

# Health Talents International

ACU Spring Break Mobile Dental/Medical Team

March 12-19, 2022

Trip Participants: **Physician:** Stan Sizemore; **Dentist:** Tim Hacker and Kristin Goodwin; **Physical Therapist:** Ann Lee Bradford; **ACU Leaders:** Amber Brokaw and Autumn Sutherlin; **ACU Students:** Alicia Caughfield, David Denton, Lily Foster, Macy Frost, Katie Henderson, Aspen Malone, Chase Nolan, Alexis Pereira, Danielle Ruot and Maurica Simpson; **Caregiver:** Tammie Hacker; **Team Leader:** Rick Harper

ACU's return in 2022 is cause for great rejoicing. They were one of the last teams we hosted in 2020 and we were more than a bit excited to welcome them back. The Covid pandemic continues to rage in Guatemala, and you are required by Guatemala law to wear a mask when out in public, even inside a private vehicle. And yet, this group accepted the risks, all the while taking necessary precautions, and ultimately tested negative on March 18 before returning home safely the next day.

As airlines resumed international travel, you may have noticed a significant change in flight schedules, complete with shortened connection times. Those changes meant that our March teams flew into Guatemala City mid-afternoon or late in the evening. For ACU, it meant a 10:35 PM scheduled arrival, turning into an 2:00 AM landing after delays...and checking into our hotel rooms around 3:00 AM. This required a change in our Sunday travel plans, forgoing a 9 AM departure in favor of a noon departure for Chichi.

The team adjusted to the schedule with nary a whimper and enjoyed a late breakfast shortly before 11 AM and hit the road with tummies full and ready to see what the Lord had in store!

We arrived in Chichi shortly before 3 PM, Sunday traffic is a bit lighter than Monday through Saturday and we made great time, even stopping for a bathroom break in Tecpan.

Unloading and room check-in went quickly, allowing for a brief time to explore Chichicastenango prior to loading up and traveling to Xepocol for a worship service with the area youth.

Our time in Xepocol included an acapella song performance by Xepocol youth, songs in English, communion service, games and a bonfire.



Dr. Stan Sizemore was with us for two weeks, volunteering with the Harding team as well. He went on a long hike that Sunday, traveling to the community of Chichipaca where one of our translators lived and shared the following story with our team later in the week. For context, I am providing a backstory. (*Dr. Stan, Amber and Chase are pictured below.*)



Stan was a missionary to Guatemala in 1981, working with his wife Donna, in Quetzaltenango with Clinica Cristiana, a ministry that would later merge with Health Talents. Donna was a nurse, while Stan was an engineer at the time and would later go on to medical school. Guatemala shaped Stan's marriage and his future...and he was further refined on this trip.

Health Talents' team fled Guatemala in November of 1981 due to the civil war; Stan and Donna, along with other missionaries such as Pat and Carol Hile, all left within a few months into 1982. It is here that the story picks up.

Our translator, whose name I will respectfully decline to share, was two years old when her family received a knock on the door one evening. Huddled together in one bed, not necessarily from fear but a matter of practicality, the family of four had their lives shattered as gunfire ripped through the house, into their bed and into their lives. Father dead, mother wounded, and two children's lives forever changed.

Fast forward forty years, and our translator, complete with memories of missionaries from the churches of Christ, is supporting our ministry with her gift for languages and a heart for the Lord. Her story brought home the tragedy of that civil war, reminding us of the destructive impact on families throughout Guatemala. It helps explain the toll on widows who lost not only husbands, but sons and daughters; communities that lost generations and why these same widows come to our clinics in despair with stress and worry. It reminds us that in Christ, love, compassion, mercy and kindness are the answer. It reminds us why medical evangelism is an effective way to share the gospel!

*It should be noted that Pat Hile, beloved by thousands in the Guatemala highlands, possesses such command of the Quiche language, that he translated the gospel of Mark from Greek into Quiche for the Wycliff Bible Translator team. Just part of the legacy left behind by Pat and his recently deceased wife, Carol.*

Now back to the ACU students.

Paxot Tercero would be our primary work base on Monday and Tuesday, and we would send Dr. Kristin Goodwin back there on Wednesday with a couple of students.

Following breakfast at 7 on Monday, we loaded up for the forty-five minute ride to Paxot. Our Guatemala team had done much of the setup for dental work before we arrived and we had three complete mobile dental operatories ready to go.

Dr. Kristin Goodwin, an ACU grad who came twice as a student, was astonished by the improvement in dental health and hygiene. As a student nine years earlier, she recalled so many patients needing extractions. She, as well as Dr. Tim Hacker, were pleased to be “saving teeth”.

They were able to restore teeth using crowns, composites and amalgams for fillings!



Tammie Hacker, who came to assist her husband, Tim, graciously stepped into a different role and allowed the students to assist Tim. Tammie worked with children, encouraging them to read the hundreds of books we brought and to tap into their creative nature with drawings and games. As a former special education teacher, Tammie was uniquely qualified to serve in this meaningful role.

Bedtime reading, or reading in general, is not part of the rural culture and teaching creative thinking is uncommon in their schools.

*And a special thank you to Maurica Simpson, a journalism major who took hundreds of pictures and interviewed many on our team...what a talent!*



The ACU students, most of them going into healthcare, embraced the opportunity to provide the ABC children coming for semi-annual exams with basic health screenings, taking vitals and administering eye exams. Upon completion of one child's chart, they dutifully waiting with that child to visit one of our licensed providers for a thorough medical exam. This provided the students with the opportunity to listen, observe, learn and

serve. The experience helps these students refine their dreams, their aspirations and for at least one student, may lead her into a life of missions and medical evangelism.

Over the course of two days in Paxot, we delivered care to 129 children. The ensuing days, one day at Paxot for Dr. Goodwin, Saquilla and Caris for others, we touched 148 children and approximately 100 hundred non-ABC patients.

(Dr. Tim Hacker with his translator and dental assistant.)



The last photo is of our team prior to leaving for Antigua on Friday morning. We did our best to glorify God and I believe we were successful. At the very least, we are better for having served alongside our Guatemala brethren and the Health Talents team.

