

**HTI August Surgical Trip**  
**Clinica Ezell**  
**August 5-12, 2017**

**Trip Participants:** *Surgeons: Brannon Hyde, Dwayne Fulks, Jack Hudkins, Michael Kohlman, Nathan Powell, Philip Strawther; Anesthesiologist: Stephen Harvey; Nurse Anesthetists: Gordon Corder, Todd Holt, Carrie Hovater; RN's: Mary-Dallas Allison, Elizabeth Beazley, Barbara Burns, Patricia Corder, Bettye Green, Tina McCormack, Sheri Kretzschmar, Erika Neal, Lauren Robinson, Michelle Schuffert, Patsy Sikes, Elsa Sims, Joslyn Smith, Barbara Surowiec, Christian Watkins; Surgical Tech: Katrina Hess; LPN: Mike Caldwell; EMT; Jared Corder; Nursing Students: Amanda Covalt, Ashley Laman, Emily Neece; Speech Pathologist: Jason Fuller. Sharon Van Cleave; OR Circulators: Shelly Fulks, Alisha Hovater; Patient Care Tech: Hailey Crider; Translators: Alyssa Beyer, Kathlyn Beyer, Kristin Beyer, Kathleen Fuller, Sandy Sims; Intake/Discharge/Translator: Rita Sills; Dental Assistants: Susan Jordan, Lyn Jordan; Sterilization: David Fuller, Michael Kennedy, Cary Sills; Pre-Med Students: Abbie Holt, Madeline Shaw, Jessi Johnson; Compassionate Caregivers: Julie Ballinger, Mike Duncan, Emory Thomas, Glenna Fulks, Lizzie Fuller, Maggie Hovater, Mikayla Hyde, Tracy Laman; Trip Chaplain: Darin Kennedy; Team Leader: Rick Harper*

If you took the time to compare this team to our 2016 team, you'd see we are packed with veterans. Every surgeon and anesthesia provider were veterans and with us last year. Our nursing crew contained ten veterans and though the August trip was new to several, they soon gelled with our three nursing students. All in all, an exceptional team with forty veterans!

Fourteen on our team flew into Guatemala City on Friday night, six were already in country and the remainder arrived via American, Delta and United, mostly on schedule and with all luggage. We celebrated with pizza and fried chicken on the three-hour bus ride to Clinica Ezell.

Carlos called while we were traveling with a warning, it was hotter than normal. Upon stepping off the bus, we were met with moderate temperatures, despite Carlos' warning, thanks to a late afternoon rain, a pattern that continued every day during our stay. This would turn out to be one of the coolest August trips in recent memory and by cool, I mean a bit less perspiration and not pull out the jackets and blankets. We were grateful.

Thirty-six bags contained medicine/surgical supplies and our first project was sorting, inventorying and placing more than a thousand pounds of supplies in their proper place. This took about two hours, sufficient time for the surgeons and translators to complete patient consults and our anesthesia providers to prep the OR rooms for tomorrow.



Supper was out by 7:00, soon followed by introductions and a brief orientation. No one complained when the lights were off by 9:00 and conversations were of the whisper variety. Sleep came easy, aided by the aforementioned cooling rain.

We awoke to a pleasant morning with temperatures in the low sixties and fresh coffee brewing. The sound of fresh tortillas being hand patted and placed on the grill was a welcome call to our veterans and new experience, now invoking sweet memories for our first-timers. Sight, sound, smell, touch...and heart will all be engaged on the first full day at Clinica Ezell.

Conversation followed coffee and tortillas as our August family brought new friends into the fold and the old-timers caught up on a years' worth of living. Alisha got married, Andrew is moving back to Columbia, Abbie begins her final year at Lipscomb, Alyssa and Kathlyn are now engaged.

A few minutes before 10:00, the Spanish song books were passed out and we headed towards the gate, stepping over, around or on the figs that had fallen on the bridge following the rain storm. Carlos delivered the lesson that morning and we all missed Josue's song leading. Though he was able to worship with us, an illness left him unable to inspire us with us powerful voice and we settled for his presence among us. (He is fine and back to his normal self.)

Following worship, we made our way back to the dining room for our surgical orientation. Sheri Kretzschmar, now in her tenth year as a missionary nurse with Health Talents provided translation for Dr. Walter. With forty veterans, orientation went quickly and the OR staff went to the head of the line for a quick bite of lunch. Four plastic and six general cases were waiting for us and the moved along at a nice, manageable pace.

A short time after surgery began, our nurses and caregivers working in recovery assembled for orientation with Darling Ayerdis, our head nurse. The care that builds relationships is most often nurtured in recovery, whether it be our nurses, nursing students or caregivers. Love cannot be contained and full hearts spill over, bathing our patients with tender touches, caring gestures and simple conversations. Pictured below are a few of our nurses and nursing students. Amanda, Ashley and Emily are nursing students, Lauren began coming as a nursing student, Tina and Michelle are first-timers now committed to returning.



*(Amanda Covalt, Ashley Laman, Lauren Robinson, Tina McCormack, Michelle Schuffert and Emily Neece)*



Monday and Tuesday yielded eighteen cases each day, four plastic and fourteen general. For the second time this year, we found ourselves running out of scheduled surgical candidates and began bringing in patients scheduled for September to keep everyone productive and busy. Dr. Walter, Darling, Marta and Eva did a wonderful job.

Darin Kennedy, the pulpit minister for the Blue River Church of Christ in Lee's Summit, Missouri was our trip chaplain for the week, proving to be a prayer warrior for our patients and exceptionally gifted in delivering practical, encouraging and inspiring messages during our devotionals.

Nineteen was the number on Wednesday, six plastic and thirteen general cases, Thursday held another fifteen.

Dr. Stephen Harvey, our medical director for the week and a Health Talents board member, called the OR teams together each morning to share an encouraging word and a time of prayer before surgery began. John 9 was their text each morning, the story of the blind man sent to wash his eyes in the pool of Siloam. The lesson applications from this text were many and unique to each person listening. The blind man received his gift, sight, when he was sent and followed Jesus instruction. For many on this trip, we received our gift or gifts, when we followed Jesus' teaching and were "sent" to Guatemala. We saw more than patients, we saw people we loved and we saw Jesus working in their lives and our own. It was our pool of Siloam moment, every day!



The August 2017 trip is now history, though not forgotten. Our time together will shape our tomorrow and who knows, we may all be together again in 2018.

