

2020 update on the ministries within our body of work

ABC

- We have 761 children in the ABC Program and project adding 50 more children in 2020. Forty-seven communities and 569 families are being served.
- More than 223 children are now attending high school.
- Twenty-two of our sixty-five Guatemala employees are graduates of our ABC or scholarship programs.

Church Growth

- Highland evangelist, Gaspar Chan, continues with his discipling efforts, working with men in Chicabracan, Mactzul VI, Zacualpa.
- Most churches have been unable to assemble since March as few have the space to accommodate meeting size requirements.
- They continue to share news of baptisms and church growth.
- A women's ministry has started via Zoom, with Dr. Silvia Albizures, our former head dentist and now a resident of Nashville participating. (Her husband, Carlos, is completing his MDiv at Lipscomb University.

Facilities and Equipment

- Two new dental chairs have been ordered and should be delivered this month.
- We are re-engineering our dental suction systems with new compressors and dental suction units.
- Thirty air purification machines with Hepa filters designed to remove the Corona virus from the air are in place at Clinicas Caris and Ezell.

Health Evangelist Training, Community Development and Community Education

- Since rural community travel is difficult, or impossible, they are experimenting with new fruit and fish growing options and fertilizer production. (Some communities, if you are allowed in, have constructed bleach or ammonia bath setups that you drive through. Whether or not you are in a truck or on a motorcycle. :))

Leadership Evangelism Seminars

- Hector Cruz held a seminar in Chichi, as well as a one day seminar for our staff at Clinica Ezell, in March.

Scholarship Programs

- We awarded twenty-six Sherman scholarships this year and plan to award sixteen in 2021. (Yes, the pandemic has had an impact on scholarship applications.)
- Two Bates scholars attending medical school, have graduated and are completing their government service requirements. One other student has completed medical school and should complete her government service in early 2021.
- Our Bates scholar studying psychology has completed her studies and will graduate as soon as the pandemic schedule will allow.
- Three additional Bates scholarships will be awarded in 2021, two for medicine and one dentistry.
- Two of our nursing students continue their studies and a third will begin in January.

Surgical Teams

- We completed three of twelve scheduled surgical teams prior to the pandemic.

Budget

Our operational budget includes \$122,000 in capital expenses for replacement vehicles. New medical/dental equipment is budgeted and subject to raising the necessary funds.

Total budget for all operations, capital needs, and surgical teams is \$2,855,620.

89.8% of every dollar we received, went to program services to those we serve...stewardship is a responsibility we embrace.



Health Talents International

Annual Report 2020



*Kingdom eyes, the lens
Jesus used;
kingdom opportunities,
the ones Jesus sees;
kingdom hearts,
the ones Jesus heals!*

Narrative:

Which Biblical prophet, psalmist, recorder of Jewish history or apostle is best suited to write a narrative for 2020? Moses with all the rules, laws and lists found in the Pentateuch; David with his pleas for deliverance; Jeremiah the lamenter, Jonah the dissenter, Elijah who hid (quarantined) in a cave, Paul the missionary or James who wrote the following: *“Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials.”* (James 1: 2) I will go with James in 2020; I choose to be refined by the creator and led by His spirit; not defined by circumstance.

Paul’s imprisonment thwarted his plans to return to many of those he led to Christ, so he wrote letters. We have been restricted in our ability to travel, so we write letters, post on social media, send e-newsletters, make videos and mail newsletters by post. By whatever means available, we have sought to keep you informed and engaged. Like Paul, we press on!

When Jesus fed the 5,000, he saw opportunity; not obstacles...we have sought to see with Jesus’ eyes, *Kingdom eyes*. While our smiles are hidden behind masks, we determined to show you, and those we serve, our hearts. We provided food for the hungry, water for the thirsty and clothes for those decimated by hurricanes Eta and Iota. We touched the sick with glove covered hands and we were touched through the doing, the living, and the loving.

This annual report will be short on statistics and long on stories of people, our people, your people, *God’s people*.

January began with little fanfare and our first surgical team arrived at Clinica Ezell on Saturday evening, then 2020 presented us with our first major challenge, or I should say opportunity. 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. His mass ruptured while awaiting his consult and the situation was now dire. Danger of an infection, one leading to sepsis and death; with 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 completed a successful repair.

