

Trip Report – Guatemala

Jan 31-Feb 26th. 2016– Anne, Laura Ruch, Cydney Siggins

Feb 17-24th. 2016 –Randy, Tim Kuhn, Jessica Schulte

Accommodations

We all stayed at the Hotel Los Lagos. Nice place. No problems. Wish we could do it more cheaply. There was a German guy working in the restaurant across the street who has a house on Flores that he rents out. The whole house can be rented for \$1000 for a month. It has 4 bedrooms. One bedroom has a private bath and the other 3 share a bathroom. Also has a kitchen, dining area, internet, TV. The bedroom with bed is Q150 per night and the other bedrooms are Q80 per night. Something we might consider if we have bigger groups. His name is Patrick

Regional Hospital in San Benito

Esther Flores– Nurse from Global Health Program at OSU who is currently volunteering at the Regional Hospital in San Benito. She brings down med students and residents from OSU. She has a non-profit called 1Divineline2health. Her phone number in Guatemala is 502-4125-0073 and number in the U.S. is 614-313-0544. She was very helpful and enabled Laura and Cydney to spend 2 days in the hospital observing births and surgeries – very educational for them.

She set up a meeting with me and the Hospital Director (Dr. Victor Eduardo Morales – vemoralesg03@gmail.com. Phone is 5203 9317)as well as the physician Director for Ob/Gyn (Dr Carlos Diaz – 4150 5871). They were very friendly and receptive to collaborating with us. We talked about shipping stuff down to them from Toledo Hospital and they were very positive about receiving things that they actually needed - not the usual “junk for Jesus”!!

They are thinking about ways they could

Boy with Thyroid Cancer

Abner Yobani Garrido Diaz

12 years old

Diagnosed with papillary/follicular thyroid cancer with pulmonary mets in Feb, 2015. He had thyroidectomy and radiation treatment and now has recurrence. His mother is Cleotida Diaz (4159 9707) . I have contacted Dr. Jim Geisler at U of M about possibly helping with him. His mom is currently working on getting slides and films to send to U of M.

Things we need for the clinic (attached)

Education Program

Currently working out of Ismael’s “Ranchero”. Seiner seems to be working out great! The children have a lot of respect for him and he is doing many more things now besides just the computer work.

We spent quite a bit of time getting photos and information for all of the children to be presented at the LEAP event.

I didn't really get to do much with the kids.

Laura and Cydney and myself spent sometime working with the children. We were amazed at how they have advanced through the computer programs. Some of them are even reducing fractions! This is huge.

Internet

An ongoing issue. All options were explored in detail including getting a satellite dish, using modems, putting in a tower.

Jim and Doug will be going there on March 8th to work with Ismael further on this.

2016 Planning

Ismael, Orfe and I spent most of a full day working on the planning and budget that they had sent me in combination with the work we all did during our Annual Meeting. Very productive – I feel they are very focused and they will be sending monthly reports based on what was written up. I will present at next Board meeting.

2016 Annual Meeting with SewHope Guatemala Board

Very productive

We presented all of what was done in 2015. They were very impressed with the new building. I will attach minutes of that meeting to this document.

They had lots of great ideas about the cervical cancer prevention project. They seemed to become much more committed to this work.

Job Responsibilities for Mayra

Attached

Licensing for SewHope clinic

Dr. Luckey Hernandez is currently working on this with Ismael

We all need to have temporary licenses whenever we travel there. If we know the dates in advance, we can get the licenses for a year.

Visit to Concern America Clinic with Susanna in Las Cruces

Susanna is an American physician who has been working in Guatemala for many years. I am guessing her to be in her 70's because she said her children were around 50. Her children lived there when they were young.

Her clinic is impressive – very basic and yet, meets a lot of needs. Very well stocked with many different kinds of meds. She is very knowledgeable about tropical disease and the medical problems faced there.

She trains health promoters and they work in villages. I was very impressed but then I realized that one of those health promoters is one of the women who is

working at the Casa Materna. Although the women are supposed to be able to read, it is not a requirement. I am realizing how important it is to be able to do this.

