

## **Trip Report – Anne Ruch**

Feb 2 – Feb 23 2018

**Who** : Anne Ruch, Rachel Easley, Tiffany Slutz, Tim Kuhn, Rose Ciesla (Feb 18-21), Randy Ruch (Feb 15-23)

**Travel**: Through Belize. