

**HTI September Surgical Trip**  
**Clinica Ezell**  
**September 1-8, 2012**

Trip Participants: **Surgeons:** Audrey Barry, MD, Lisa Buckingham, MD, Bob Elder, MD, Gerald Jerkins, MD, Jerry Swale, MD, Mike Trimble, MD; **Anesthesia:** Jason Buehler, MD, Ken Beach, CRNA, Rachel Turner, CRNA, Katie Baylet, SRNA; **Dentist:** Sean Prine; **PA:** Jonathon Clemens; **RN's:** Glenn Berkey, Neva Berkey RN, Barbara Burg, Taylor Crampton, Kristen Foshee, Cari Fowler, Courtney Goddard, Michelle Heasley, Katherine McCool, Lauren Moore, Allyson O'Hara, Linda Osborne, Janelle Sladek, Patsy Sikes, Elaine Stockstill, Sam Strange, Misty Vance, Julie Williams; **CNA:** Terri Clemens; **EMT:** Jerry Ervin; **Medical Student:** Haley Landwher; **Nursing Student:** Jenn Martin; **OR Circulators:** Derrick Sikes, Evan Wooldridge; **Translators:** Kathy Buckingham, Nicky Hacket, Laurel McCurdy, Dianne Martin; **Sterilization:** Alfred Anderson, Guy Martin, Kelly Milam, Cary Sills; **Compassionate Caregivers:** Daniel Clemens, Stephanie Dixon, Nick Foshee, Beverly Milam, Kelsi O'Hara, Sonny O'Hara, Rita Sills; John Vance; **Trip Chaplain:** Mark Smith; **Team Leader:** Rick Harper

One, thirteen, eighteen, thirty-six, fifty-four and eighty-two...descriptive numbers for the September 2012 surgical team. We came from thirteen states, with eighteen first-timers and thirty-six veterans to form a team of fifty-four. Before the week was out, we cared for eighty-two surgical patients...one at a time. God enabled, Spirit led, Christ inspired and with the unfailing help of our Guatemala ministry team. . Read on for the stories of Carmen and Francisco!

As you can tell, this was a veteran team and while many were veterans from different trips, the core members of this team view September as "their" trip and team members as a second family. Our Missouri, Nashville and Arizona team members flew into Guatemala on Friday night due to flight schedules while the rest of the team arrived via Delta and United airlines by noon. After a short delay to one piece of delayed luggage that eventually arrived on Tuesday and one bag requiring a duty waiver, we were off to Montellano. Despite repeated traffic delays, we still made it to Clinica Ezell by 4:30 PM. *Luggage was unpacked, supplies and medicine inventoried, patients examined, dinner served, stories told and sleep embraced.*

Sunday morning began with breakfast at 8:00 and a couple of hours to visit with new friends, catch up with old friends and settle in for a busy week. Following worship with the Montellano church family we held a brief orientation and surgery began.

As is often the case, we were a bit ambitious in scheduling patients for our first day and we ended up moving three patients to Monday's schedule. Nevertheless, we completed surgery on fourteen patients. The most challenging case of the day was a skin graft patient and the Padgett Dermatone worked like a charm in harvesting the graft. Julio Ixot would be with us for the entire week as we wanted to insure he did not apply any pressure to the graft on the bottom of his foot and we wanted to make the first dressing change.

Since we had moved three patients to Monday's schedule, we began the day with a daunting list...twenty-one patients. (Seven GYN cases, ten general cases and four urology cases.) Despite a large case load, one OR room was done in time for supper when it began at 7:00 PM and the other rooms finished up a bit later. Fatigue was evident and the excitement of being in Guatemala to serve began to wear off. Mark Smith served as our trip chaplain throughout the week and on his first night, provided some insight into Jesus and what it meant to be called a rabbi and the process for achieving such recognition even before he began identifying himself as the Son of God. Mark's easy style and biblical knowledge blessed us all week long.

After two long days, we were surprised by a light load on Tuesday, only thirteen patients. We had a couple of patients who did not show up for consults, one whose hematocrit was too low and another who complained of radiating pain down her arm. Better to be cautious!

Dr. Jerry Swale arrived Tuesday afternoon for some special cases requiring his ophthalmic skills in strabismus surgery. Jerry began coming for these cases two years ago and in year one completed two surgeries, year two three and this year we had seven cases lined up. Carmen would be his first surgical case on Wednesday.



As you can see in the photo below, Carmen's surgery was a success and she is looking forward to going to school. Her esotropia was so severe, and the teasing and ridicule so intense, she had been unable to attend school.



Twenty-three cases on Wednesday and one more special story!

Francisco Perez was an eighteen month old baby when he was first seen by one of our dentists, Dr. Heidi Alonzo, at a mobile clinic in August. Francisco had a large mass growing under his tongue that was making it difficult to swallow. Our ENT's saw Francisco on their last day at Clinica Ezell in August, but with the team preparing to leave, the diagnosis uncertain, surgery risky and no one remaining to provide follow up care, Francisco was deferred until September. By now, the mass had grown, it was obstructing his airway and a minor cold or sinus congestion would have led to Francisco's death. After confirming it was a cyst and not a solid mass with our ultrasound, surgery was successfully performed and Francisco is doing great. He didn't know what to do with his tongue for a while as he had grown accustomed to it being pressed against his palate, but within a few hours he was eating up a storm.

Thursday is primarily lump & bump day when it comes to surgery and we finished all but one case by noon. One of our eye patients arrived that morning...after eating breakfast and disregarding instructions to fast. Most of our team took advantage of a slower day and traveled to San Lucas Toliman to see Lake Atitlan and enjoy the view and a meal. The last group to return from San Lucas Toliman battled some bad weather, but returned safely and promptly performed surgery number eighty-two for the week.

The September surgical team 2012 was a tremendous success and our final day in Guatemala was spent in Antigua, enjoying its beauty. One team member from 2011, Jack Tipton, hearing of our work during the week sent the following text. ***“The closer you get to the equator, the easier it is to see miracles.”*** If you ask young Carmen or the mother of little Francisco, they will agree.