Interviews with radio and television

I was surprised to find out that these interviews were happening. As much as I hated it, many good things happened. Because we were on TV, one of the women who worked in our hotel came to me asking for paps. I did the paps on 8 people and as it turned out, one had a Stage 1 cervical cancer. Her life will probably be saved. So as much as I hate notoriety, you can see how important these things are.

Clinic

Can't say enough about how well the clinic went. I was a bit worried about having enough patients but every day it seemed to work out perfectly. Somedays we were a bit inundated and we had to move quickly. But most day people trickled in throughout the day and we had a chance to spend meaningful time with everyone.

One day we were a bit slow so Laura and Cydney rode around in an ambulance with Orfe announcing that "women are dying all over the world from cervical cancer but we are here to help!!" We laughed so much over this but within an hour we had 50 patients!

The EMR worked great and Orfe was able to enter all the pertinent information in the computer before we saw the patient.

Laura and Cydney astounded me with their compassion and passion to treat every patient with the utmost respect and concern. One man came in with Carpal Tunnel syndrome from working with a machete every day and Cydney looked hard to find him a wrist splint and to talk to him about some PT things he could do. He honestly left crying saying that he had never been treated like this before from medical people.

We all took great pains to make sure that each person left feeling loved and cared for. I really felt that the structure of the clinic contributed to this great sense of love. When you were busy and walked out of a room, you could see a beautiful view and somehow it reminded you of the goodness of our God.

Our team working on the clinic

So of course, Ismael was frantically working on everything at the clinic to make it better. And then when Randy and Tim arrived, things went into top speed. They put in a pila in the room designed to clean instruments. They worked on the electricity and internet and hanging things on the block walls and pretty much everything that needed to be done.

Vaccinations

We had the great fortune to have a student who was getting a masters in Public Health at UT to join us. Her purpose was to interview the women to find out if their

children were receiving the appropriate vaccines. We learned a TON through this. In addition to doing the interviews, her presence allowed us to meet with the local promoters to find out their perception of all of this. The strong message that we heard was that the people have a very warped sense of what a vaccine is. And many of the vaccines are stolen and sold to local health clinics.

Vitamins

As bad as I thought that vitamin distribution was in the past, this trip reinforced why we should NEVER distribute vitamins there unless the woman is pregnant. In the past I knew that women were spending inordinate amounts of money on vitamins but on this trip I realized that they are putting cortisol or such drugs into the vitamins so of course, the people are feeling better and they think it is because of the vaccines.

We have to be sure not to distributed these unless the woman is of childbearing age.

Mayra Martinez

I can't say enough good about Mayra. She is smart, hard-working, skilled and very professional. She helped us in every way during the month. I'd like to hire her immediately at a good wage. She has already been offered jobs as a cytotech in the Peten.

Our first day here in Guatemala. Each trip is always shaped a bit by those who accompany me and this is no different. How awesome to have "mi hija" with me and also another wonderful med student, Cydney Siggins, a fourth year med student at Dartmouth University.

I have to say that I was like a proud mother showing off the new clinic to the two of them. There was a nice breeze and a bright beautiful sun out when we got there. I could see the pride in Ismael's face also. No longer do we have to sweat it out in a hot and dreary building that was rented so we couldn't improve it. Bright rooms have a cool breeze going through them throughout the day which makes for happier staff AND happier patients. The patients often comment "muy profesional" which I think makes them feel that they are receiving the kind of care that the privileged receive.

Spent a day with Orfe and Ismael reviewing budget and activities for 2016.

Laura and Cydney put fluoride varnish on teeth of children in program. We also has a class with the children about dental care.

They also helped me get the handprints for the gift we will be giving to Lisa Gathard

Saw about 1000 patients – 405 pap smears. While I tried to limit it to Ob/GYn, it was impossible. People would come in under "pretense" of getting a pap but actually wanted other things. I had brought tons of meds and so we readily gave out meds for diabetes, hypertension and gastritis as well as ibuprofen.

