

Health Talents International

March 16-23, 2019

Eye and Ortho Surgery

Trip Participants: **Orthopedic Surgeons:** Jason Brashear, Mike Cannone; **Anesthesiologists:** Jim Doeble, Wilma Proffitt; **Internatal Medicine:** Jim Proffitt; **Ophthalmologist:** Jim Loden; **Dentist:** Bob Huffstutter, DDS; **Nurse Practitioner:** Emily Davis; **Physician Assistants:** Blakeley Burlison, Louis McDaniel; **OR Nurse:** Mark Sloan; **Optometrist:** Emily Evans; **Ophthalmic Tech:** Chris Aiosa; **RN's:** Connie Campbell, Freda Fuller (**Lipscomb Faculty**), Jules McCord, Lyndsie Warren; **Nursing Students:** Kat Griesen, Shannon Guthrie, Hannah Hutcheson, Collin Jenkins, Alexis Reynolds; **Lipscomb Faculty:** Alan Bradshaw, PhD; **Lipscomb Student Leaders:** Mary Welch, Collin Vasseur; **Caregivers:** Austin Brashear, Mitzi Emig, Tre Horton, Heather Loden, James Loden, Jr., Reed Loden; Lipscomb Student Caregivers: Adelia Birdwell, Heath Bridges, Abby Bryant, Mikey Cannone, Elizabeth Cluck, Katelyn Council, Tiffany Dang, Emilie Doeble, Allison Earley, Alexa Erazo, Macy Glassco, Grant Hitchcock, Breckin Horton, Jeremiah Niehls, Grace Proffitt, Madeline Surdacki; **Translators:** Drew Bennie, Kathlyn Chan, Rita Sills; **Sterilization:** Cary Sills; **HTI Team Leaders:** Rick Harper, Dave Mellor, Susan Mellor

We bade farewell to our ACU and Harding teams this morning and welcomed our March surgical team. They arrived through Atlanta, Dallas, Houston, Miami and Newark, excited, ready to serve and ready to love.

Our travel to Clinica Ezell was uneventful, conversation was aplenty while working our way through Guatemala traffic, but after about an hour, sleep settled in for the majority. Napping is a well-practiced art for university students and since many on our team had been awake since 2 or 3 AM, slumber came easy. We arrived shortly before 5:00 PM, quickly unloaded, unpacked and began seeing patients. Unpacking and inventorying the twenty or so bags of supplies that came down took a couple of hours, the same amount of time for examining our orthopedic patients...eye patients were another story, taking a good three-four hours.

Following supper, we had a brief welcome and orientation, made introductions before the naps wore off, and made our way to bed or the porch for some sweet conversations. Dr. Alan Bradshaw and the Lipscomb students spent most evenings in song and conversations on the front patio, worshipping and fellowshiping until nearly midnight. Just one of the activities that bring students like Collin, Elizabeth and Mary back for four consecutive years.

Worship began at 9 on Sunday morning, Josue did a fabulous job leading singing in Spanish, and Heath Bridges led us in a few songs in English. Our time together set the tone for an exciting, spirit-filled week of service. Side by side, two cultures free of man-made boundaries, worshipping, loving and giving of self.

Sunday's results, ten cataract surgeries.

Dr. Jim Proffitt was here for the first time, along with his wife, Dr. Wilma Proffitt and their daughter, Emilie, a veteran of two previous trips. He went out each day, Monday through Thursday, working with our coastal physicians in mobile clinic locations and plied his internal medicine training. When you are accustomed to working in a nice, comfortable office, going out into the heat and dust each day requires a servant heart and kind spirit. Jim was a champ and embraced each servant opportunity.

Our Monday tally was sixteen cataract surgeries and four ACL repairs, twenty cases for the day!

Dr. Wilma, an anesthesiologist, thought she might be going out on mobile clinics as well since we already had an anesthesia provider for the ortho room, Dr. Jim Doeble. However, she was right where I believe God wanted her, at Ezell, as we were able use her in the cataract room with children. Adults will remain still during eye surgery...not so the little ones. Our first patient needing anesthesia in Dr. Jim Loden's room was this little treasure, blind in both eyes from birth and able to see for the first time on March 20, 2019. She'll return for surgery on the other eye in July!



Our orthopedic work has grown since Dr. David Gilliam pioneered this expansion of services, and Dr. Mike Cannone built upon that through his US relationships with Arthrex, and their distributor in Guatemala. (They loan us equipment and a tech for a few days.) Tuesday was a big day, six ortho procedures with three of them being ACL repairs. We'd actually finish with nine for the week. Dr. Loden and his team completed another fourteen cases and for the second day in a row, twenty surgical cases in total.

Dr. Jim Loden brought his wife, Heather, and two sons, James, Jr. and Reed, as well as two nurses, an optometrist, Dr. Emily Evans, and ophthalmic tech. (Julies, Mark and Chris.) They were marvelous to work with, bringing the same level of enthusiasm and professionalism that is part of their Loden Vision legacy to Montellano and Clinica Ezell.

Dr. Bob Huffstutter, making his third or fourth March trip, not only stayed busy in our dental clinic, but was able mentor to Lipscomb pre-dental students during the week. Tiffany Dang, a first-timer, could hardly contain her enthusiasm as she pursued her dream of becoming a dentist.

Wednesday brought us another seventeen eye patients and four ortho as we broke the twenty mark and came in at twenty-one cases for the day. By the end of the day, we realized our the end of our time together was drawing nigh, one more day for surgery and that, only a half day.

Five more ortho cases on Thursday, giving us twenty for the week, and a total of seventy eye surgeries...with one having to be canceled.

We sent a large group to tour the chocolate farm on Thursday afternoon and to see the large Ceiba tree on the property. You can get a sense of the size of this massive tree in the photo below. Estimated to be over 400 years old, the Ceiba, is Guatemala's national tree and this one, a local treasure.



The March 2019 surgical team is now history, memorialized in this photo. The memories will last a lifetime and the life lessons will shape careers for decades to come. The gospel lived this week as *the blind see, the lame walk and the good news was preached to the poor.*



I could not resist!

This is what fatigue looks like on the Friday bus ride after long days service and late nights of fellowship and worship. Gotta love it!

