

Health Talents International

Harding Spring Break Mobile Dental/Medical Team

March 5-12, 2022

Trip Participants: **Physician:** Stan Sizemore; **Dentist:** John Case; **PA-C:** Gary Hill; **Family Nurse Practitioner:** Greg Brooks; **PA Students:** Ellie Dean, Abby Dollens, P.J. Drolet, Megan Froiland, Ana Kate MiLeah Hayes, Ana Kate McGimsey; **MEPN Students (Masters Entry Program Nursing):** Ashley Edwards, Christina Mowry; **Caregivers:** Helen Hindman, Carolyn Nunnally; **Team Leader:** Rick Harper

Our first mobile dental/medical team of 2022 marked a milestone in our return to HTI normalcy. The ACU and Harding Spring Break teams in March of 2020 were the last of that year as we returned to the US to find campuses closed in response to Covid-19 and a world changed by the pandemic. We are exceedingly grateful for this baby step and the resumption of Spring Break teams with the Christian universities and students we hold so dear!

If you have flown much the past couple of years, you likely discovered a significant change in flight schedules and shortened connection times. Those changes meant that our March teams flew into Guatemala City mid-afternoon or late in the evening. For Harding, it meant a 10:35 PM scheduled arrival, turning into an 11:30 PM landing after delays and checking into our hotel rooms around 1 AM. Nevertheless, the team was up and ready for their 9 AM departure to Chichicastenango following a few hours of rest.

We arrived in Chichi and checked into Hotel Santo Tomas, introduced the team to Kemmel and Dr. Lisa Dunham over lunch and allowed them a couple of hours to explore the market and enjoy some ice cream at Sarita's. An orientation meeting was convened before worship service, then a short trek through town to worship with the local church of Christ at 6:30. Singing and praying in English, Quiche and Spanish always makes for a memorable time together, especially for our newcomers. Supper followed and our beds were calling...we answered.

The team gathered for breakfast at 7 and were joined by our Guatemala team and several gifted translators, a pattern followed through Wednesday. Our destination on Monday was Mactzul Sexto, a forty-five minute ride down the valley and across the mountains, eventually stopping at 7,300 feet above sea level.

Many were surprised by the size of the church building, easily holding more than one thousand, beautifully decorated and welcomed by the phrase, "Cristo Te Ama" inscribed on the lectern. **Jesus Loves You!**

The bulk of our team would be here the next three days to provide semi-annual dental and medical checkups for children in our ABC Program, a child sponsorship ministry. We delivered medical care to 122 children and dental care to seventy during these three days.

<http://www.healthtalents.org/abcprogram.php>



Our Spring Break teams help Health Talents meet one of its core objectives by providing US Christians the opportunity to use their talents through medical evangelism. The university students, along with the licensed providers joining them, work alongside our full-time team of national providers and US missionaries. Our aim is to nurture a heart for missions among these students and inspire those who might become future missionaries.



The process for medical checkups included each PA or MEPN student taking a child's vitals, administering an eye exam and conducting a preliminary ear exam before sitting down with one of our licensed providers for a thorough medical exam. The students are able to practice their diagnostic skills under the supervision of these providers and apply their classroom knowledge to actual patients. The value of this experience is difficult to quantify yet can be seen in the bright and sometimes misty eyes of the university students. Their comments in group discussions on the rides back to the hotel, over lunch or

supper, reveal a change in both heart and medical knowledge.

We are shaping their future through these trips, and they are shaping the lives of the children in our ABC Program by their presence and tender care.



Aura, Heidy, Juan, Ruby and Yoselin were our translators, and their value cannot be overstated. Four of the five were trilingual, speaking English, Quiche and Spanish. It remains true that many of the mothers and young children only speak Quiche, meaning gifted Spanish speaking PA students such as Ana Kate, are compromised in their ability to speak with our patients.



On the occasions our team was split up into smaller groups, we traveled to Clinica Caris, Xejoj or Saquilla, a central clinic in the valley beyond Chijtinimit. At those clinics, we cared for another 56 ABC children and more than fifty traditional, non-ABC patients.



A special shout out to Dr. John Case and his granddaughter, Helen Hindman. John was our lone US dentist this week, though he was joined by two of Guatemala dentists. This trio provided dental care to eighty-seven patients, with some of the care quite extensive.

Gary Hill, the clinical director for Harding's PA Program and pioneer of our relationship, is retiring at the end of this school year. Gary left his mark on our ministry and a permanent mark at Clinica Ezell. The cross embedded in our parking pad at Clinica Caris contains engraved bricks honoring Gary, Mary Madill and Nicole Mount. Mary and Nicole, now part of the PA faculty, were mission interns while in Harding's PA Program. Ellen, Megan and PJ are shown pointing to the bricks honoring these three. We wish Gary much success in his retirement and hope he returns in the future.



Harding Mobile Team 2022



The Harding team passed the all important Covid test, testing negative, and safely returned to the US on March 12...praise the Lord!