

Health Talents International

Harding Spring Break Trip March 3-10

Chichicastenango, Guatemala

Trip Participants: MD: Eric Dahl, PA: Gary Hill, Sarah Ezell; Pharmacy Faculty: Sarah Griffin; Pharmacy Student: Katie Patterson; PA Student: Savannah Bradbury, Alira Carpenter, Emily Cowan, Megan Britson, Abigail Cain, Lauren Cox, Sarah Lule, Justin Tucker, Alexandra Porter, Timothy Shipp, Sarah Anderson, Sean Driggers, Chris Dahl, Jenna Maraldo; Translator: Jose Calderon; Team Leaders: Rick Harper, Julie Wheatley

There were few worries among this group about making the flight to Guatemala since most every one flew into Houston on Friday night. Unfortunately Julie wasn't able to make it to Guatemala on the 3rd because of a canceled flight as a result of the bad tornadoes and storms in Nashville. Everyone else met up with Kemmel and Lisa at the airport and headed out for Chichicastenango.

That evening the team had a brief orientation from Kemmel and Lisa and said goodnight.

Sunday morning was relaxing. Breakfast was served at Hotel Santo Tomas before the team headed out to explore Chichi and enjoy the hustle and bustle of market day. The shopping was fun and the lunch buffet at the hotel was delicious. The day passed by quickly and soon it was time for the team to gather and head out to the Chichicastenango Church of Christ for worship.

The service was held in both Quiche and Spanish so the group could only understand part of the sermon. The experience was certainly worth it! Gathering with the local Christians was encouraging and uplifting. After service the group headed back to the hotel for a late dinner and devotional time. Kemmel and Lisa also shared with the group about the ABC program since many of the clinics over the next few days would be ABC clinics. The whole group was excited about the opportunity to see and enjoy the little ABC children!

Monday morning the team gathered for an early breakfast and welcomed the arrival of Julie. Her flight had finally arrived on Sun. evening and she was shuttled up to Chichi early Monday morning. The team split up between Mactzul V and Clinica Caris. Dr. Eric Dahl and nurse Sheri headed up the Mactzul group while Dr. Ruben headed up the clinic at Caris and Dr. Lisa lead a team to Mactzul II. Both the Mactzul groups saw ABC children for medical and dental check-ups. Several team members commented on how impressed they were with the health of the children as well as their growth. Each child was checked against the World Health Organization's growth chart for Guatemala and very few fell into the category of malnourished or under weight. We are thrilled to see the ABC program having such good results.

All three teams had fairly busy days. The team in Mactzul V had the pleasure of being with HTI's new dentist Dr. Sandra. Sandra joined HTI's team the same week the Harding PA's came to visit. The group also got to meet her mother who came up to see where Sandra would be living and working. Sandra is a great addition to the team and a wonderful dentist. She was also pleasantly surprised by the teeth of the ABC children. There were entire days where Sandra didn't have to pull a single tooth while doing

ABC check-ups. Children who were in need of cavity fillings were referred to Clinica Caris for that treatment. What a great blessing to see the ABC program and educational efforts paying off!

That evening the group gathered for dinner followed by some devotional time. The devotional time throughout the week was especially nice since several of the team members shared the responsibility of providing the team with devotional thoughts. Dr. Dahl, Joe Calderon, Rick Harper and Chris Dahl all took turns sharing their thoughts with the rest of the team. Their thoughts were greatly appreciated and the team enjoyed great devotional times each night as a result of their contributions.

On Tuesday the team divided up between Chutzurob and Pacaja Xesic. The group in Chutzurob enjoyed their day on the mountain. The family that always comes to clinic to volunteer was there again and spent the day helping the students and doctors keep the clinic running smoothly. In Pacaja Xesic there were fewer patients so the team set out for a brief hike after lunch. Dr. Ruben led the hike to a waterfall and a couple natural springs just down the hill from the church building.

The group from Chutzurob wrapped up early and headed back to Chichi for a late lunch while the Pacaja Xesic team enjoyed a nice lunch on the patio at the home of one of the local ministers. That evening the group joined together for dinner and welcomed Rick Harper to the team. Rick drove up from Guatemala City that day to join the team for a couple days of clinic.

On Wednesday the group split up between three different clinics. One small team headed to Xepol with Sheri, another team went to _____, and the third team headed out to San Jorge. The Xepol clinic was high up in the mountains and was very cold. The team there only had two patients so they spent lots of quality time with their patients to be sure they were well taken care of and loved on. One little girl in particular loved all the attention she got from the PA students. The San Jorge team had a full day. Dr. Marcos headed up dental while the doctors started to see patients. The PA students got lots of opportunities throughout the week to examine patients, learn about different conditions and put their book knowledge to use. Gary, Sarah and Eric were great teachers as well as the HTI practitioners.

Wednesday afternoon most of the group wound up at the soccer field after clinic. There was a fun game played between two teams, both of which were a mix of HTI staff and PA students. After the game the group made their way back to Hotel Santo Tomas for dinner and devotional time.

Thursday was the last day of clinic for this group. Breakfast was again served at 7am followed by departure to clinics. The team split between Paxot II, Caris and Chichicastenango. The Paxot II group had a day full of children. They did ABC check-ups as well as regular clinic so their day was busy and active. Most of the children got out of school around noon so the biggest crowd of ABC children came after lunch time. There were lots of "take a deep breath" and "stick your tongue out and say AAA" statements made that afternoon!

The group at Caris saw some very interesting cases. Caris is used as a referral clinic where patients go for more restorative dental care and for any procedures best performed in a clean environment. This means that many of the patients who arrive at Clinica Caris have interesting or irregular cases. The PA students at Caris this day were especially intrigued by the cases they were able to observe.

Clinic in Chichi was slow but steady. Thursday is market day in Chichi so the population of the town swells each Thursday and Sunday when market day rolls around. This clinic is therefore a nice clinic to have on a market day. The local church members have even more “neighbors” to share the gospel with on these days! Dr. Ruben and Dr. Dahl saw patients and got to spend a good amount of time with each patient while sharing their knowledge with the students.

Sadly on Thursday Justin and Alie Tucker had to return to the States early because of a death in the family. We were sad to see them go but appreciated Rick’s willingness to get their flights changed and escort them back to Guatemala city.

Early Friday morning the rest of the team set out for Antigua along with Sheri. The group stopped for breakfast in Tecpan and then headed the rest of the way down into Antigua. Everyone enjoyed a perfectly beautiful day in Antigua walking around in the market, getting massages and enjoying the cobblestone streets and old cathedral ruins. That night for dinner the team went to La Peña del Sol Latino, a restaurant with live music any yummy frozen coconut-lemonade! Dinner was enjoyed by all and then the group headed back to Hotel Antigua and said goodnight. Saturday morning the group loaded up and headed for the airport. God blessed the group and kept everyone safe and healthy. Many patients were seen, lots of children were loved on and lots of fried chicken was eaten! To God be the glory.



