

## **Health Talents International**

**March 8-15, 2014**

### **Eye and Ortho Surgery**

Trip Participants: Ortho surgeon: David Gilliam, Collin Bills; MD: Doug Hodde; DDS: Mark Tate, John Smith; Ophthalmologist: Lee Coleman, Nathan Stevens; NP: CJ Wilson; Anesthesiologist: Kendle Yates; Surgical Tech: Richard Yates; Eye surgery assistant: Amy Coleman; RN's: Connie Campbell, Ashlee Gothard, Stephanie Murdaugh, Amy Archer; Caregivers: Vanessa Gilliam, Madeline Coleman, Walker Coleman, Claire Coleman, Mindy Yates, Rita Sills; Sterilization: Cary Sills; Students: Breanna Barrow, Chipper Bridges, Travis Chura, Dru Colins, Abigail Dodson, Gabe Espinoza, Austin Felts, Brittany Gilmore, Landry Gwin, Jared Hargrove, David Herriman, Alice Hodde, Jennifer Hulett, Destinee Martinez, Colton McCoy, Mat Molina, Angela Salvatore, David Sandersion, Alyssa Shaffner, Sam Shawn, Ashli Simpkins, Kenya Steptoe, Andrew Tate, Ana Arango, Arodi Leon, Georgia Smith, Jacob Woods, Brandi Prado; HTI Intern: Andrew Dickerson; HTI Team Leader: Julie Wheatley

Spring break had finally arrived and it was time for the Abilene Christian University students to join HTI's eye and ortho surgery week. Thankfully everyone arrived with all their luggage and the team was loaded onto the bus and at Clinica Ezell in time to unload all the supplies from suitcases before dinner. After dinner the ACU students got to work inventorying everything we had brought down while the surgeons headed to the clinic to see patients. The night flew by and before we knew it Sunday had arrived and we were at church in Montellano.

Once church was wrapped up the surgeons gave a training session for the students who would be shadowing and assisting in the OR area. They pointed out the importance of maintaining a sterile field and how to properly scrub in. Shortly after lunch on Sunday the surgery teams got things rolling back in the OR's. The day went smoothly for the surgery teams. Carry Sills, a familiar face around Clinca Ezell these days, handled the sterilization needs for the week. He was mostly a one man show but none the less was able to have everything ready and waiting for each surgical case. One of the interesting things about sterilization for Ortho cases is the fact that many of the surgical instruments are the same as what you may find in your tool shed. For one case in particular this week the Ortho crew had Carry sterilizing allen wrenches because a metal plate in a patient's leg needed metric allen wrenches instead of the English ones already in the OR. It is always impressive and surprising to see all the ortho cases that come to Ezell for treatment.

Since several of our team members were mobile medical workers and their trips would start until the following day we got a group of them to go to the cacao farm for the afternoon. They had a great trip and were fascinated by the massive ceiba tree as all who happen upon it are. The family was so receptive and warm to welcome the team again. The family had a church service happening at their home in the afternoon so the team headed back to Ezell after spending a couple hours enjoying some of Guatemala's natural beauty.



Trips with college students are often different than our regular teams since we do not have a designated chaplain but have the student leaders in charge of asking team members to share with the group each night. This week we were blessed to hear from Dru, CJ, Collin, and Dr. Tate. Dru started off the week encouraging the team members to strive to be Christ to those we would come in contact with no matter if there were language barriers or not. He encouraged his fellow ACU students to get out of their comfort zones and get to know the patients and staff around Ezell. It was a great note to start out on and set a high standard for the students to strive toward throughout the week.

The team was up to the challenge Dru had given. Those who had down time between cases or after mobile medical clinics came to the recovery ward to spend time with the patients. The most touching thing that happened throughout the week was the washing of feet as the passage where Jesus washes his disciples' feet from John 13 was read over them. The patients were touched as this beautiful act of service was preformed along with the reminder that Christ is the example by which we live. It was certainly beautiful to see the team members investing in this way as they loved the patients not only in word, but in deed.

