

Health Talents International

March 12-19, 2016

Eye and Ortho Surgery

Trip Participants: Orthopedic surgeons: David Gilliam, Collin Bills; DDS: David Gregory; Ophthalmologists: Lee Coleman, Anne Henzel and John Shipp; Anesthesiologist: David Crasto; Physical Therapist: Christina Frohlich; Dental Hygienist: Jasmine Gregory, Lisa Sarrett; Eye Surgery Assistants: Amy Coleman and Jennifer Shipp; RN's: Connie Campbell, Debbie DiFranco, Rachel DeLozier, Jessica Lovelace, Destinee Martinez and Terri Aldriedge; Caregivers: Claire Coleman, Madeleine Coleman, Walker Coleman, William Crasto, Cate Rivers Shipp, Michael Sykes; Translators: Rita Sills; Sterilization: Cary Sills; ACU Students: Cody Bly, Whitney Brantley, Kristen Brehm, Evan Bridges, Aaron Burch, Rachael Carstens, Tanner Gregory, Tim Kang, Makenzie Kerns, Michaela Laird, Isabel Laiseca-Ruiz, Cameron Ludwig, Kathryn Mitchell, Shelby Pellaran, Lauren Powell, Michael Ramirez, Andriana Saenz, Andrea Saenz, Stephanie Sariles, John Swartout, Sussan Talmas, Elena Taylor, Julia Taylor, Selvin Villeda, Emily Wilson, Jeffrey Wooliscroft ; HTI Intern: Rowdy Sarrett; HTI Team Leader: Rick Harper

Every few years we have multiple university Spring break teams whose schedules fall on the same week and this year, it was ACU and Lipscomb. Lipscomb students spent the week in the highlands and ACU students joined our surgical team. Joining a mission team during Spring break requires more than a commitment to serve, it requires an extra level of financial commitment. The basic principles of supply and demand kick in and drive airfare prices through the roof with some tickets running as much as \$1,800. Yet these students remain undaunted in their fundraising efforts and call on their family, church family and friends to help them spend a week serving others and glorifying God.

A few on this team flew into Guatemala City on Friday night and the others on four different flights and three different airlines on Saturday...sans one bag of luggage. We left the airport for the drive to Clinica Ezell and made great time, arriving before 5:00 PM. Our Guatemala ministry team was ready for a small invasion of patients and servants, and we promptly unpacked supplies and began seeing patients. Three hours later, all patients had been seen, fajitas and fresh guacamole consumed and our welcome orientation complete. Time for bed!

While those in the US were waking up to Daylight Savings Time changes, we were waking up to the sounds of roosters, birds chirping and the patting of corn tortillas. Following a breakfast of eggs, beans and the aforementioned tortillas, Dr. Collin Bills held a class on sterile technique for the students who wished to observe or participate in the operating room. Seven cases were scheduled for the day, but that would have to wait. Worship with the Montellano church family was next on our agenda, complete with a stirring song service led by Josue, a lesson by Dr. Nehemias and communion thoughts by Carlos. Refreshed, renewed and ready for our surgical orientation and our seven patients, we made our way across the road to Clinica Ezell's dining room.

Our student leaders, Tanner Gregory and Selvin Villeda did a masterful job of coordinating the students' schedule, aligning their interest with the provider skills represented on our team. Dr. David Gregory, a dentist; hygienists Jasmine Gregory and Lisa Sarrett taught not only many of the students, but provided additional training for our Guatemala dental team. Dr. Collin Bills and Dr. David Gilliam, our orthopedic surgeons for the week, had no surgery scheduled for the day, but a long list of patients to see and schedule over the next few days. They worked in consult with Dr. Christina Frohlich, a physical therapist, who was able to provide PT care when surgery was not needed, or not an option. All three were shadowed by interested students.

And lastly, our eye surgeons, Dr. Lee Coleman, Dr. Anne Henzel and Dr. John Shipp had a bevy of students, enthralled, excited and enthused over their opportunity to observe them delicately working with a surgical microscope to remove cataracts and insert lens implants that will restore sight and hope. The students learned how a patient's vision was evaluated with the aid of a slit lamp, how an A-scan aids in the diagnosis of the best lens implant and the process for prepping the patient for surgery with drops and an ultimate anesthesia block. Our patients were not the only ones for whom, "the light came on." In many cases a new career path was laid out for these students. Such was the case for Jessica Lovelace, an ACU student on 2015 trip who came down as a nursing major, actually graduated with her BSN in May of 2015, but her time at Clinica Ezell convinced her to return to school this year and follow her dream of becoming a physician. As soon as she completes the prerequisites for entrance to medical school, she'll begin applying for admission. Dream defined, dream pursued...and others dreaming with her.

