

**Health Talents International
Lipscomb University Spring Break Mission
March 11-18, 2016**

Trip Participants: Pediatrician: Brian Cress; Nurse Practitioner: Lisa Truett; Physician Assistant: Sarah Tipton; Dentist: Clint Sweitzer; RN: Freda Fuller, Amy Cottrell; Team Leader: Alan Bradshaw; Students: Kaylyn Attig, Morgan Carr, Elizabeth Click, Timothy Coca, Macy Cottrell, Shelby Crues, Kayla Ford, Amy Carpio, Andrea Goode, Brittney Gorman, Addison Groves, Kaytlin Kelley, Luis Portillo, Jennifer Scanlon, Bethany Seamon, Deion Sims, Lexie Vasilikos, Collin Vasseur, Mary Welch; HTI Team Leader: Julie Obregón

Christian fellowship is something special and unique to people of faith. This spring break many of our team members were able to experience this fellowship with people who did not speak their language, did not understand their culture and who did not look, dress or act like them. The amazing thing about Christian fellowship is that we don't need to be able to communicate with words or completely understand each other's culture because there is something more that bonds us to one another...love for our Savior and love for one another.



After arriving in Guatemala and traveling to Chichicastenango the majority of the team had a short night of sleep before an early morning drive to Xejox and Chuchuca where we camped out for a couple days. On Saturday we held an ABC clinic in each village. Dr. Lisa Dunham saw patients in Chuchuca while Lisa and Sarah cared for the sweet little children of Xejox. At the end of the clinic day the group in Xejox packed up and headed over to Chuchuca to settle in for the night and enjoy a meal with the brothers and sisters from the Chuchuca congregation. We all swapped stories of the precious patients we saw, the funny things they said and played with the adorable children who captured our hearts.

Not everyone on the team was able to head off into the mountains since there were clinics back in the Chichi area which needed help. A group of six students along with Dr. Brian and RN's Freda and Amy stayed back in Chichi to help out with these clinics. Dr. Mike Kelly, a former missionary to Guatemala, was filling in for Dr. Sara Castellanos who was out on maternity leave. It was great to work with such a talented doctor. The students enjoyed shadowing him as he treated patients not only in Spanish but also in Quiche! Dr. Mike worked long and hard to speak the Quiche language and it was obvious how much the patients appreciated being able to express their ailments in their native language.



On Sunday the Chichi group enjoyed the morning by wandering around the Chichi market, enjoying a delicious buffet lunch at the hotel and attending church with the Chichicastenango Iglesia de Cristo. The team in Chuchuca woke up with little children surrounding their sleeping bags greeting them with the Quiche version of good morning, "Sakarik!". After a breakfast of beans and eggs prepared with love by the sisters of Chuchuca and Xejoj they attended a church service mostly in Quiche. In the

afternoon there were activities for the youth. Our team planned out skits, crafts and activities for the kids using messages from some of our favorite Bible stories. The kids soaked it all in but most importantly they were sponges for all the love the students had to pour out into their adorable little hearts. When it came time to leave on Monday the group was happy to be headed to Chichi for hot showers, beds and toilet seats but sad to leave the brothers and sisters with whom we had shared such great fellowship.

Back in Chichi, Monday morning meant a day of clinic at two different locations. At the main clinic in Lemoa, Clinica Caris there were some rather sick patients who came hoping for cures for renal failure and a brain tumor. Sadly our team wasn't able to offer medicine to eradicate the tumor or reverse the kidney damage, but despite that we did what we could and offered prayer and words of comfort from the Lord. After a trip like this there are faces that stick in our mind, patients we remember or children we adore and we carry them with us back to the USA in our hearts and in our prayers. These patients from the clinic on Monday are some of those special cases which we continue to pray for as time goes on. The second Monday clinic was a little less eventful for Dr. Brian as he saw over twenty ABC children from Mactzul VI who were mostly in good health. That was a great sign that our sponsorship program is doing well to educate families and keep these children healthy both physically and spiritually. The RN's on our team, Freda and Amy were such amazing helpers and even better teachers. They invested in the students and did their best to make sure that everyone understood how to take vital signs, check blood sugar, and read urine and pregnancy tests. Having their skilled hands made the team stronger and helped us provide a great quality of care for our patients.



