

## HEALTH TALENTS INTERNATIONAL

### Surgery Clinic Trip Report

June 4-11, 2016

Team Members: Surgeons: Drs. Kyle City, Ben Doke, Charles Gross, John Little and Ralph Marrero; Anesthesiologist: Drs. David Passafiume and Joey Tilton; CRNA's: Buddy Malone and Pam Passafiume; Physical Therapist: David Breedlove; Nurses: Isabel Beckett, Taylor Binkley, Mike Caldwell, Ruth Church, Jeanie Damren, Leslie Doke, Kacy Forrest, Amy Frazier, Chris Frazier, Ashley Grimes, Jennifer Hicks, Rachel Jones, Valentina Long, Elizabeth Marrero and Kim Neatherlin; Pharmacy Tech: Hallie Sartain; Nursing Students: Landon Church, Samantha Dowden, Jackie Hunter and Carlen Little; OR Lay Circulators: John Grant Little, Matt Little and Emily Woody; Sterilization: Susan Harper and Cary Sills; Caregivers: Anna Leigh Breedlove, Callie Doke, Brenda Hunter, Jennifer Little, Sarah Little, Lucy Malone, Anita Pippins, Kay Reiboldt and Faith Tilton; Translators: Luis Barrundia, Alyssa Beyer, Kathlyn Beyer, Kristin Beyer; Manuel Guarcas, Chase Passafiume and Rita Sills; Trip Leaders: Rick Harper.

Once again, several on our team opted to fly into Guatemala City on Friday night and take the shuttle back to the airport around noon to meet those of us who had been traveling since early morning. A good night of rest is a precious commodity and even more so once the excitement and adrenaline induced energy begins to wane...that typically happens on Saturday night.

All in all, our Saturday travel was uneventful and a blessing we never take for granted. (Compared to May when thirty-two missed their flight, this a cause for celebration.) We arrived at Clinica Ezell before 5:00 PM and promptly began the process of unpacking and inventorying supplies. Our surgeons and translators commenced seeing patients, and our anesthesia providers tested out equipment and stocked their rooms. Supper was set before us by 7:00, a prayer of gratitude was offered and we enjoyed an excellent meal. Afterwards, we took a few minutes to introduce ourselves to one another and go through a brief facility orientation.

Sunday, June 5: A good night of rest does wonders for the weary and I found no one who wasn't smiling brighter at breakfast. We went to bed with nine patients scheduled for surgery, three for each specialty, ENT, General and GYN, but that would wait. Fellowship and reunions were in order that morning, then a time of worship with the Montellano church family and six MET students finishing up their second week on the coast.

Once worship concluded, we gathered together in the dining room for our med/surg orientation, lunch and an afternoon of surgery. Six-seven hours after lunch, the last patient was out of the OR and in the hands of our capable, compassionate recovery room crew. Try though they might, the recovery room crew never found the air-conditioner thermostat. (*Maybe we should place a false one on the wall, just so they could walk by and get the satisfaction of lowering the dial.*)

Monday, June 6: Our ENT surgeons had one-two grueling cases each day, some as long as six hours in duration. They were able to get in three cases on Monday and two each on Tuesday and Wednesday. All the while, our GYN room was able to complete five cases and six in our general room. Most importantly, no complications for any patients through the first two days.

Tuesday June 7: Our lone general surgeon this week, Dr. Charles Gross, determined he and his crew in OR would complete ten cases on Tuesday, an ambitious number in a single room, turning the OR in less than an hour each time. One of our anesthesia providers commented, “Dr. Gross just started, which means he is about done.” Meanwhile, room three, our GYN room cared for six patients that day and Drs. Little and Marrero another two ENT cases.

David Breedlove, a physical therapist from Alabama was on this trip, and he went out with our mobile medical teams each day and then returned to provide PT care for some of our US team members. David was joined by Noe Chan, the physical therapy provider on our Guatemala team. Dr. John Little, he of the five, six and seven hour cases, suffered a shoulder injury earlier in the year and after Noe was finished with some hands on therapy, Dr. Little considered taking Noe back to Knoxville, TN.

Dr. Joey Tilton, one of two anesthesiologists on this trip, asked two years ago about also serving as trip chaplain. Joey not only pulled double duty, but he brought his daughter, Faith, this year. Daddy, anesthesiologist, chaplain...Joey was masterful at all three and he challenged us with his devotionals and morning thoughts. Whether it was a subtle shift in language, “the supper of the Lord, instead of the Lord’s supper,” or telling us we were slaying dragons by the way we chose to live and to serve, he inspired us all.

Wednesday, June 8: Two more for ENT, five GYN and nine General cases on Wednesday, now four consecutive days of surgery without any complications. Fatigue has settled in and our team is ready for a lighter day of surgery on Thursday. Back home, Wednesday is known as hump day, at Clinica Ezell we’re in the home stretch. Steak and black bean soup are on the menu tonight and nine cases on the schedule for Thursday.

Thursday, June 9: Drs. Kyle Citty and Ben Doke had a few colpo patients on Thursday, all procedures typically done in the office back home, so we did not include those in our surgical numbers. We had one ENT case and eight general cases, with Dr. Gross bouncing from room to room and all patients done by around 1:00.

We sent three different groups on excursions that day, one group to the chocolate farm and two different groups traveled into Chicacao to see the square, walk the market and get a taste of a small quasi-urban Guatemala town. Everyone was back at Ezell before dark, and the chatter in the dining room was joyful. You could almost hear a collective sigh as we began the transition back to the US. Though it would be Saturday before most went home, the mental part of the transition begins on Thursday.

Your trip report scribe took advantage of a less busy evening and the end result is a new, favorite photo. Danika and Dante enjoying a book, me enjoying their laughter and affection. The photo below is now on my laptop screensaver, rotating among other photos that prompt a smile.



Come Friday morning, the transition was complete and our team was ready to a day of R & R in Antigua, the beautiful former capital of Guatemala. We enjoyed the charm, cooler temperature, culture and one more day of fellowship before bidding farewell.

June team 2016 may be history, but the memories will last a lifetime...and for some of our patients, life just got a little bit better. To God Be The Glory!

