

Health Talents International

March Eye/Ortho Surgery & ACU spring break

March 10-17 Montellano, Guatemala

Trip Participants: Orthopedic Surgeon: Jason Brashear; Ophthalmologist: Lee Coleman; Optometrist: Mike Brown; Nurse Practitioner: Susan Smith; Anesthesiologist: Ken Smithson; Lab Tech/Circulator: Louise Clites; Paramedic: David Farrow; Med student: Tom Mendel; RN: Connie Campbell, Terri Aldriedge; Care Givers: Amy, Madeline, Walker and Claire Coleman, Sandy and David Brown; Sterilization: Jeremy Glass; Chaplain: Mark Aldriedge; Translator: Raiza Vega-Candelario; ACU Students: Heather Kregel, Jake Hutto, Austin Anderson, Amara Childers, Alexander Clendening, Corbin Clifton, Kristin Goodwin, Sally Hays, Clinton Jones, William King, Zachary Kroeger, Sarah Pinson, Carly Rochelle, Luke Sorrell, Marissa Stewart, Drew Thomas, Katherine Wood, Bailey Terhune, Briana Burton, Ryan Threadgill; Team Leaders: Rick Harper, Julie Wheatley

What a crazy start we were off to with this team! Several of our team members made it to Guatemala on Saturday with no trouble at all meanwhile the ENTIRE ACU team was delayed because of weather and our anesthesiologist, Ken couldn't make it out of Nashville either. Thus we started out our clinic with 24 people less than expected. Rick was in Guatemala City and managed to work out flights for all of the stranded team members but they trickled in little by little. The first group of 8 arrived on Sunday around noon and made their way to Montellano. The second group arrived Sunday evening and spent the night in Guatemala City before coming to Montellano the following day.

Despite the crazy adventure the ACU group had driving all over the state of Texas trying to make it to airports for their flights, things went rather well once everyone made it to Clinica Ezell. On Saturday the group that made it to Ezell got quickly to work organizing the OR's and seeing patients for the following day. Mike had his vision checkers, drop givers, note takers, etc. In the OR Lee and Jason had help from several others to get things situated and ready for the following day. Susan and David were great about pitching in and helping make sure the OR was set up and ready for Jason's surgeries each day. The trip would not have been nearly so smooth without them. Having a circulator who knew Clinica Ezell was also a big help. Louise was a trooper and a hard working circulator in the ortho surgery room!

Sunday morning the group headed across the street to worship with the Montellano Church of Christ. The worship was lovely and Carlos was kind enough to lead the group in a few English songs. After worship lunch was served and the eye team headed to the OR. Amy did a wonderful job once again of setting up and having everything ready for surgery. She and Lee really are the dynamic eye duo but this year they added to that duo by bringing all three of their kids along with them. Madeline, Walker and Claire were all present and were immensely helpful all week long. Madeline and Walker helped in the OR, Madeline and Claire helped give drops and prepare patients for surgery, they looked after patients and pitched in wherever they could.

Since our anesthesiologist didn't make it to Guatemala on time our ortho surgeon Jason wasn't able to do any operations on Sunday. Thankfully Ken did make it to Montellano Sunday evening so that

operations could begin first thing Monday morning. This was our third year to have ortho surgery at Clinica Ezell. We were so excited to have more arthroscopy surgeries than ever before and more ortho surgery cases all together. In addition to the surgeries Raiza and Jason spent lots of time working together in clinic treating patients with injections and also referring patients to other facilities for more invasive surgical needs.

On Sunday afternoon the first group of 8 arrived and got plugged into clinic. They helped with the surgeries and the eye clinic. That night everyone was introduced to one another during devotional time. We were glad to have the first group of students with us and were anxiously awaiting the group coming down from Guatemala City the next morning.

Monday morning the hospital bustled to life and everyone headed to their assigned positions. Most of the ACU students headed out to mobile medical clinics with Dr. Walter and Dr. David. They visited Las Margaritas and Rio Bravo and each had busy days doing vitals and sitting with the doctors as they saw patients. The rest of the ACU group arrived mid morning with Rick as well. They quickly moved their things into their rooms and then headed to work in the hospital. Some of the students helped Mike with vision checks, others headed to eye surgery, ortho surgery and to the recovery room to work with Connie Campbell our ortho recovery queen.

