

## TRIP REPORT November 2019 Eye/General Surgical Team

TEAM MEMBERS: Ophthalmologists: Russel Brear MD, Nathan Stevens DO; General Surgeon: Jon Brown DO; Anesthesiologist: Nabeel Khan, MD; Optometrist: Dakota Waldropp, OD; Surgical PA: Abby Atchley, PAC; OR Nurses: Sonia Chavez, RN, CNP; Roxana Sherill, RN; Jennifer Stockli, RN; Recovery Room Nurses: Barbara Burg, RN; Connie Campbell, RN; Lisa Duke, RN; Translators: MaryBeth McCown, Jaclyn Sherrill, Ana Vargas, Mariana Vargas; Caregivers: May Stevens, Abi Stevens Mr. Fix-it: Gary Tabor; Trip Chaplain: Roger McCown HTI Support: Rick Harper; Team leaders: Dave Mellor, Bode Teague

This year's team was made up of 23 USA members supplemented by 8 Guatemalans. We arrived in Guatemala on the 9th of November. One group came in early and were sent on to the Clinic to begin consultations with patients in order that surgeries could begin Sunday after worship and lunch. The remaining team members arrived later and began inventorying supplies.

We were blessed to have several Guatemalan residents join us this week: Rita and Cary Sills, Carol Angelo, RN, Gladiz Liquez, RN, Magdalena Najera, RN, Alyssa Barrundia, Kristin Beyer, and Oscar Robles.

One of the unique things about this trip was the fact that we had several team members who have had a long history with HTI. Our chaplain, Roger McCown, and his wife MaryBeth were pioneers in the beginning days of HTI. They served as missionaries for several years. Roger challenged us to see more than just the illnesses in the people we were treating. He helped us see into the world of the Guatemalan social, family and spiritual world. MaryBeth helped us see all this from the perspective of a wife and mother. Their ability to sit with and communicate with the Guatemalan patients and staff was a tremendous blessing. *(Alyssa and Bode)*



Connie Campbell, RN, has also traveled with HTI for many years. She and her husband, Eugene, have a long history of serving. "Mr. Fix-it", Gary Tabor, has been involved with HTI for many years. As you look around our campus there are several examples of his work. This week he had two major projects 1) building bins to hold recycling material and 2) building a corn hole game. I enjoyed watching him work alongside the Guatemalans on these projects. He is a good role model. I have always been impressed with how hard Guatemalans work, but I believe they had a hard time keeping up with Gary despite his increased age and many surgeries. These "pioneers" truly love this work and have played an important part in its' development.

Dr. Jon Brown was a newcomer to us. His friend had come with us last summer and told him about the work. He signed up! We were glad to have him since we had a few complicated surgeries. He has already committed to return. Dr. Brown and his nurses were able to complete 28 general surgeries.

Abbey Atchley (nee Stanley) was one of our nurses this week. She now is a PAC and is continuing her education. Abby is a great example of what happens when parents expose their children to missions early. Dr. David Stanley and his wife, Julie, have been serving with us for many years - now they are a second generation HTI family. Many will remember Julie from her work assisting Dr. Haller.

The eye surgery teams worked so well together. Dr. Dakota Waldroop screened the vision patients. Dakota and Dr. Brear have worked together on many trips. Jennifer Stockli, RN was a great addition having worked with Dr. Brear for years. May Stevens was called on to help her husband, Dr. Nathan Stevens. It was touching to hear her share how proud she was of him after working with him this week.

*(Drs. Dakota Waldroop and Russell Brear.)*

Rick Harper worked as a circulator for the eye surgery rooms. He did a great job but is not planning a career change! The eye teams completed 87 surgeries.

One of the joys of these trips is watching the teens and college students serve. The Stevens brought their daughter, Abi. Roxana Sherrill brought her daughter, Jaclyn and her friends Ana and Mariana Vargas. These teens helped with eye drops, sterilization, cleaning beds, delivering gurneys and anything else they were asked to do. The Vargas girls were also very helpful as translators.



There are three stories that demonstrate the impact of our efforts:

1. One of our patients was able to see her grandchildren for the first time. Her face was a picture of joy!
2. One lady said she couldn't see after her procedure was successfully done. The doctors examined her and couldn't understand why she could not see. Finally, in frustration, she asked why they were looking at the wrong eye. She was ready to have surgery on her other eye - so she could see well from both eyes!
3. One patient sat up after his bandages were removed and looked at his hands. He turned them over, turned them back and front, up and down in fascination. Something we take for granted, but he had been unable to do for years.

God was glorified as each patient was prayed with before, after and sometimes during surgery. The members of the local congregation came often to visit the clinic and pray with the patients. Truly God was with us.

A total of 115 souls were touched by surgery this week. New friends were made. Once again, the partnership of Guatemalan and US volunteers working alongside the HTI staff proved to be a blessing to those we serve. God was glorified and Jesus was shared.

