

Health Talents International

April 30-May 7, 2016

Oklahoma Christian Medical Mission

Trip Participants: Medical Doctors: Zann McMahan, Jeanie Tryggstad, Neil Roberts; Dentists: Owen Corwin, Debbie Corwin; Pharmacist: Dave Roberts; OC Professor/Team Leader: Eric Phelps; Translator: Matt Anderson, Jeny Soto, Manuel Guarcas, Mario Rosas; Students: Jan Bian, Danielle Collins, Meridith Corwin, Luke Fletcher, Nathan Giles, Landon Hester, Jackson Higginbottom, Sara Hufstedler, Ryan Jones, India Loyd, Jonathan Miller, Laura Wilson; HTI Team Leader: Julie Obregón

This trip started out in the wee hours of the morning with flight delays and bad weather all over the place. The bulk of our group was flying out of Oklahoma City and arrived in Houston after the flight to Guatemala had already departed. They were diverted to other cities throughout Central America and Texas and from there finally arrived in Guatemala late on Saturday between 8 and 11pm.

Unfortunately, several bags were left behind in Houston and Oklahoma City. The bags finally arrived a couple days after the team had been safely working in Chichi. Owen was especially thrilled to get his bag with his special gasses used for his dental work!

After spending the night in Guatemala City upon our late arrival we headed out for Chichi and had a smooth trip. Sunday afternoon was spent in the market and that night we enjoyed worshiping with the Chichi Church of Christ. Later that night we discussed plans for the following day and headed off to bed to get some rest.

The team was up bright and early and most everyone was off to Mactzul V to see children from our ABC program. We had a busy day with lots of sweet kids who visited both the doctors and the dentists. Each child also spent time with HTI staff member Cesar who updated their photos for their sponsors and gave them a lesson on tooth brushing technique complete with dye to show them when their teeth were truly clean. This community was a great way for the students to get their feet wet seeing patients and taking vital signs. Eric Phelps spent a great deal of time working with the students before they traveled to Guatemala. They were each able to take vital signs and do basic interviews in Spanish to get a patient's history.

each student practiced speaking of the patients who Spanish language. and enjoyed hearing to speak their native



The true bonus was that watched a video and in Ki'che so that they communicate with many never quite mastered the Many of the ladies giggled the "gringos" attempting tongue.

Debbie had one little boy who absolutely refused to sit in the dental chair. His mom tried to encourage and then she moved to bribing him with a 5Q bill and nothing would do the trick. But Debbie is an amazing pediatric dentist who wouldn't let this little guy off the hook. She started working on him and building his trust until little Jonathan...hours later (after playing soccer and watching videos on Debbie's

phone, after getting tickled and warming up to Debbie) finally agreed to let Debbie look at his teeth and give him a quick tooth brushing. Hopefully little Jonathan won't be so afraid next time he has to see the dentist thanks to Debbie!



The second group of doctors this day went to Clinica Caris to hold a referral clinic for patients they needed to do further exams on or who needed simple procedures. The patient volume was smaller but those who attended clinic at Caris still had an interesting day, although sad when they saw a patient going into liver failure without much hope for improvement. Despite sad cases like this it is encouraging to see what a difference prayer makes in the lives of these patients. Praying with them for their wellbeing and that of their family is often the right medicine.

Tuesday was our far away day. Most of the clinic sites were a good distance away so we hit the road quickly after breakfast. The group divided up between four sites, Las Cuevas, Saquilla and Patzite where the sites for the bulk of the team and Owen, Julie and Jackson headed to Clinica Caris with Dr. Aura Alvarez to see special patients for surgical procedures like wisdom teeth removal. Each group had a full day in the communities. Since we had the help of so many great MD's on this team it gave us the freedom to spend more quality time with the ABC children and their parents. There were some truly bright children in the bunch. Sister Jeny Soto, HTI's newly hired Scholarship Coordinator particularly enjoyed visiting with ABC students who aspire to continue their education at the high school or

university level. She gave them great tips to help them prepare themselves and motivate them to work toward these great goals of furthering their education and becoming professionals.

The group from Las Cuevas was the last to arrive at Hotel Santo Tomas at the end of the day, a little dusty and a lot hungry! Thankfully dinner was served shortly after they arrived and that was soon followed by our devotional time. Eric served as the chaplain for the week, asking the team to consider some though provoking question each day. The devotional time which hit home the hardest was when he started out asking everyone what we worry about. We went around the circle discussing our concerns about school, jobs, transportation, health, some of the students worried about upcoming exams or wondered if they would get into their favorite medical school. After we discussed this for a few moments Eric proceeded to ask what we thought our patients from that day worry about. That question turned our thoughts toward the worries of the poor, hard working day laborers, market vendors, bus drivers and shoe shiners we had been treating over the past few days. We thought that their worries were much more likely to be things like “how can I feed my children?” or “who can we afford medical care for my ailing family member?”. Eric brought us around to the point by reading us the verse from Matthew 6:25-34 “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?” We all have worries, no matter if we are from the USA or Guatemala and all those worries need to be turned over to our amazing Heavenly Father who cares for us like none other!

When Wednesday rolled around we were up early and ready to roll off to Chicua, Las Trampas and Xepol for another day full of sweet children’s faces and dying teeth. We once again split up into four groups with the fourth headed to Caris but this time Dr. Owen and Julie were accompanied by Meredith and Dr. Andrea Lux. Dr. Owen was a great asset to the team not only because he was able to treat some more complicated cases but because he helped our local dentists Aura and Andrea learn some great techniques for removing some of those more stubborn teeth. His help with their training is something that we certainly couldn’t put a price tag on!



What would a mission trip be without translators?! This team certainly owed a big debt to Matt, Manuel and Mario for helping translate for each of the doctors. Matt and Zann made a great team and joked that by the end of the week Matt was so familiar with the questions Zann asked each child that he could have done the check-ups without Zann’s help! That might be a bit of a stretch but Matt did a wonderful job and made Zann’s job much easier. Manuel and Jeanie worked together all week as well. Jeanie was so blessed by Manuel’s ability to translate direct from Ki’che to English and our patients were put at ease knowing that their situations were being completely understood despite the language barrier. Dr. Neal was paired up with Mario for the week. The two of them got along great and

Mario definitely kept Neal and many of the patients with smiles on their faces as he joked with each one and set a comfortable mood for the visit with the doctor. Sister Jeny was also a great help to Dave in the pharmacy. He enjoyed seeing each patient as they came through for their prescriptions, he is one who understands the value of a smile and a hand shake.

The week quickly passed by and before we knew it Thursday rolled around and we were off to clinics in Mactzul VII, Chuguexa and Clinica Caris. The Chuguexa clinic was a special one set up by Dr. Lisa, Dr. Sara and RN Sheri K. The ladies planned a pap smear clinic with the women of Chuguexa after providing those same ladies with education on women's health and common diseases. The ladies were motivated to start taking better care of their own health so that they could continue to care for their families and almost forty ladies showed up for their pap-smears! Since this was a more sensitive clinic only the senior level female students and underclassman India attended the clinic with our local doctors. India was invited to attend despite being a bit younger because she already knows that she would like to study gynecology.

As the day progressed Zann and Neil were making good progress seeing patients at Clinica Caris but Jeannie was swamped with patients over at Mactzul VII. Zann and Matt headed over to give Jeannie some help about half way through the day. Jeannie was grateful as there were close to 50 patients to be seen in Mactzul VII! The students were especially excited about their experience with Jeannie that day. Since she was so overloaded she had each of the students working with her interviewing the patients and taking their history prior to seeing Jeannie. The OC students gave Jeannie the synopsis of



how their patient was doing and Jeannie was quite impressed with how thorough and complete their histories were. They were such a great help and the whole process made everyone have a great day despite the long hours.

That night we shared in our final devo time for the medical doctors and Julie. The rest of the group would be going on to travel around Guatemala seeing the sites around Lake Atitlan and Antigua over the next few days. The sharing time was a perfect ending to a great week of serving together. The next morning we enjoyed breakfast before saying our goodbyes. Julie and the doctors headed to Antigua for a tourist day and dinner at the hotel before flying out the following day while the

students, Eric, Matt, Owen and Debbie had a real tour of Chichi guided by our very own Manuel Guarcas. God richly blessed each person on this trip and we pray that all the ABC children and patients we were able to see were also blessed by His grace.

Written By: Julie Obregón