Yonni returned in February for his third surgical procedure in ten years, coming at the ages of five, nine and fifteen. He has grown up with us and reserved a place in heart and lore. See those eyes? Those are trusting eyes, adoring eyes. And if love has anything to do with it, eyes destined for the Kingdom.



And March, what can we say about March. **It was great!**

Two teams traveled to Guatemala on March 7, one going to Chichicastenango and primarily made up of Harding University PA and Nurse Practitioner students; another going to Clinica Ezell to deliver eye and orthopedic surgical care. In addition to our licensed providers, the surgical



team included four nursing students from Harding University, eighteen future healthcare providers from Abilene Christian University and four nursing faculty members from Lubbock Christian University. We are excited about this new relationship with the LCU nursing program and any time we can serve alongside more than thirty university students, it is a rewarding, life changing week. Obstacles? Nay, only opportunities that included cutting, sanding, shaping, and sterilizing a titanium plate for a shoulder repair. Bolt cutters, channel-lock pliers, and a belt sander; all tools of the trade when you see with Kingdom Eyes.

These two teams returned to the US on Saturday, what is now known as the Covid era. Within a few days, it seemed the world shut down. The university students were not allowed to return to their dorm rooms for any reason other than collecting their personal belongings. In short order, classes were canceled and transitioned to virtual.

Guatemala instituted some of the strictest guidelines imaginable. No public transportation, home confinement, curfews, church assemblies forbidden, \$2,000 fines if you were caught without a mask and the closure of their borders. (Those borders would remain closed until September.)

What did we do? We plotted and planned; dreamed and schemed...and we prayed and trusted that God would reveal the needs and our role in His plan. *We wanted to see with Kingdom Eyes!*

As the pandemic wore on, our Guatemala team members were unable to work, eventually all surgical teams were canceled; and we undertook a fundraising campaign to raise the money necessary to continue paying their salary. We revealed the plan, you gave, and God used you to answer the call. It was enough to cover salaries through the end of 2020!

While our team members were still receiving a salary, most of their neighbors and friends were not so fortunate, so we began delivering food supplies. We were able to deliver food to many of our ABC families through the help of local churches. This, even with the requirement of no more than two in a vehicle, as well as other travel restrictions.



Telemedicine, we tried it with moderate success and still do some today. Home visits, setting up dental hygiene training at a safe distance in front of a house, Facebook Live, WhatsApp, texting, phone calls; no stone unturned.



When we canceled the remaining surgical trips, we decided to send each registered volunteer a Guatemala style surgical mask. A token of appreciation, a reminder to those we are called to serve and a visible sign of our intent to return. More than five hundred masks were sewn by volunteers

and distributed to our health care heroes.. The more we became accustomed to seeing the eyes behind the mask, the more intently we began to look at the sentiment conveyed by those eyes. We saw compassion and despair, but mostly we saw beauty.



Things began to turn in late July, restrictions relaxed, fears subsided, and hope was reborn. We began holding clinics, only to be forestalled when several on our ministry team tested positive for Covid or experienced exposure. As September approached, we found ourselves holding clinics at Caris and Ezell with dental care approaching 90% of historical levels. Medical care, largely

dependent upon traveling to other communities for mobile clinics, is running less than 50%. Nevertheless, we are healing as Jesus did. One by one, teaching, touching, and healing.

In October and November, we have been able to hold mobile clinics in a couple of locations. We are still limited by the size of assemblies and homes or buildings large enough for patients to gather; and still we go.



Hurricanes Eta and Iota brought opportunities and devastation in November. We partnered with area churches to provide disaster relief. We purchased clothes, their church families brought food supplies...and we delivered together, hand in hand. Partners in the kingdom, seeing with kingdom eyes.

As I bring this narrative to a close, one more story, one more kingdom opportunity answered. The last week of November we held our first ever wheelchair clinic in partnership with Faith and Practice and I suspect it will not be our last.

God can do remarkable things when we see with Kingdom Eyes. Thank you for seeing in us, a ministry worthy of your support and heart. It is an honor to *encounter various trials* with you by our side.

Grace and peace,

Rick

