

**HEALTH TALENTS INTERNATIONAL**  
**General/GYN Surgery Clinic**  
**October 2-9, 2010**

Trip Participants: General Surgeons: Benny Cleveland, Gyn Surgeons: Kris Citty, Bill Griffin and Ken Mitchell; Family Practice Physicians: Kent Brantly, Jorge Aguilera; Anesthesiologist: Byron Brown, Cindy Brown; CRNA's: Ken Beach; Student CRNA's: Elizabeth Cole, Ken Selerio Nurses: Glenn Berkey, Amber Brantly, Connie Campbell, Kathy Chestnut, Leslie Doke, Aviva Hufford, Jennifer Mitchell, Cheryl Winfield, Surgical Techs: Joe Calderon, Jenni Prevatt; Chaplain: Larry Griffith, Translators: Olga Brazzel, Cynthia Brazzel Allen, Geneveive Davila, Lucy Howard, Rosa Jenson; Sterilization Crew: Dustin Hufford; Compassionate Caregivers/Surgical Assts: Tami Beach, Brenda Griffith, Ali Brown, Jake Brown, Karen Morrison, Kay Reiboldt, Maklayla Samaras, Leea Sills, Matthew Skinner, Chris Torregosa, Anna Vue; HTI Board Member: Harriette Shivers; Team Leader: Rick Harper

Most of the team arrived in Guatemala on Saturday, but our California contingency flew into Guatemala City on Friday night and met us at the airport on Saturday morning. (They had a great night of rest and even found time to visit the Guatemala Zoo before heading to the airport.) It took a little longer than hoped for in customs as the documents we had were copies, not originals. Alex had to drive back to our Guatemala City office to collect the originals before they let us through with our supplies. Nevertheless, we got on the road at a good time and made it to Clinica Ezell around 5:00 PM. This allowed us plenty of time to unpack luggage, sort supplies and begin seeing patients for the next day of surgery.

On Saturday evening Rick led the group through orientation and our nursing staff, under the guidance of Leslie Doke began to make plans for the week. Since we were a bit short on nurses, we hired three Guatemala nurses to assist with the later shifts, while Leslie Doke and Connie Campbell committed to twelve hour shifts if necessary and staggered their schedule to handle peak patient loads in recovery. The entire week went amazingly smooth in recovery. Saturday night would be the last night we had running showers in the dormitory...

Sunday morning was nice and a bit relaxing even without the "wake-up" showers many were expecting. We had breakfast and headed across the street to the Montellano Church of Christ. After a period of worship the team headed back across the street to Clinica Ezell and prepared for their orientation with Dr. Walter.

We began surgery shortly after lunch and by 7:00 PM we had completed four GYN cases and five general surgery cases, off to a great start. Since we hold our surgery patients in a separate recovery area for the first hour they are out of the OR, having patients out between 6:00 and 7:00, with 6:00 an ideal, lends itself to a more peaceful evening for the night shift and enhanced care for our patients.

Larry Griffith, recently retired choral director for Lipscomb University, served as our trip chaplain throughout the week and following our devotional, many of us became familiar with the

term “bucket shower.” Our Guatemala housekeeping and maintenance team labored all week long trying to fix the water situation. In the meantime, they kept 50 gallon barrels of water full in the bathrooms and we were able to fill five gallon buckets and take showers. They were refreshing, cleansing and a reminder of how much we take for granted. Praise the Lord, we had water running to our autoclave and were able to sterilize instruments all week long without any interruptions. We only had one or two days when the sterilization sinks did not have running water, but our OR team kept going by pouring water over their just sanitized hands.

We were blessed this week to have Dr. Jorge Aguilera with us and he went out each day, beginning Monday, to work with Dr. Sierra or Dr. Lux at their mobile clinics. Jorge is an MD from Honduras, but has been working as a minister of the gospel in Raleigh, North Carolina for several years. In addition to working with our October team, Dr. Aguilera stayed an extra week to speak on I Timothy for a Men’s Leadership Evangelism Seminar. Monday was another productive and uneventful day with nine GYN cases and eight general cases for the day. Our two anesthesiologists, Drs. Byron and Cindy Brown could not stop complementing our surgeons. They were amazed by the speed and efficiency of Dr. Ken Mitchell, referred to Dr. Bill Griffin as an artist and could not get over all Dr. Benny Cleveland could accomplish with suture. A blessing indeed!

It is worth mentioning that Dr. Cleveland’s wife, Becky, was on our hearts and in our prayers this week. Becky suffered several mini-strokes a few weeks earlier and has lost her short-term memory, yet Dr. Cleveland was committed to coming to Guatemala to serve. Dr. Cleveland is an example to all...he truly strives to serve as Jesus did.

Our Rancho Cordova contingency once again provided us with several translators, nurses and the ever “glowing” Karen Morrison. They brought down hundreds of Spanish children’s books and spent the week comforting and reading to our patients. Anna Vue, a first timer, won the prize “frequent reader” prize for the week. The children from Rancho Cordova raised a mile of pennies to purchase all of these books.



Tuesday was a light day for GYN surgery as we had two patients fail to come in for the preop consultation, only five cases for the day and another eight general cases. Since the GYN team finished early, we sent several out to the chocolate farm for a tour.

Harriette Shivers, our current board Vice President was busy interviewing scholarship students and before the week was out she had interviewed more than thirty current or potential scholars. Harriette would leave us on Wednesday and travel to Chichicastenango with Kay Reiboldt and chauffeur/translator Dany Rodriguez. They safely rejoined us on Friday in Antigua.

Wednesday started out on an urgent note as Amber Brantly, an expectant team member, experienced elevated blood pressure and protein levels. We determined to send her home early, along with her husband, Dr. Kent Brantly who was doing an internship with HTI and Dr. Kris City, one of our OBGYN's. We finished the eight GYN cases for the day by 2:00 and they traveled to Guatemala City that afternoon and made it safely back to the US on Thursday morning. Our general surgery team rocked along with another nine cases and Dr. Cleveland was on a roll. With three OR rooms available, he went from room to room for each case, no down time in between and we finished the afternoon in short order. Throughout the week, each of our surgeons were assisted by our "trained on the spot" nurse circulating team of Karen Morrison, Makayla Samaras, Leea Sills and Chris Torregosa.

We only had four cases on Thursday and approximately twenty in the group were able to go to San Lucas Toliman for a nice, peaceful lunch. We finished the week with sixty cases and later in the evening had our traditional devotional by the fountain. This is always a wonderful time of sharing, fellowship and a few tears.

Friday morning the group said goodbye to the patients and staff and headed for Antigua, another successful trip in the books.

