

HEALTH TALENTS INTERNATIONAL

Surgery Clinic Trip Report

June 2-9, 2018

Team Members: Surgeons: ***Drs. Stephanie Cross***, Ben Doke, Rhys Irvine, ***Maggie Landwermeyer, Elizabeth Richardson***, George Robertson; Anesthesiologist: Drs. Mark Gruwell, Steve Walsh; Physicians: ***Linda Meade, Thomas Meade***; CRNA's: Jan DeHaven, Buddy Malone; Nurses: Nicole Baker, Mike Caldwell, ***Lora Charles, Olivia Charles***, Jeanie Damren Leslie Doke, ***Candy Hall***, Christy Hallock, Kasey House, Tianna Mashburn, Courtney McCoy, ***Diana Passaro***, Rachel Reiboldt, ***Kristen Ruiz***, Susan Thomas, Jane Walsh, ***Deanna Young***; Nursing Students: ***Emily Cook, Kiana Froelich, Savannah McMillon, Sabrina Punjabi, Katy Webber***; PA Student: Madi Harmon; Child Life Activities Coordinator: Joanna Smith; Lay Circulator: Emily Woody; Sterilization: ***David Mashburn, Philip Woody***, Cary Sills; Caregivers: Callie Doke, ***Joel Doke***, Kristi Hilton, Avery Land, John Land, Nancy Land, ***Wilson Parker***, Kay Reiboldt; Translators: ***Thiago Brito***, Megan Cannon, Kathlyn Chan, ***Marissa Maldonado, Elise Meade, Maria Mendez***, Rita Sill; s; Mascot: Fievel Reiboldt; Trip Chaplain: Kevin Owen; Trip Leader: Rick Harper.

(First-timers listed above in bold, italics.)

Suave, Spanish for smooth was the word of the week in May, June requires two words...flexible and Fuego.

Our flights were on time, and everyone arrived with their luggage, always a plus. A late departure from the airport required our first measure of flexibility as the rain was torrential and slowed our travel to the coast. Instead of arriving before 5:00 PM, the norm, it was 7:00 PM. We held off on sorting supplies and beginning patient consults long enough to have supper. Dr. Rhys Irvine, girlfriend Joanna Smith and first-time translator, Thiago Brito saw patients until 10 PM. They missed our very brief orientation as the majority of the team went to bed, thankful for the cooling rain.

We awoke to two familiar sounds; birds chirping and the patting of tortillas. A breakfast of fresh fruit, tortillas, fried plantain, eggs and black beans was laid before us.

Our worship time with the Montellano church family included the baptism of a new sister in Christ. Carlos, who delivered the sermon, was honored to perform the baptism, one of the last he will do before moving to the US.





Nine cases were scheduled for Sunday, five GYN, two ped urology and two general cases, so it was a full schedule for Sunday afternoon. Thiago, a native Brazilian, required surgery on one of his kidney's a few years back, so the consultation with a young child who needed a nephrectomy was a special case. Dr. Rhys Irvine allowed Thiago to scrub in and serve as a second assist for the child whose consultation he translated, and who captured his heart.

Surgery went well and both Rhys and Thiago have a special memory!

Though we were unaware when it began, it was during lunch that the volcano Fuego began erupting and sending ash 15,000 feet into the air. By Monday, the airport was closed, three villages were destroyed, hundreds of lives were lost, and one major highway shut down. The next few days were spent developing contingency plans for our departure and in prayer. Though we were thirty-two miles away as the crow flies, our family and friends in the US were rightfully concerned for our safety. Phone calls, texts and e-mails were the order of the day as we sought to keep everyone calm and apprised of our situation. Through it all, our team maintained their focus and continued to serve with humility and distinction.

David Owen, whose real claim to fame is being married to Jana, Healings Hands Director of Women's Ministry, is the pulpit minister the College Hills Church of Christ in Lebanon, TN. David served as our trip chaplain and did a masterful job with encouraging devotional thoughts. He would return to Tennessee with lesson material for weeks to come.

While Fuego was wreaking havoc on the country side, covering three communities in up to ten feet of ash, and sending 1,300-degree pyroclastic blasts down its slopes, we were busy delivering surgical care to ten GYN, three ped urology and three general patients. Neymar, a September 2017 patient requiring an additional procedure, made his return. Only two years old, and called the "King" by his mother, he believed it to be true and thought others should follow suit. Maybe it was the dark blonde curly hair, or the way he managed his world with a frown instead of a smile, but alas, Neymar endeared himself to all. He was the patient of the day.

Former Health Talents intern from the 80's, Dr. Thomas Meade, now a cardiologist, joined this team, along with his wife, Linda whose specialty is internal medicine, going out on mobile clinics each day. Their first day, Thomas saw a patient in need of orthopedic surgery, one leg much shorter than the other, a procedure far beyond our ability. We began networking among other ministries working in Guatemala, sharing photos, the diagnosis and within 24 hours, had a commitment by the Shalom ministry working in Guatemala City to treat nine-year old Ronaldo. As the children's song says, "Our God Is So Big."

The average surgical team requires twenty nurses, and/or surgical techs to provide optimal care. Nursing, PA and Medical students compliment this need with varying degrees of expertise, depending upon how far along they are in their studies. This trip was no exception with one PA student and five senior nursing students. Our nursing students, in addition to working a full shift in recovery, embraced the opportunity to



observe and participate in surgery. Emily, Katy, Kianna, Savannah, Sabrina, all learned to scrub in and serve as first assistants, as did PA student, Madi Harmon. When a couple of our OR nurses were battling a virus, these students were essential to our OR success. (Remember that word “flexible,” it came in to play with the virus we believe was brought down from the US.)

Monday was followed by seventeen cases on Tuesday and Wednesday, no complications either day, and finally another eleven cases on Thursday...all complication free. Fuego’s activity prompted us to forgo our Friday trip to Antigua, the conditions were unsafe, and we thought it best to go straight to Guatemala City on Friday and be as close to the airport on Saturday, hoping all the while that it would not shut down for a third time this week. Once again, the team was flexible!



We made it safely to Hotel Barcelo before noon on Friday, feeling fortunate to find twenty-four hotel rooms on such short notice. A delicious buffet and time of fellowship was enjoyed by all.

Photos were aplenty following dinner, then we had a restful, safe, quiet evening before our journey home on Saturday. Fuego cooperated, no more airport closings, and all returned home as scheduled.

(Four nursing students, one RN and one PA student in the photo to the left.)

