engaged and will be known as Spiderwife in the near future!

(Spiderwoman & pre-pharmacy student, Natalie Whitlock and nursing student, Tori Naylor.)



Dr. Silvia Albizures asked for our assistance with a young dental patient Wednesday evening. Suffering from undiagnosed congenital issues, too young to sit still in a dental chair and in great need of dental care. Without any real openings in the OR schedule, a few on our team went down to the OR and PostOp area around 6:30 AM to care for this precious little one. Though a fever following dental surgery kept him in recovery for a good part of the day, he was able to be sent home and the OR was clear by 7:30 and ready for our first plastic case of the day.

Wednesday, not counting our little dental patient, was a repeat of Monday with fifteen general cases and five plastic cases...and one unscheduled. Carlos and Silvia's daughter, Danica, took a tumble in the dining room Wednesday evening and split open her chin. Many parents reading this report can relate to the drama and trauma when one of your children is injured, but seldom do you find yourself with a plastic surgeon just a few feet away. Carlos carried Danica to OR three and held her head still for stitching, Silvia fought back the tears and tried to keep Danica calm, Rita could not hold back the tears, but did manage to hold one leg still and your report scribe held the other leg and her tiny torso while artist/surgeon Dr. Fulks and assistant Shelly Fulks worked their medical magic. The next day, Danica proudly displayed her injury, none the worse for the wear.

The dining room was a bit less busy on Thursday morning, and though it would be a full day for plastic surgery, we only had twelve cases scheduled. Six general and six plastic patients! Dr. Dickerson, who joined us on Tuesday, went out with Dr. Patricia for mobile clinic and a few others went with Dr. Walter to Xejeyp. ABC deliveries were completed and everyone was able to break bread together around 7:00. Our sharing time began at 8:30, only a few tears were shed, but many hugs were shared.

Nine of our number flew back on Friday afternoon, so we gathered early for a group photo. Decide for yourself which is more beautiful; the feet of those who bring good news or the tropical canopy behind us. (I vote for feet.)

