

## **Health Talents International January Surgical Clinic Jan 12-19, 2013**

**Team Participants:** Surgeons: Tommy Hatchett, Steven Scarcliff, Scott Smith; GYN Resident: Nora Chiu; Anesthesia: Beth Bailey, Lawrence Freund, Dorletha Seay, Phyllis Willis; Nurses: Karen Bradley, Leah Bradshaw, Mike Caldwell, Charlotte Foreman, Lindsey Howell, Tina Howell, Linda Kelsey, Kathy DeLong, Laura Piedmont, Kelly Smith, LeAnn Stacy, Ann Stowe, Jenni Whitefield, Beverly Wilson; Surgical Tech: Ryan Lambert, Jeanette Matthews; Sonographer: Chad Stacy; Translators: Federico Echeverria, Rachel Finney, Trina Gateley, Alicia Ingram, Edgar Lucero, Vicky Schandavel, Dakota West; Sterilization: Zach Bradshaw, Tyler Bradley; Non-Medical Cargivers: Julie Anderson, Lindsay Bradley, Cathy Good, Diana Goodwin, Joyce Matlock; Mr. Fix-Its: Ernst Kelsey, Conley Matlock; Trip Chaplain: Dave Mellor; Team Leader: Rick Harper

On any given trip, we are blessed to have volunteers from ten to fifteen states and on occasions, multiple countries. This team covered ten states from the West coast to the East coast arriving on three airlines and for the first time in a year, every piece of luggage arrived with team members. This was the first time the January team experienced the bus ride on a Litegua charter and they were more than pleased as a result. A larger, roomier, air-conditioned bus with bathroom facilities makes for a pleasant trip. We arrived around 5:30 PM and quickly unpacked, sorted and inventoried supplies, prepped the OR and completed pre-op exams before supper and a brief orientation. If you ever run into Rachel Finney, *translator extraordinaire*, please ask her about her experience translating for a colo-rectal surgeon after preparing to translate for a general surgeon specializing in hernia repair. You'll laugh until you hurt!

Dave Mellor, or Brother Dave as he prefers to be called, was our trip chaplain this trip and he reminded us during our evening devotionals that God created us to be part of a community...His community. Within a short-time, new and old faces with the January team experienced community with one another and those we came to serve.

Our Sunday morning breakfast time was uneventful as we made plans for the week, reviewed recovery ward schedules for nurses and translators before joining the Montellano church family for worship. We were blessed to witness a baptism to start the service as Monica is now a new sister in Christ. During the lesson time, we were treated to a bilingual lesson from Edgar Lucero of Tahlequah, Oklahoma. Edgar has served as trip chaplain in the past as well as serving as a translator.

Following worship service, we met with Dr. Sierra and Rosario for a thorough orientation and this team was introduced to a new blood donor practice we first implemented in October. As a precaution to needing to provide blood transfusions in the event of an emergency, we are now asking for volunteers to donate on Sunday afternoon and we store the blood throughout the week. Fortunately, no transfusions were necessary, but it is a comfort to know we are prepared if needed. Surgeries began around 1:30 and we completed two GYN cases and eight general cases that day and were out of the OR at a reasonable time.

Our case load this week would end up a bit lower than a normal January trip, but proved to be a blessing. We lost one RN on Friday before departing and a second RN to a motorcycle accident on Friday evening. Nevertheless, our post-op, recovery ward and caregiver crew rose to the occasion and were able to provide high quality, compassionate care. Monday yielded thirteen cases, four GYN and nine general surgeries.

Monday evening also provided us with an opportunity to introduce our newest physician, Dr. Nehemias Lopez. A former Bates scholar, Nehemias joined our team on January 7 and in coming months will begin to lead a third, mobile medical team on the coast. When you meet Nehemias, don't let him fool you. He understands your English, much better than most of us understand his Spanish!

Tuesday's pace was a little bit heavier with five GYN and eleven general cases for the day. By the time Tuesday evening rolled around, we had no empty beds in the recovery ward. They were full with Wednesday's patients as well as those who'd had surgery on Sunday or Monday and had yet to be sent home. Tuesday evening was also one of the occasions that members from the Montellano church family visited Clinica Ezell and moved from bed to bed singing and praying with our patients.

We were fortunate to have Chad Stacy with us this week, a sonographer from Manchester, TN. Since we now have an ultrasound unit at both operational bases, Clinica Ezell and Clinica Caris, we asked Chad to provide some training. Dr. Lisa Dunham traveled from Chichicastenango with her husband and Director of our Highland Operations, Kemmel, and joined Drs. David Lux and Walter Sierra for many hours of training and practice. We will now be able to provide better prenatal care along with additional diagnostics. Chad's wife, Lisa, is an RN and we have no doubt that they will return in the future.

I've already made reference to having a colo-rectal specialist and Dr. Steven Scarcliff was making his first trip with HTI. After three days of general surgery, not his normal routine, Dr. Scarcliff began to wonder "why he came." He found his answer during Tuesday's consults and on Wednesday he performed surgery on a nine year old boy who was suffering from a prolapsed rectum. Most certainly a problem brought about by a parasitic infestation and extended periods of diarrhea. The surgery was successful and Dr. Scarcliff had this to say upon his return to the US. *"It was an absolute honor working with you all. I thank each of you for allowing me to have, in more ways than one, the best experience of my life. Next January cannot get here fast enough."*

We completed seventeen cases on Wednesday and another six on Thursday morning for a grand total of sixty-one. Of those, seventeen were GYN and the remainder general or colo-rectal. Truly a grand week!

Our Mr. Fix-It crew, Conley Matlock and Ernst Kelsey kept equipment operational and also found time to build twelve benches to place outside each of the shower stalls in the bathrooms. This was appreciated by all, but especially by those with names like...Alice, Ann, Marie, Nancy, Julie and Brittney if you get the picture.

Drs. Lawrence Freund and Tommy Hatchett left us on Thursday afternoon, another seven departed for the airport on Friday morning and the larger part of our group traveled to Antigua and enjoyed its beauty.

(HTI Veteran RN, Karen Bradley)





(Fourth Time Translator Vicky Schandevl)



January 2013 Team