

Health Talents International January Surgical Clinic Jan 11-18, 2020

Team Participants: Surgeons: Kris Citty, Tommy Hatchett, Stewart Lowry, Steven Scarcliff, Scott Smith; Anesthesia: Adrian (Buster) Herren, Duane Gill, Allen Gould, Lisa Richard; Nurses: Victoria Cover, Penny Forte, Krystle Gore, Jenny Lawler, Nikki Lockett, Anna Luther Christine Martin, Jan Pewitt, Jenny Phelan, Meghan Phelan, Kelly Smith, Erika Stanley, Jane Todd, Ann Stowe, Kat Taylor, Kyle Vick, Samantha Vick, Jenni Whitefield; Surgical Techs: Tamika Reese-Lopez; C.N.A.: Gracie Tucker; Lay Circulator: Missy Hatchett; Translators: Oscar Calel, Rachel Finney, Jason Kellerhalls, Maia Moxon, Rita Sills, Emily Smith, Janet Smith; Sterilization: Julie Anderson, Cary Sills, Paul Vandekamp; Caregivers: Eryka Berryhill, Allen Close, Easton Gill, Adri Gruis, Brandy Gruis, Roy Koch, Lisa Koch, Marion Leary, Alena Lowry, Bennett Lowry, Austin Lockett, Marshall Lockett, Susan Phillips, John Scarcliff, Kristie Scarcliff, Madelyn Scarcliff, Sarah Scarcliff, Carmen Smith, Bailey Whitefield, Ryan Whitefield; Mr. Fix-It: Jerry Hatter; Trip Chaplain: Wes Phillips; Team Leader: Rick Harper

A natural theme for this week might be Montana ranchers meets Guatemala, after all, we had more ranchers than anesthesia providers. A better theme might be, “heaven came down and glory filled my soul.” At least that is what our patients believed as we sought to teach and heal as Jesus did. *We did not literally come down from heaven as did the Son of God, but we did fly through the heavens and descend upon the spiritual oasis that is Clinica Ezell.*

We came from Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Montana, Ohio, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia and yes, Canada. Seven couples, fifteen families, five sisters, two brothers and one new spiritual family, the January 2020 surgical team. God came near two millennia ago; we came nearer to him in January.

Our Montana and seven Virginia team members arrived in Guatemala on Friday night and took a shuttle to Ezell that morning, whereas the rest of us arrived on Saturday afternoon, along with all of our luggage and supplies, boarded a charter bus and began the 142 KM trek to Montellano and Clinica Ezell.

Upon arrival, we found all in readiness as we unloaded, sorted supplies and began seeing patients...then a first, a Saturday night surgery. One of our patients, Juan Carlos, was scheduled for a “consult only” due to his diabetes and a rectal mass believed best treated in a local hospital with ICU capability, had his mass rupture while awaiting his consult shortly before we arrived. His situation now critical with the infection possibly leading to sepsis ; and no time to transport him safely, he was quickly prepped for surgery and moved to OR 2. Colo-rectal specialist, Dr. Steven Scarcliff, along with general surgeon and board member, Dr. Scott Smith and several others promptly undertook the repair, a successful repair I might add.

Kudos to all, especially our recovery room nurses who responded with the flexibility and professionalism you'd expect from those called by God to serve. Juan Carlos was with us for several days but, dismissed midweek and recovered nicely. However, he still needs to do his part to control his diabetes.

Super was late Saturday night, the orientation brief, hours available to sleep a bit short, but tomorrow was the Lord's day!

January is one of the cooler months on the coast, meaning it only gets into the 80's during the day, and we awoke Sunday morning to temperatures in the high 50's. Worship services began at 9 and the temp was still in the 70's, very pleasant. Alex's lesson and the singing led by brother Josue were both uplifting. Joy is contagious and we were all infected that morning.

Following orientation and lunch, surgery began. Dr. Kris Citty, far left, was the newbie in OR 3, though a veteran of three previous trips. Before the week was out, he and Dr. Tommy Hatchett, far right, were moving in such sync that nurses Ann and Penny had a hard time keeping up. Four hands a blur, working in unison as a case that took two hours on Sunday took only 45 minutes on Tuesday.

(Moving left to right: Kris Citty, Ann Stowe, Penny Forte, Tommy Hatchett.)



We completed six cases on Sunday, one combination GYN and General; one purely GYN case and four general cases. One case went late into the night and our patients did well that evening. Monday was coming soon.

Tamika returned for year two and teamed up with Dr. Stewart Lowry, a veteran of more than ten trips and knocked out twenty cases this week, one hernia repair after another. (Identities concealed by surgical masks out of humility.)



Outside of the corner bedroom in the physicians lounge, the warmest/hottest area at Clinica Ezell is the recovery ward. When you get thirty-forty patients, half a dozen nurses and another six to ten caregivers and translators working, the heat can be stifling.

On occasions, the heat and fatigue are best addressed with humor. Using a stethoscope, Jan confirmed brain activity in Nikki.



OR 2 was a combination general/thyroid and colorectal room. Due to the nature of colorectal surgery, very few pictures were taken. Only the brave were willing to get much closer. Dr. Scarcliff and Smith completed twenty-two general cases, three thyroid and four colorectal cases.

Sixty-five cases for the week and all patients returned on January 17 for post-operative checks and received excellent evaluations.

The January 2020 surgical team is pictured below. We became closer this week, hopefully we brought God closer to those we served.