Monday was our first full day of surgery with seventeen eye and six ortho cases scheduled, but within a couple of hours it was clear that we'd need to move some ortho cases to Tuesday. The Arthrex rep arrived that morning with the instrument sets we needed for ACL repairs, the second year in a row that we were able to provide this type of surgical care. The ortho room began with a ganglion cyst before tackling the ACL repair, and even then had a delay when it was discovered that the instrument sets, already sterilized when brought down by the rep. had a puncture in the wrap and were in fact, not sterile. We went to plan B and moved the knee case to the afternoon.

Our equipment for the ACL repair had been tested out on Sunday afternoon, light source, cameras, scopes and monitors and all were working fine. However, the light source began overheating and shutting down, so a spare was quickly put in place and the room filled with student observers intrigued by the use of the surgical scope and mapping out of a strategy. Once the knee was opened and a tendon harvested, measured and predrilled, the implant screws were readied and the repaired tendon was affixed with the implants. .

Eleven hours after surgeries began, our three mobile teams had safely returned and twenty-one surgeries successfully completed. Supper and a devotional thought by Dr. David Gregory were still to come.



Excitement still reigned when Tuesday morning arrived, three mobile medical and one mobile dental team were on the road by 8:15 and two eye patients were prepped with drops. Our eye team was hitting stride and twenty patients were scheduled and completed by the end of the day. OR three, our ortho room, complete five surgeries that day, one which was an arthroscopic shoulder repair and two other repairs requiring the surgical saw. Thanks again to Luiz, our Arthrex rep for spending the day with us and providing the necessary tools and instruments. When asked how the week went upon their return to the US, the team was encouraged to reply, “the blind see, the lame walk and the Good News was preached to the poor, it was a pretty good week.”

Wednesday would prove to be a bit lighter in OR three, with only three cases scheduled, yet our eye team was good for another twenty. One special case involved a four year old boy whose eye was damaged by a piece of metal penetrating the retina and triggering the body to create a trauma cataract. We were able to remove the cataract, and he will have minor improvement in his vision, but will need to be seen by a retina specialist. It isn't every trip that our eye team has the services of an anesthesiologist and fortunately, Dr. David Crasto was on this trip with his son, William. We can't expect a child to sit still for a couple of hours of surgery with the aid of a local anesthesia block and Dr. Crasto, who was available due to the light day in OR three, was essential.

An unexpected blessing occurred in the midst of sadness as Dr. David Gilliam received news that his father's health was failing and would likely be placed in hospice care. With ortho surgeries nearing completion, we were able to change Dr. Gilliam's ticket and send him to Guatemala City that afternoon for a redeye flight to Houston and an early morning flight into Little Rock on Thursday morning. David was able to speak to the nurse upon landing in Little Rock and his fathers' prognosis had changed, and though in failing health, hospice care was not necessary. And most importantly, David was there to be with his father and mother!

Seventeen was the magic number on Thursday and by 1:00 PM, the eye team had completed all surgeries. Practice makes perfect and after three full days of eye surgery, our surgeons, two lovely assistants, (Amy and Jennifer, the wives of two of our surgeons) and students were in perfect rhythm and felt they could do twenty-five surgeries in a day. Alas, the week was winding down and forays into Montellano, soccer games and relaxing were on the schedule Thursday afternoon. The mobile medical team traveling to Xejeyup was treated to a trek into the forest for a viewing of a local waterfall.



Though someone deserving of special recognition will be missed, Terri Aldridge, ACU's faculty leader and Director of the Body and Soul ministry merits a bit of praise. She, along with Tanner and Selvin, recruited seven student Spanish translators for the week and we'd have never completed ninety-three surgeries, twelve ortho and eighty-one eye, during the week. Their ability to translate for our physicians, nurses and patients enhanced our care and expanded our ability to serve. (The student translators are identified with underlining in our name listing at the top of this report.)



We concluded our time at Clinica Ezell with a group photo, then it was on to Antigua for a day of exploration, relaxation and transition. It is our prayer, that we were also transformed more into the likeness of our savior, Jesus Crist.