

Health Talents International

January Surgical Clinic Jan 16-23, 2010

Team Participants: Surgeons: Ed Grogan, Eric Grogan, Tommy Hatchett, Judi Jehlel, Danny Minor, Scott Smith ; Anesthesia: Jason Blankenship, Kevin Burns, Lawrence Freund; Nurses: Denise Allensworth, Michelle Berry, Karen Bradley, Leah Bradshaw, Barbara Burg, Brittney Cover, Mary Dodd, Patricia Frawley, Carolyn Hatter, Jeanie Langston, Lynn Rafferty, Dawn Skinner, Kelly Smith, Bonnie Spink, Rebecca Stowe, Michelle West, Michelle Young; Physician Asst/Surgical Tech: Tim Thurston; Translators: Rachel Finney, Edgar Lucero, Janet Smith, Vicky Schandavel, Linly Stowe, Dakota West; Sterilization: Leslie Minor, Stacy Smith; Non-Medical Cargivers: Julie Anderson, Lindsey Bradley, Victoria Cover, John Fewkes, Carolyn Grogan, Guinevere Reddick; Mr. Fix-Its: Jerry Hatter, Sam Yaws; Team Leader: Rick Harper

Due to airline consolidations and departure points, we arrived in Guatemala on two different airlines and though both flights were delayed, we were blessed with a very smooth experience through customs. Of course, Kelly Smith thought otherwise since she had on bag missing and it did not arrive until Wednesday. (She had a secret stash of Mountain Dew in this bag!) We arrived in Montellano shortly after 5:00 PM and quickly unpacked, sorted supplies and saw the patients who were scheduled for surgery on Sunday. Following dinner and a brief meeting, it was off to bed for many and visiting with old friends for others.

The general surgery crew was once again blessed by Kelly Smith who prepared and general and GYN surgical packs with everything needed for surgery, including each doctors preferred gloves and suture! Ambition and optimism carried the day on Sunday as we scheduled and completed thirteen surgeries following worship service that morning with the Montellano church family. Edgar Lucero, the Hispanic minister from Tahlequah, OK delivered the sermon that morning and served so well throughout the week that we have invited him to serve as our trip chaplain in 2011...and he accepted.

Rick Harper served as our trip chaplain throughout the week and had us focus our thoughts on II Corinthians 2:14-17 and what it means to be "*a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.*" We looked for examples when our patients, our Guatemala ministry team and our US team members blessed us with the pleasing aroma of Christ.

We picked up on Monday, much like we left on a Sunday...full tilt and ready to serve. We had seventeen surgical patients scheduled for Monday, five of which were laparoscopic gallbladder surgeries, so it was a full day of service and blessing. Leslie Minor was a jewel in her work with in sterilization and newly minted sterilization pro, Stacy Smith worked tirelessly. We had a plethora of translators on this trip, Dakota, Egar, Janet, Linly Rachel and Vicky took turns in OR, recovery, preop and consultation. You'll have to ask Rachel for her list of "Top Ten Things She Never Thought She'd Say in Spanish," you'll be laughing for weeks.

Our ever busy and industrious “Mr. Fix-Its” Sam and Jerry spent the week plying their many skills in plumbing, air-conditioning, masonry and carpentry. Check out the new air-conditioner in the sterilization room or the venting in the autoclave room and you’ll see their handiwork.

Tuesday was another full day of surgery, though not quite as full as Monday and the one day respite was very welcome. When we are able to finish surgeries around 6:00 PM, it is much smoother on the team as a whole, especially our OR nurses and nurses in recovery. The smiles are a little brighter and sighs a little lighter! Our tally for Tuesday, thirteen surgical patients in all three GYN and ten general surgeries completed.

We originally scheduled seventeen patients for Wednesday, a large number, but some of the cases were quick and bore no complications. As a result, two of the patients scheduled for Thursday were moved up to Wednesday in the hope that we could be through by 11:00 AM on Thursday and take a large group to San Lucas Toliman for an outing. Wednesday yielded nineteen patients and a weary crew of God’s mighty servants. A special note of thanks to our RN’s working the late shift on this day as patients came out late in the evening and required significant care throughout the night. Our Colorado Michelles, Berry and Young, were not alone, but were just two of the RN’s who pulled several night shifts.

Wednesday’s highlights included the regular visit by little Cindi, shown here with RN, Brittney Cover. Cindi has been coming 4-8 times each month for over a year to receive treatment for genital warts, the result of sexual abuse. She has become a favorite and brightens our day when we realize the improvement in her health and the joy she finds in visiting with her Health Talents friends.



We got an early start on Thursday and by 11:20; nine more patients had received surgical care, bringing out tally to seventy-one for the week. We sent two groups to San Lucas Toliman to have lunch and see Lake Atitlan, a real treat as seen in the photos below.



Beauty can be found in many places in Guatemala, Lake Atitlan is a prime example. Of course, nothing can compare with the beauty found in the faces of our patients, our volunteers and their family.

(Sonia Lux, wife of HTI Physician, David Lux, Barbara Burg, RN and HTI veteran from Arizona and Sonia's mother, one of our patients this week.)



If you think we serve a glorious God, say amen...I'm sure God is listening!