

Health Talents International
August Surgical Trip
Clinica Ezell
August 3-10, 2019

Trip Participants: *Surgeons: Dwayne Fulks, Jack Hudkins, Michael Kohlman, Nathan Powell; Anesthesiologist: Stephen Harvey; Pediatrician: Dentist: Nathan Russell; Nurse Anesthetists: Gordon Corder, Todd Holt, Carrie Hovater, Buddy Malone; Dental Hygienist: Lisa Sarrett; Surgical PA: Siera Shiyou; RN's: Lucy Cantey, Patricia Corder, Amanda Covalt, Ryan Cox, Mary Jo Creecy, Rose Evans, Alice Hoggatt, Emily Neece, Lauren Robinson, Debbie Shoemaker, Lesli Shoemaker, Karla Short, Savannah Simpson, Susanne Simpson, Patsy Sikes, Kimberly Swarnes; LPN: Mindy Eck; Paramedic: Alvin Creecy; PA Student: Madi Harmon; Dental Hygiene Student: Ashlee Haynes; PreMed Student: Kane Weaver; Speech Pathology Student: Leigh Shoemaker; CNA: Sarah Phillips; OR Circulators: Shelly Fulks, Maggie Hovater, Derrick Sikes; Translators: Alyssa Barrundia, Titus Dauck, Blanca Escandon, Richard Moore; Intake/Discharge/Translator: Rita Sills; Dental Assistants: Emma Russell; Sterilization: Cary Sills; Compassionate Caregivers: Kendra Brewer, Mike Duncan, Lisa Fuller, Hadyn Hoggatt, Laney Hoggatt, Aubrey Hudkins, Susan Jordan, Savannah Shoemaker, Emory Thomas, Cindy Tandy; Trip Chaplain: Steve Tandy; Team Leaders: Rick Harper, Bode Teague*

Airlines impact our trips each month with their everchanging fee options, luggage limits, weather delays or the recent grounding of the Boeing 737 Max that resulted in flight cancellations. Fortunately, we are well practiced in the mission art of flexibility; it comes with the territory when working in a developing country.

It has become fairly common for several on our teams to flying to Guatemala City on Friday night. For some, it is a desire to avoid early flights from their home airport on Saturday morning, for others it is a safeguard when connections times are too close. And for our Pacific time zone travelers, it is the only way they can meet up with the group on Saturday.

Recently, we've begun scheduling a separate shuttle to Clinica Ezell on Saturday morning for those who fly in on Friday evening. Instead of waiting for the Saturday afternoon flights to land and their fellow team members to retrieve their luggage and clear customs, these well-rested team members get a head start on the day and are able to begin seeing patients 2-4 hours earlier than the Saturday fliers. It works quite well, and on the occasions when we experience traffic delays on Saturday afternoon, the Friday night wave of volunteers save the day. Such was the case in August when more than forty of our group arrived after 6:45 PM and all patients had already been screened and scheduled.

Arriving so late, we ate supper first and then began the process of unloading and inventorying more than thirty bags of supplies. Following a brief orientation, we retired for the evening knowing ten patients, two plastic and eight general cases, were on the Sunday afternoon docket.

A good seven to eight hours of rest does wonders for the weary and that was evident on Sunday morning. Coffee was flowing, the energy was palpable, and smiles were brighter. By 8:00 AM, stomachs had been filled with eggs, beans and tortillas; and we readied for worship with the Montellano church family at 9:00.

Fellowship, family and friendship are three of the greatest blessings found on our surgical trips.

Forty-one have served together in the past. Amanda Covalt, Emily Neece and Lauren Robinson began coming as nursing students, Lauren from Harding University; Amanda and Emily from Oklahoma Christian University. Drs. Jack Hudkins and Michael Kohlman, general surgeons and partners bring their friendship and mischievous ways almost 2,000 miles and share it with Jack's daughter, Aubrey, or Michael's dear friend, Dr. Nathan Russell and his daughter Emma. Sisters-in law, Debbie and Lesli Shoemaker have come with their three daughters, Abby, Leigh and Savannah. Father/daughter, mother/daughter, aunts/nieces, grandfather/granddaughter, husband/wife, grandmother/granddaughter and best friends...we are all Health Talents family now.



(Amanda, Lauren and Emily above.)

Sunday surgeries went smoothly, and we finished in time for a brief devotional by our trip chaplain, Steve Tandy. (He's the one with the dynamic wife, Cindy, a wonderful Spirit-filled force of nature.) The evening ended with a prayer for our team, our patients, families back home and a great first day of school for Hannah Harvey.

Nineteen patients were on the schedule Monday and Tuesday, five plastic and fourteen general cases. Our dental clinic fired up on Monday, Guatemalan dentists, Drs. Carmen and Michelle welcomed Dr. Russell, hygienist, Lisa Sarrett, future hygienist Ashlee Sarrett, and dental lay assistants, Mike Duncan, Susan Jordan and Emma Russell.



(Daddy's girl, Emma, plotting and planning with Dad, Dr. Nathan Russell.)

Nineteen was the magic number on Wednesday as well, twenty if you count Dr. Xiomara removing a "black bean" from a child's ear. He did require anesthesia and the setting up of the ENT scope...yet took less than five minutes once started. Our patients continued to do well and one day of surgery remained.



Gordon and Patricia Corder, CRNA and RN, are among our most beloved volunteers. Gordon even returned in September when an August veteran, Janet Sessums, found herself recovering from a ruptured appendix. This was a tough week for Gordon and Patricia as their youngest, Jared, had be airlifted from the mountains he was hiking in CA after experiencing extreme difficulty breathing and chest pains. Two days after coming down the mountains, he was eating a hamburger and we all gave a sigh of relief and expressed our gratitude for answered prayers.

Thursday rolled around and we had thirteen more cases to complete, six general and seven plastic cases. A few of the plastic cases were simply changing bandages but, required loving care...and anesthesia to complete.

The August 2019 surgical team invites you to our spiritual oasis. A place to serve, a place to call a home away from home. And for our patients, a place where God is at work!

