

**Health Talents International**  
**2019 Oklahoma Christian Summer Break Team**

The April 2019 Oklahoma Christian University Mission trip to the Highlands of Guatemala included the following students: veterans - McKenna Box, Gian McLaughlin, Reid Reding, Brandon Reed, Caleb Ruff, Andrew Bruce, Whitney Bohannon and Sidney Wilkins and first times, Amy Giemza and Hadley LaMascus. Faculty sponsors were Eric Phelps, PhD and Sara Alcorn, PhD. The rest of the team included returning veterans Dentists Owen and Debbie Corwin, Dr. Neil Roberts (Gastroenterologist), Dr. Katie Kramer (Family Medicine) and also Dr. Terry (dentist) and Judy Wilkins, grandparents to one of the OCU students, Sidney. Dr. Katie first came with HTI as a Medical Evangelism Training (MET) intern in 2009.

The Medical Evangelism Training program of Health Talents International is a program designed to provide North American university students with a real-life medical evangelism experience by working in clinics in the area of the highlands and coastal plains of Guatemala. The primary aim of this program is to encourage students to consider medical evangelism as a valid avenue of service for their lives, either as a full-time participant or as an active supporter. We are happy to see Dr. Katie Kramer joining a long list of other medical professionals active in medical evangelism either on a short-term basis or long-term basis. In addition, one of the students from this OCU group will be joining the MET interns of 2019 beginning in May of 2019.

Dr. Phelps has been leading this group for the last six years. He is an example of how to prepare students for a medical mission. The students meet several times prior to the trip and learn to take and record vital signs. This allows them to begin assisting the HTI staff on day one. The students come prepared with their own scrubs and a medical bag containing stethoscope, blood pressure cuffs, thermometers and other supplies that might be needed. They have gained experience in Oklahoma by volunteering at the Lighthouse, a free clinic in Oklahoma City that serves a predominately Hispanic population. The students have also learned key phrases in Spanish and the local dialect of Quiche.

Here is a reflection of the trip from a student named Reid Redding.

Guatemala 2019

*This was my second year to travel to Guatemala and serve the extremely deserving community that makes up the town of Chichicastenango and its surrounding villages. Unsurprisingly, I was blown away by the impact that this town and its people made on me and my friends' lives. To start off the week, we attended a church service with the youth group at a Church of Christ in Xepocol. Worshipping with this group was honestly one of the most meaningful experiences of the trip because it reminded me that we all worship one God who is bigger than each of us individually and it set my focus for the week: showing God's love to every person I encountered. The members of the church were very welcoming and reinforced the idea that we are all God's children, brothers and sisters in Christ, regardless of where we come from or the number of differences we may have. We were able to sing and worship together in different languages, knowing that we have a common purpose that united us.*

*Throughout the week, I had the privilege to serve at clinics different clinics in the area. I got to visit many local villages and work alongside American and Guatemalan doctors, nurses, and dentists. Each community that I visited had its own ambiance, but it was evident that everyone in each village cared deeply for one another, which was refreshing. Before starting the doctor visits each day, each clinic began in prayer to ensure that the patients and the volunteers both understood that we were working through God and that He was the reason we could all come together. I was able to visit Clinica Caris two times, which allowed me to visit with a multitude of patients, each going through his or her own hardships or prosperities. A different day, I went to a clinic with only one other American student, a native nurse practitioner, and a dentist. This was one of my favorite days of clinic for many reasons: I was not surrounded by many Americans, so I got a better feel for the typical Guatemalan workday, allowing me to experience Guatemalan culture at its purest; I also got to work one-on-one with the nurse practitioner, which was very exciting.*

*The best part of the whole trip was each relationship I developed with the people we served while working in the clinics. Each person I encountered was grateful for everything that he/she had and was ecstatic to be seen by a doctor. It was humbling to realize that true joy comes from the heart, fellowshiping with others, and taking the time to talk to people and hear more about who they are. The families who prepared the meals for us each day were beyond generous to give up the food they had worked hard for, but in their minds, it was a simple act of service toward us. We went to serve the people of Guatemala; however, I believe that they served us just as much.*

Each day the group was distributed in 2 to 3 different teams to serve in both regular clinics which has its share of acute and chronic diseases and well child checkups for HTI ABC program which is a child sponsorship program emphasizing family participation in church and children participation in school. This program has been instrumental in strengthening the church, the family and the physical and spiritual health of the kids in the program. We have seen less parasitic infections, better dental hygiene, creation and development of more children's Bible classes based on age of the child, spiritual maturity of growing teenagers, involvement of parents and elderships, and an increased school retention rate which more and more kids continuing many years of school more than their parents and previous generations.

All in all, about 12 different communities and clinics were served, seeing around 300 medical patients and 250 dental patients which both included sick patients and ABC program patients. Dental care of the ABC children included tooth brushing education and application of Silver Diamine Floride which the Corwin's helped begin a couple of years back. SDF is used to stop the growth of cavities. Medical care included well child checkups and an educational topic with the family such as sexual education, hygiene education or the importance of school and good grades. Extra activities included library time with ABC students and delivery and education of water filters for new ABC families.

A new tradition was created with the OCU group of the visiting group singing a song and the Guatemala staff singing a song in K'iche before going to clinic. Above all, we pray God was honored and glorified in the service and unity demonstrated by the US and Guatemalan brothers and sisters who came to serve.



