Tuesday got off to a smooth start with people going in all directions. Part of the team headed out to mobile medical clinics while others hit to OR and recovery room areas. Dr. Lee and Dr. Nathan in the eye room were well taken care of as Amy Coleman, Lee's wife an mission trip eye assistant had plenty of students rotating through to learn about scrubbing and assisting during surgery. The Coleman kids Madeline, Walker and Claire are now veterans to eye surgery teams and were so helpful in keeping things running smoothly. Walker stepped in to help Dr. Nathan in his OR while Madeline and Claire managed the pre op area for eye patients. They made sure all drops were given and trained other volunteers on the pre-op process for eye patients.



Drs. Mark and John rotated back and forth between going out to mobile dental clinics with Dr. Heidi and staying at Clinica Ezell to work with Dr. Silvia. They were great teachers to those who were able to spend a day learning from their experience. Dr. Hodde spent time with Dr. Walter and Dr. Nehemias at their different clinics where he used his Spanish skills to treat patients and help students understand the diagnoses he was making as he went along. It is always such a blessing to have a team so full of health care professionals when student groups are down, it gives the students a rich experience as they learn and watch new things and are inspired by what they see.

For the first time this year we had a full three shifts of RN's to work in our recovery area with our ortho patients. How wonderful it was to have such a great RN team. Connie, Stephany and Amy were our golden girls back in Recovery. Stephany was selfless and sweet as she offered to take the night shift for the week. We didn't get to see as much of her as we would have liked but

she was loved by all the patients who she spent the nights caring for. Thankfully on Wed and Thurs nights all patients had been discharged from that day of surgery and Stephany was able to join the team for devo and a good nights sleep. Amy and Connie managed the recovery during the day time hours. They were awesome and so willing to encourage the young nursing students from ACU. As our ortho clinic increases in size each year we will continue to need great nurses like these three ladies to help recover our patients.

On Wednesday the eye surgery team had a record breaking schedule with a total of 19 patients. The eye teams worked quickly and smoothly in both OR's and the surgeries were completed by 6pm setting our record at Ezell for the most number of eye surgeries in one day! Below you see the picture of all the helping hands that worked together to make this possible.



Thursday was another work day for all. The team divided up among the various work sites and those who had a little extra free time were able to help out with some of the chores needing done at Clinica Ezell. The ACU students pitched in to help us by cleaning all the window awnings around the clinic and by counting pills. They were so helpful to our ladies in the kitchen each evening as they washed all the dinner dishes before devo started. All in all they were a blessing to our staff, the patients who they interacted with and to one another. Dru's challenge at the beginning of the week was met and exceeded.

"God healed me here. He used all of you to bless me in this place. A year ago I was sad and thought I would never walk again but God did His work in me." 2013 Ortho surgery patient Rosario said these words to our Ortho team after walking into Clinica Ezell on Thursday, exactly

one year after her miraculous surgery. Rosario was victim of a hit and run which left her lame for 9 months before seeking help at our 2013 ortho clinic. God was gracious and surgery went well as you may remember from our trip report last year. We had hope that Rosario's bones would heal but she had many months of wound care ahead. Thankfully Rosario and her daughter were meticulous about caring for her leg and a mere three weeks before the ortho team arrived she was able to begin walking with the assistance of a cane. 20 months after her accident and 11 months after her surgery at Ezell, Rosario is now a walking testament to God's amazing goodness. Rosario is pictured below on the left with her daughter and the ortho crew who cared for her last year.



That night at devo we had our traditional time of sharing around the fountain. It was a great opportunity for everyone to process and debrief after a great week of surgery, dentistry, nursing, medicine and being the hands and feet of Christ. The next morning we headed out for Antigua bright and early and spent a beautiful day exploring, zip lining, bargaining in the market and taking pictures before we came together one last time for dinner. The night wrapped up with a nice buffet at Hotel Antigua and plenty of time to visit and share about the day. Saturday morning we loaded up after breakfast and headed to Guatemala City where everyone was loaded onto a plane and off to their homes without any delays or trouble at all. Once again we felt the hand of God working and watching over us as we carried out His work upon this earth.