

Health Talents International

September 6-13, 2014

General/GYN/Urology Surgery Trip

Trip Participants: General Surgeon: Mike Trimble; Pediatric Urologist: Gerald Jerkins; GYNs: Lisa Buckingham, Bob Elder, Fred Masset, Megan Thompson; Anesthesia: Stephen Jones, Dave Ratliff, Rachel Turner, Jeremy Taylor; Dental Hygienist: Linda King, Leigh Walker; Dental Student: Leea Sills; OR Staff: Lesa Dale, Courtney Hibbs, Rashari Mitchell, Leslie Smith, Gary Tabor, Misty Vance, Julie Williams; Recovery RN's: Alice Bush, Cari Fowler, Nolyn Hartley, Ruby Lucroy, Lauren Moore, Linda Osborne, Teresa Parkman, Donna Pollat, Amber Schmit, Jean Sellers, Janelle Sladek, Amy Smith; Caregiver: Yolanda Jones, Abby Schmit, Kobbie Vance; Translator: Kristi Burns, Kathy Buckingham, Dianne Martin, Brian Nunez, Adolfo Obregon, Hannah Pollat, Gloria Salinas, Rita Sills; Sterilization: Alfred Anderson, John Buckingham, Cary Sills; Trip chaplain: Eric Gentry; HTI Historian: Marie Agee; Trip Leader: Julie Wheatley

The whole September General/Gyn/Urology surgical team deserves a big pat on that back after the record breaking week in Guatemala this past September 6-13. A total of 86 surgeries were performed over four and a half days. Everything worked like a well-oiled machine from the moment we arrived in Guatemala to the moment we made our way back to the airport. There were no problems at customs upon arrival so the team made it to Montellano in good time and started seeing patients for surgery on Sunday while others inventoried and stocked supplies in the hospital.

Saturday night after dinner the surgeons wrapped up clinic as orientation time was beginning. Orientation went quickly and everyone was off to bed for a good night's rest before a busy day on Sunday. After church and a med/surg orientation meeting with head MD, Dr. Walter Sierra and RN, Rosario Poncio the team enjoyed lunch and headed down to the hospital to start surgeries. The nursing staff met with Rosario and Laruen Moore the USA team designated head RN to get the run down on how things work at Ezell. Everyone was on board and ready to work when the first patients started coming out of the OR.

With so many veteran HTI trip participants, veterans to surgical missions and plenty of translators we were well prepared for the busy week ahead of us. The OR teams hit the road running on Sunday and kept things flowing nicely all week long. There were a couple of long days but all surgeries were completed in time for the OR teams to enjoy dinner and devotional time each evening. The teams were also up bright and early with patients back in the OR each morning before 8am or right at 8am. This team made the most of every minute of the day as they compassionately cared for our patients. The surgeons worked well together sharing rooms between the different specialties.

Each day started out with one GYN room, one Urology room and one General room. As the day progressed the surgeons rotated through the available rooms assisting one another when needed and sharing OR time and teams to provide needed treatments to so many thankful patients. The GYN surgeons were able to care for women with severe prolapse, ovarian cysts and an array of other complications. The general team helped patients with numerous hernias and cysts while the urology team tackled some big cases helping patients with severe kidney blockages.



The anesthesia team was also on the ball. The CRNA's covered their rooms while Dr. Stephen Jones rotated through the rooms and pre-op prep area screening patients and helping where needed. The anesthesia providers worked hard to provide excellent care, calm nervous patients and to not miss a beat in the OR as there were many patients scheduled for each day. One special person was missing from the team however. Dr. Al Jones, multiple trip HTI veteran and traveler throughout the world in missions among the churches of Christ was unable to join the trip after having signed up several months in advance. His health prevented him from joining the trip in body but he was with us in spirit as the entire team prayed for him and sent much love his way. We hope that Dr. Jones can join a trip in the near future after a complete recovery, *"primero Dios"*.

