

Health Talents International
ABC Mobile Medical/Dental Trip

November 2-9, 2016

Trip Participants: MD: David Weed, Charlie Branch; DDS: Robin Pruitt; PA: Melina Calderon; Caregivers and Dental Assistants: Kat Brakefield, Debra Blesener, Cam Pruitt, Gary Tabor, Lisa Belch; Translator: Manuel Guarcas; HTI Team Leader: Julie Obregon

Our small group made our way to Guatemala for a few days of mountain weather in the Guatemalan highlands in and around Chichicastenango. We came together at the request of Kemmel and Lisa for some extra help seeing the ABC children in their area for their second annual medical and dental check-up's. It isn't hard to convince a pediatrician and veteran like David Weed to make his way to Guatemala to help care for our darling ABC children. With a few more phone calls to Robin, Melina and our caregivers our team was quickly assembled and Guatemala bound.

Entry into the country went smoothly and we arrived in Chichi in time to get settled in and enjoy dinner with Lisa, Kemmel and Sheri. After dinner Kemmel filled us in about clinics the following day and we headed off to rest.



On Thursday morning our small team split off in three different directions and headed out to clinics in Xepol, Las Trampas and at our own Clinica Caris. The Xepol community had already had their medical

check-ups so Dr. Andrea Lux and her dental assistants headed out their for dental hygiene talks and teeth dying to see how much plaque the kids had on their teeth. Many of the ABC kids scored low plaque counts which made our dental team proud. At Clinica Caris Dr. Robin work with Dr. Aura to extract some mighty big wisdom teeth while Dr. Charlie pitched in to help with some simple dental extractions. Carlie and Lisa came down from the South Fork Church of Christ in Winston Salem, NC to spend some time visiting with Sheri K. The South Fork congregation is Sheri's main supporting church. Having Charlie and Lisa down for a few days was both a blessing and a lot of fun for Sheri! The group in Las Trampas saw 47 ABC kids for medical and dental check-ups while the group at Caris saw a total of 47 patients putting the two groups at a tie for the day!

That evening we shared dinner and enjoyed the company of Dr. Sara and her husband Mario. After dinner we met together for a brief devotional and update from Kemmel before calling it a night.

On Friday morning we split off into five different directions. The ABC clinics were held in Pacaja Xesic, La Palma and Mactzul 1 while dental teams worked at Clinica Caris and Panajxit. Dr. Pruitt once again headed to Caris to extract wisdom teeth but instead of training Dr. Aura he was able to provide training for Dr. Andrea. Each of the Guatemalan dentists are such talented young ladies who were excited to observe and learn from Dr. Pruitt. Cam and Kat worked as great dental assistants having everything ready and organized for the surgical procedures the dentists were doing. At clinic in the villages Gary was a big help lending a hand to the dentists by assisting, cleaning instruments and pitching in wherever needed. Having a veteran like Gary along on a trip always helps things run smoothly and is a treat for our staff to see an old friend.





Those in La Palma had a nice treat when Dr. David and Gary were each able to visit with one of their own ABC children. There are hundreds of ABC children in our program but only a select few ever have the honor of meeting their sponsor, especially children from the remote village of La Palma high up the mountain. That means that it was extra special for David and Gary to meet and visit with their sponsored children. David was also able to work with a young man named Sergio Vasquez. Sergio was in the ABC

program until he graduated last year. In his application for a Bates scholarship to study medicine he mentioned a pediatrician he remembered caring for him as a child, a man with long white hair. We all knew just who that was and we were able to reunite Sergio with his inspiring doctor, David Weed! The two worked together throughout the week with some help communicating from translator Manuel Guarcas. David and Sergio are pictured below with an ACB child.



Our last day of clinic was on Saturday. Clinics were held in Mactzul V and Chuchipaca. The group in Mactzul V stayed quite busy seeing a total of 69 patients for medical, dental and ABC. Melina, Sheri and Dr. Sara had their hands full with 52 ABC children check-ups! Over in Chuchipaca the team had a great day with 23 medical and a few handfuls of ABC dental patients. The special thing about the day didn't involve medicine or dentistry however, it was once again a joy for Debra and Julie to meet their ABC children. Many of the families around Chuchipaca have apple trees and it must have been apple season because these families came bearing gifts of 20lb bags of apples! Debra and Julie were each gifted a large bag of delicious sweet apples in addition to sharing sweet moments, hugs and tears. It is amazing the

bond which the children have with their sponsors. Even the shy children understand the difference their sponsor makes in their life and offer smiles and hugs. It's a beautiful way for a sponsor to imitate Christ and care for His children.

Our devotional times throughout the week were mostly short and sweet with this little team. Gary and Charlie each picked a night to lead a couple of songs and share some thoughts with us. We thoroughly enjoyed these times together each evening where much laughing and joking was had by all.



It was time for Charlie and Lisa to depart in the wee hours of the morning on Sunday so we all said our farewells to them as we wrapped up our devotional. They made it safely to the airport with thanks to Sheri for accompanying them. The Pruitt crew was next to depart on Sunday around 9am while David, Gary, Debra, Melina and Julie enjoyed the market before hitting the buffet at Hotel Santo Tomas. Tongue was on the menu but I am pretty sure most of us skipped over that dish! Before leaving Chichi both Gary and David were able to visit with their last ABC children from the area. David's little boy showed up big smile and all while Gary's little boy was shy and let his momma do all the talking. That said, it was a wonderful ABC mission trip to serve and love on the children of the Chichi area, and to get a few hugs in the process.