Plan is that those patients will follow back up and Mayra can record their progress in the EMR and then refill.

We charged Q10 for all meds and Q15 for pap and consult. I think we netted about Q15,000 during whole month.

Saw the gamut of heachache, hypertension, gastritis, flu, women's health issues, goiters, boy with thyroid cancer

One day we were a bit slow so Laura, Cydney and Orfe rode all over Santa Ana announcing that "women are dying of cancer. SewHope is here to prevent this! It was pretty hilarious and pretty soon we were flooded with patients.

I met with the director of the regional hospital in San Benito as well as the director of Gyn services. Good to have them know us. They were very hospitable. Allowed Laura and Cydney to observe general and gyn surgeries as well as deliveries for 2 days.

Had separate jornadas in Poptun and Sayaxche.

Had annual meeting with Guatemalan Board of Directors. In addition to Isabel, Tita and Luckey, Jose Bertranas came up from Guatemala City. Jose is the head of Rotary down there and is working with me on the global Rotary grant.

They were extremely impressed with all the progress and promised to be more involved this year.

Visited "Dra. Susanna" in her clinic in Las Cruces. She is affiliated with Concern America. She trains health promoters. Her clinic is impressive and it was great to meet her. I can see where we might have good collaboration in the future. Mayra trained with her and Mayra will continue to work with her a day a week for further training.

Met with Esther Flores who is the nurse from OSU who is volunteering at the hospital in San Benito. She helped us get the meetings with the docs there. She is very passionate about missionary work and about finding ways to collaborate with the local docs. She will be back in the US next month.

We had a little didactic on why you should worry about your teeth. I took a couple of videos of the kids talking about why they like the clinic.

Went to Claro to get modems - picked up my suitcase from TACA.

Set up 2 meetings with Dr. Norman Gutierrez about working in our clinic. He did not show up for either and didn't call to cancel for the second. I actually saw several

patients that had seen him and I think his quality of care is less than we would want for the clinic.

The week has brought its share of satisfaction, frustration, laughter. Through it all, I always feel God's grace pulling us along.

We see the gamut of mundane to tragic; pregnant girls excitedly seeing their babies for the first time on ultrasound welcoming a new life with anticipation and joy; another sadly experiencing a miscarriage....too many girls with frightening stories of sexual and violent abuse.....

Somehow God seems to always provide what we need. On Friday, we were all feeling a little overwhelmed and helpless in knowing how to deal with so many stories of girls telling frightening stories of sexual abuse and domestic violence. Out of nowhere a psychologist with many years of experience in dealing with these girls came and said she would like to volunteer with us one day each week. She was able to connect us with an organization that provides help for these girls.

Education program

3 became pregnant this year

2 graduated from high school

Orfe and Ismael were disappointed that most of the students that have received money from us this year did not come as asked to show their graduation certificates.

The cervical cancer prevention program is continuing to expand. Mayra Martinez completed her education in cytotechnology and now she is working for us full time! She is able to read the paps as we do them so that we can treat people immediately. We will of course be bringing all the paps back for review by our own cytotechs in Ohio but with time, I believe we will have a complete high-quality pap program with a cytology school here.

Laura and Cydney are doing an outstanding job in this challenging environment. We put in long hours and Laura commented the other day "Hmmm.....this is kind of like a regular OB rotation!" They amazed me with their Spanish skills and their ability to figure out what is needed from patients who live lives so different to what we are accustomed to hearing about. Sometimes it's a simple treatment for headaches or gastritis and other times a biopsy for unusual bleeding or a treatment of a precancerous cervical lesion.

We also had some time for laughter. Cydney wants to bring home *a machete* so she can cut her own coconuts so Ismael gave her a full lesson in the best cutting techniques! Popping open coconuts and drinking fresh coconut water is a pretty

special treat. Ran a 5 K race with some of the children in our program. Two of our boys took 1st and 2nd place for kids under 13 and Laura and Cydney took 1st and 2nd place for all females! Because we were there, they called it an “International Race”! Randy says we have Gringa power! Laura and I ran most mornings.