Back in the recovery ward the RN's stayed busy recovering patients. Thankfully there were no complications post operatively so the RN's had plenty of time to provide the loving tender care Clinica Ezell is widely known for providing. Since Dr. Gerald Jerkins was on the team there were quite a few children on the schedule. The kids were delightful to play with and love on as they spent their time at the hospital. Those little smiles and bashful glances from the Guatemalan children steal the hearts of so many of our team members.



Special appreciation goes out to the night shift RN's who stayed up all night each night watching over and caring for the patients. Donna, Nolyn, Cari, Janelle and Jean were also helped by caregivers and translators Hannah, Kobee, Kristi and others who didn't stay all night but hung around until things had simmered down and most patients were soundly asleep. Each member of a mission team like this is so vital and helpful as we work together to keep things running smoothly.

Our caregivers are some of the key people who compassionately look after patients and spread Jesus love among them. Rita Sills is our veteran caregiver and translator who did a wonderful job of both helping other caregivers plug in and know what to do while also serving and helping in every way you can imagine. Rita and her husband Cary live in Antigua and bless HTI with their help on several trips each year. Their experience working in recovery and sterilization have become a great blessing to HTI and to each of our patients blessed by their service.

Everyone who does surgery knows the importance of a knowledgeable and hardworking sterilization crew. Alfred, an HTI board member and longtime veteran jack of all trades lead the sterilization crew for the week. He helped train John Buckingham who was down with his daughter Dr. Lisa and wife Cathy for the first time. John jumped right in and helped keep things clean and flowing smoothly through sterilization. He also had a special moment when he was able to step into the operating room and for the first time watch his daughter, Dr. Lisa as she operated. It was a special father daughter moment on the trip which meant so much to this sweet family.

Our trip chaplain Eric did a great job each evening at devotional time bringing our thoughts around to the higher purpose of the week over and above the medical care being provided. He preached from Luke 4:18 (taken from Isaiah 61:1) and encouraged our hearts as we worked to fulfill those words. We were the anointed, chosen by God to be His hands and feet in Guatemala that week, chosen to proclaim freedom from the prison of sickness and to preach His good news! What a beautiful passage to have upon our hearts as we worked throughout the week. We were grateful for Eric and his leadership and service.

What would a mission team be without the translators?! Translators play such an important role in facilitating communication but also in helping sooth nerves and concerns held by patients. This month we were blessed with quite a few translators who worked long hours. Brian, Adolfo and Gloria helped in the OR while Dianne, Kristie and Rita camped out in the recovery ward. Cathy floated around helping between pre-op with anesthesia providers as well as in clinic with surgeons. Hannah helped in the evenings in the recovery ward. Gloria also pitched in working with Linda King as she used her dental hygiene skills in the dental clinic. The smoothness of the week was largely due to the efforts of these translators always making themselves available.

HTI's resident historian, Marie Agee, was on campus for the week. Marie was able to share with the team one evening about some of the HTI history. Her book "Mud On Your Own Boots" about the history of HTI was published in 2013. This team was lucky to have Marie along to share some of the stories that made HTI the organization it is today. The Clinica Ezell staff was also overjoyed to see Marie again and took full advantage of her presence as they spent time working and enjoying meals with their dear friend.



A “first” happened at Clinica Ezell this week! For the very first time a team member was proposed to and got engaged while on a trip to Ezell! Team leader Julie was proposed to on Sunday morning in the wee hours of the morning by her fiancé Adolfo. He and his mother Gloria joined the team to help translate and to see Julie at work in Guatemala. Little did she know that Adolfo had a little something extra up his sleeve! It was a big surprise to the team when they announced their engagement on Sunday morning at breakfast!

After all the excitement wound down and the last patients were discharged on Friday morning the team loaded onto the bus and headed out for Antigua. A relaxing and fun day was spent in the somewhat cloudy drizzly weather of Antigua before dinner at Hotel Antigua that evening. A couple different departure times were scheduled for Saturday morning but by noon all team members were through security and headed to their flights home. We had yet another safe and wonderful week in the service of our Lord Jesus Christ, may his name be glorified!