The day went well in eye surgery. Lee and Amy worked together to train David and Tom to scrub, prepare the room between surgeries and assist Lee during surgery. Eventually Amy had them so well trained that she and her kids were able to head out to a mobile clinic to play with children and enjoy time with the patients at clinic. Most of the ACU students were able to learn about sterile technique and have the opportunity to scrub in and observe a surgery up close in either eye or ortho surgery. Jason and Lee were wonderful about teaching the students as they operated giving the medical school aspirants a good look at what they may one day be able to do themselves! Ken, our anesthesiologist was also a good teacher. He had a student assigned to him each day so he took time to teach and explain about the techniques he was using. The students were impressed with the amount of math involved in anesthesia! Having Ken on the team was a huge blessing. We were close to having to cancel the ortho portion of the week because we couldn't find an anesthesiologist. He signed up just in the nick of time and boy were we ever grateful!

Monday night the team had all finally arrived and decided to go around once more introducing each team member. After that, Mark shared a short devotional with the group and everyone was off to bed shortly thereafter.

Tuesday morning most of the team headed down to the hospital to watch as the patients from the previous day had their patches removed and their vision checked. It is always a marvelous and miraculous thing to watch as patients who came to clinic blind wake up the next morning with their sight restored. God is so good and so powerful to allow us to work in His name and accomplish such great deeds for His glory! After that everyone divided up and headed off to do their jobs. The day passed nicely once again with students helping in lots of different areas. That afternoon things wrapped up early in surgery so several people decided to take a walk through Montellano to see the swinging

bridge and buy some yummy sweet bread from the bakery. When they got back from their walk the students pitched in to help clean the mattresses from the hospital. Once a year all of the mattresses get pulled out of the hospital and get a good scrub down by one of the student groups. HTI is always grateful for the help of the students who are so willing and anxious to help in any way they can.

Wednesday was the last full day of clinic. The ortho surgery had slowed down by this point so there were just a couple of cases this day. Eye surgery was still going strong as well as eye clinic with Mike. This year optometry patients came in the morning to visit with Mike and his team. He was able to write prescriptions, help advise patients with glaucoma and refer other patients with retina problems to be seen by specialists. Having an optometrist along for an eye surgery week is a great help to both the surgeon and the patients.

At the end of the day the team came back from the dental clinic, mobile medicals, left the air conditioned operating rooms and the newly ventilated recovery room. Most of the group headed over to the cacao farm to see the beauty of the Guatemalan countryside and enjoy the sweet family that is always so gracious to allow our teams to wander around their property. That evening we had another wonderful devotional time by Mark and said our goodbyes to Rick as he was headed home the next morning. Having Rick on the eye trip was nice; he hadn't been with us in March for several years! Rick worked alongside Jeremy in sterilization making sure that things went smoothly for all the surgeries. The two of them did a wonderful job of cleaning up and getting things processed on time. Having an experienced crew in the sterilization room makes a world of difference on a trip. Jeremy was a veteran sterilization worker and with Rick's help they were sterilizing stars.

Thursday was a day for adventure. The majority of the ACU group headed to San Lucas Toliman to enjoy a nice trip to the lake. The ortho crew came up a little later in a pickup truck and a nice lunch was shared by all. After lunch the group had a little time to wander around town and shop. That afternoon they headed back to Clinca Ezell. Meanwhile the eye group and Jeremy from sterilization made their way to a hot spring near the village La Fortuna. They got rained on and had some issues with it being slippery but found the hot springs to be precisely that...HOT!

Once everyone was back at Clinica Ezell the group gathered together for dinner and followed that with our last devotional time together. The ACU group was headed directly to Guatemala City for the flight out on Friday morning so we said our goodbyes that evening and took our team picture as well.

Friday morning the ACU team headed out early to Guatemala City and the rest of the team had a relaxing breakfast before discharging the last patients and loading up to head to Antigua. The ACU group made it to the airport late but still in time to make their flight after sitting for a while in traffic due to an accident on the highway. The rest of the group made it to Antigua without any trouble and enjoyed a relaxing day in sunny Antigua. That evening the team gathered for dinner and fellowship. A day in Antigua is always a pleasant way to wind up a trip!

Saturday morning the group enjoyed the breakfast buffet at Hotel Antigua before jumping onto the bus and heading to Guatemala City for their flights. Many thanks to God for a wonderful week of surgery and many thanks to each team member for all their hard work!



