

Health Talents International
General/GYN Surgery Clinic
October 4-11, 2014
Trip Report

Participants: *General Surgeon* Drs. Tony Fillmore and George Robertson; *Gyns* Drs. Bob Cleveland, Janeel Crawford and Ana-Maria Gray; *Family Practice Emergency* Dr. David Brazzel ; *Anesthesiologist* Dr. Buster Herren; *CRNAs* Desiree Cherye, Jeff Cherye and Jackie McLean; *SRNA* Abbey Gurgeveich; *Nurse Practitioners* Carol Bompert and Danielle Santiago; *OR Nurses* Elizabeth Beazley, Jeanie Damren, Barbara Jones, Janet McNeil, Saroj Singh and Barbara Van Beckum; *Floor Nurses* Ryan Beseda, Kayla Bond, Connie Campbell, Illa Cox, Carol Faust, Erin Gonzalves, Jacqui Hurd, Toni Hawkins, Katie Saad and Cheryl Winfield; *Paramedic* Christopher Giboney; *C.N.A.* Brittany Cox; *PA Student* Whitney Powaser; *Translators* Cynthia Allen, Olguita Brazzel, Amy Class, Ruth Cross, Jennifer Dekker, Erika Dore, Mark Ketchersid, Tony Martinez and Rita Sills; *Sterilization Crew* Cary Sills and Deb Wright; *Caregivers* Cassie Camp, Jane Dye, Mary Greenidge, Kim Lawson, Karen Morrison, Heather Russo, Harriette Shivers and Pam Vincent; *Trip Chaplain* Randy Wray *Team Leader* Rick Harper.

We continue to monitor and adjust to the ever changing travel landscape due to airline consolidations. This year, thirty team members flew into Guatemala City on Friday and enjoyed a good night of rest, while the remainder of the team flew down on Saturday. One team member, Amy Class, had her flight canceled, but arrived on Saturday night...and we only had one bag misplaced, and it was delivered on Sunday by Delta.

This team, much like others throughout the year, was blessed with volunteers from throughout North America, hailing from twelve states and Canada.

We arrived at Clinica Ezell earlier than most trips and had plenty of time to unload, sort, inventory put away the surgical supplies and medicine we brought down in our luggage. It always takes a couple of hours and to the first-timer, looks like a fire sale. But this is really helpful as the surgeons are seeing patients with the aid of translators, while anesthesia is prepping equipment. And on this occasion, anesthesia was checking out some new equipment.



(Jeff, Desiree, Abbey, Jackie and Buster...the October dream team.)



We awoke Sunday morning, following a good night of rest, to an excellent breakfast of eggs, beans, tortillas, fresh juice and Guatemalan coffee. Old friends caught up on life since their last trip together and new friendships were forged. Sunday morning is a time to become acclimated and prepare to worship with the Montellano church family. Following worship, the pace would pick up as we held our major orientation, ate lunch and began surgery. The team had three, first-time surgeons in Drs. Bob Cleveland, Janeel Crawford and Tony Fillmore and were joined by HTI veterans, Drs. Ana-Maria Gray, George Robertson.

Within an hour of surgery beginning, representatives from a local lab arrived to collect blood from our volunteers willing to donate. As a precaution to emergency needs, we try to maintain 3-4 units of O positive blood to start the week. This is a good practice and our plans were fortuitous as we needed two units before the night was out. One of our patients had a large cyst that upon removal, by itself contained almost a unit of blood, and when coupled with blood during surgery, needed two units to ensure a safe and speedy recovery.

Day one yielded ten general cases and three GYN!

Randy Wray served as our trip chaplain this week and in addition to outstanding Spanish skills and an excellent student of the Bible, Randy brought the insight of a missionary kid whose family served for many years in El Salvador. His gift for communicating biblical truth in a succinct and powerful manner enriched our team throughout the week.

(Randy, second from the left, with Dr. Nehemias Lopez, Lester, Danielle and Jayro.)



Board members Cynthia Allen and Harriette Shivers were busy interviewing scholarship students Sunday and Monday at Clinica Ezell and then traveled to Chichicastenango on Tuesday for interviews on Wednesday and Thursday. By the time their week was over, a total of 43 students were interviewed and another 9 had been interviewed a couple of weeks earlier. Twenty-six students have been recommended for scholarships in 2015!

We had sixteen patients slated for surgery on Monday, but knew that a couple were going to be challenging and that we might have to delay a couple of cases. We ended up completing four GYN cases and twelve general cases and moving two patients over to Tuesday. However, that was not before one of our Sunday patients was brought back in following complications. Though she was experiencing some internal bleeding, we found no bleeding arteries or suture issues. We finally concluded that it was simply bleeding from muscle and tissue as she did fine after receiving two units of blood. (We had called the lab back in that morning and sought two more volunteers...a good thing.)

Tuesday and Wednesday went smoothly and come Thursday morning, we only had a few cases remaining. A large group traveled to San Lucas Toliman and we ended the week with 54 major surgical cases and three minor cases not requiring anything more than local anesthesia.

One patient remained was suffering from bowel blockage and was transferred to a local hospital on Friday afternoon, but was able to evacuate later that evening and was sent home over the weekend. One week later, each patient returning for their post-operative checkup showed excellent results and good progress in healing.

We have learned to never take things for granted and remain grateful when all of patients do well and each team member safely returns home. For this...we give thanks and God the glory.