Once the team from the mountains got back into town on Monday, and had a chance to clean up, they waited for the Caris and Mactzul VI groups to return before hitting the "cancha" or soccer field for some exercise and fun. They left their play time mostly unscathed with the exception of some scrapes and Sarah Tipton's dislocated pinky toe...ouch! That evening it was so nice to have everyone all together again for our devotional. We enjoyed sharing about our experiences over the past couple days, talking over the people we bonded with, the patients we prayed for and the adventures we had.

Dr. Alan Bradshaw led the devotional time that night and asked us to consider “What do you bring to the table?” Many in our group are headed into the medical field and already possessed useful skills, while others felt that their best contribution was to simply shower children with attention. Regardless of what our skill sets are, we all agreed that God has a way of using our talents so long as we let him.



Tuesday started off busy as we split into teams and headed out to clinics. Dr. Brian and Dr. Mike and Sarah headed off to Mactzul II with Dr. Clint while Dr. Lisa and NP Lisa went to Saquilla. Having a dentist on the team was a huge blessing on many levels. The ABC children were well cared for by Clint and the students who shadowed him and assisted. The students were able to learn about teeth, oral hygiene and even about where the nerves are which get injected with Novocaine to help numb the mouth for cavity fillings, etc. The extra special thing about having Clint on our team is that he is the first medical professional to return to Guatemala with the Lipscomb spring break team after having been on that same trip years before as a student. It really brought things full circle for Dr. Bradshaw who led Clint’s team years ago and was there to enjoy working alongside Dr. Clint, now a dentist!

In the afternoon we had to say adios to Lisa Truett who headed back to Guatemala City in order to catch a flight home the next day and get back into the groove at work. We appreciated her joining the team and being willing to “rough it” in Chuchuca with the students and to care for our patients with such compassion. Tuesday night we all made it back to Hotel Santo Tomas to enjoy dinner and devotional time together. Once again Alan had a thought provoking devotional time with discussion and a special announcement that Brittany Gorman had received a full ride scholarship to medical school at Indiana University of Illinois with a stipend to cover additional expenses. Brittany is an exceptional student and a beautiful person inside and out so we were thrilled to hear of this great blessing for her future as a medical doctor.

Tuesday was our last full day with Lisa and Kemmel as they had to head out to Guatemala City for a flight the next day to join a mission trip in Mexico with their sponsoring congregation. We said our goodbyes at devo that night and bright and early Wednesday morning Dr. Mike and Sheri K. who had just arrived from the US the night before were at the hotel to direct us and get us off to clinics. A smaller group headed out to San Jorge in the high desert region of Sacapulas, Guatemala while the other team bounced around on the road to Xepocol. Once again Dr. Brian and Sarah and Clint worked together to see ABC children and care for their needs. The students enjoyed time in Xepocol doing their Bible class activities again and making good use of the down time while the children waited their turn with the doctors. In San Jorge the team squeezed into their little church building with lots of diabetic patients waiting to see Dr. Mike for their next month's supply of metformin or glipizide. Julie was able to see a special friend in San Jorge, a little girl named Sarita who she bonded with years ago when the clinic was held at Sarita's house. They hadn't seen each other in several years so it was great to catch up and see that their bond as sisters in Christ was as strong as ever.

Since the clinic sites on Wednesday far from Chichi, the teams got back just enough time for showers and a before dinner and devotional. Our night was a rich time of sharing saw God working in our lives week. We talked about things that disturbed us about the poverty we also the things that warmed our us more about God's amazing love.

Antigua was on the menu for headed out for our day of tourism breakfast. Everyone hit the town and excitement to see what the offer, what size nachos were sold at how warm the swimming pool at After a fun day we met back last dinner and our final devotional a team. Wrapping up our time in with a devotional time to debrief and prepare to reenter the USA and all the stimulation we have at home was healing and helpful before we were off to bed and waking up at 3am to catch our 4am bus to the airport.

Thankfully we had good advice to leave with plenty of time to arrive at the airport early and avoid the worst of the traffic. Since our departure also coincided with the weekend before Holy Week the airport was a complete zoo with long lines and people everywhere. It took us over an hour to check in at the Delta desk and then we had other lines to wait in going through customs and security. Thankfully we all made it safely through and boarded our flight to Atlanta praising God for another wonderful week in Guatemala.



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Thursday and we just after with new energy market had to Mono Loco and the hotel really is. together for our time together as the mission field