

Health Talents International

March 11-18, 2017

Eye and Ortho Surgery

Trip Participants: **Orthopedic Surgeons:** Jason Brashear, Mike Cannone; **Anesthesiologists:** Mark Gruwell, Sandra Lumby; **Ophthalmologists:** Larry Patterson, Michael Patterson; **Dentist:** Bob Huffstutter, DDS; **Physical Therapist:** Christina Frohlich; **Physician Assistant:** Louis McDaniel; **Surgical Tech:** Jason Andersen, Sarah Wilson; **Ophthalmic Assistants:** Cassie Jo Stone; **RN's:** Rachel Betts, Leah Bradshaw, Freda Fuller, Jenn Scanlon, Beathany Seamons; Michelle Roberts; **Nursing Student:** Shea Mincher; **Lipscomb Faculty:** Alan Bradshaw, PhD; **Lipscomb Student Leaders:** Addison Grover, Kaylyn Attig; **Caregivers:** Shayna Andersen, Cameron Brashers, Heath Bridges, Anna Cannone, Gabby Cannone, Amy Carpio, Elizabeth Cluck, Emilie Doeble, Alexa Erazo, Mason Forchetti, Macie Glassco, Andie Goode, Stephen Hemmerly, Breckin Horton, Graysen McConnel, Deion Sims, Lexie Vasilikos, Colin Vasseur, Mary Welch; Chloe Higgins; **Translator:** Rita Sills; **Sterilization:** Cary Sills; **HTI Team Leader:** Rick Harper

March 2017 would bring the largest number of Health Talents volunteers ever recorded with two surgical teams to Clinica Ezell and two mobile medical/dental teams to Clinica Caris...this report is on the first one, the March surgical team.

As is common in this era of airline consolidation, schedules and the price of airfare meant our team members were flying on four different airlines, some arriving on Friday night and others on Saturday. All arrived safely with only person missing luggage, Christina Frohlich, and her bags arrived Monday afternoon, a mere two days late.

Dr. Sandra Lumby blazed a trail for us as the first anesthesiologist from Central America (Nicaragua) to join one of our surgical teams as an anesthesia provider. Dr. Lumby was known to Health Talents since her husband used to be one of our physicians in the Guatemala highlands. We teamed her with first timer, Dr. Mark Gruwell, himself a Spanish speaker, in an effort to ensure we had no communication issues in the OR with our orthopedic surgery. She was magnificent and Dr. Mark Gruwell is already looking for his next opportunity to join us.

Our travel to Clinica Ezell was uneventful with more than a few catching a nap after an early morning start to the day. We arrived around 5:00 PM, quickly unloaded, unpacked and began seeing patients.

Following worship services on Sunday morning, we began surgery with nine eye patients on the list and one orthopedic case. The majority of our orthopedic patients were screened Sunday afternoon and scheduled for surgery on Monday and Tuesday when we had the services of a local Arthrex representative. The relationship with Arthrex began two years ago when Dr. Mike Cannone was determined to find a way for us to do ACL repair and called his Ohio rep asking for help. His persistence yielded a wonderful relationship which has blessed many with greater mobility and the ability to provide for their family.

Sunday's results, ten and counting.

Dr. Bob Huffstutter, a dentist and elder at the Jackson Street Church of Christ in Monroe has joined several July trips, but this was his first time in March. Not only did it provide him with the opportunity to teach and mentor several pre-dental students from Lipscomb University, he performed a remarkable forty root canals over the course of four days. The addition of our new digital dental imaging system was a key component to maximizing his time and providing optimal care to our patients.

The Arthrex rep showed up as scheduled on Monday morning and after a quick review of the equipment he brought, we began the first of three ACL repairs for the week and a total of four orthopedic cases for the day. One of those cases was an implant of a titanium plate to repair a tibia fracture. A little over one year ago, Health Talents received some donated orthopedic equipment, including a tray of implants...they were put to good use on Monday.

Drs. Larry and Michael Patterson were rolling through the cases, thanks in part to the skill of two surgical techs, Jason Andersen and Sarah Wilson, and ophthalmic assistant Cassie Jo Stone. Nineteen cases were completed on Monday, twenty-one on Tuesday and twenty-three on Wednesday with a total of seventy-eight for the week. The university students played a key role in this, helping with patient prep, patient transport and all around tender care.

Tuesday saw the aforementioned twenty-one cases as well as seven orthopedic cases. All the while, Luis Razon was delivering ABC supplies, with the help of students, to our partnering churches along the coastal plain and adjacent mountains. Three of our seven cases on Tuesday were knee arthroscopies and one, a titanium wrist implant.



Dr. Michael Patterson

For the third year in a row, we were blessed to have physical therapist, Christina Frohlich, with us. She team up with Noe Chan, the physical therapy provider on our Guatemala team, to provide post-operative care to our surgical patients.

With no ortho cases scheduled for Wednesday, our surgeons joined mobile medical teams, an opportunity not often afforded to them. The end result was six more cases scheduled for Thursday after seeing patients in the rural communities, and one urgent case that very day.

I recall commenting that while our Wednesday schedule was light, we did not yet know what God had scheduled...and he did have at least one scheduled for us!



Future RN, Shea Mincher

A diabetic patient showed up at the Nahualate clinic on Wednesday morning and Dr. Patricia Velasquez noticed a large ulcer on her heel. Dr. Jason Brashears with her and as they began examining her wound, the stench of decaying skin was almost more than some of the students could bear. Unable to feel the ever growing ulcer, our patient was approaching the point of gangrene setting in and eventually losing her foot or leg. She was given an appointment at Clinica Ezell and arrived shortly after lunch for debridement of her wound. After all decaying skin and infection was removed, you could have placed a golf ball inside her heel.

Six eye and five ortho cases were on tap for Thursday, a light day was the standard this team had set, so we found another way to care for a few more selective patients, this time dental patients.

Having Drs. Gruwell and Lumby there to provide anesthesia care opened up the opportunity for us to put a few young children under general anesthesia, for procedures they could not have in a dental chair without some form of sedation. Dr. Silvia Albizures, our head dentist on the coast, completed three cases with the assistance of Dr. Lumby.

All surgery was completed in time to send a busload of volunteers to the chocolate farm and we began to face the reality that our week together was coming to an end. Yes, we still had one more day together in Guatemala, but a chapter was closing for some and opening for others. A few of the Lipscomb students had come to Guatemala four years in a row and were about to graduate.

We can only hope that they follow in the footsteps of Jenn Scanlon and Bethany Seamons, both Lipscomb students who began coming with Spring Break teams and who returned this year, as professional nurses.

There is a reason we host Spring Break teams from various Christian universities and it is not because it is financially profitable. We believe it is profitable for the Kingdom of God and the future of Health Talents as a ministry.



Kaylyn, Mary and Lexie in Xejeyp

The baptism of Lexie Vasilikos on frigid Friday night in a swimming pool at the foot of the volcano, Agua, brought the week to a wonderful close.

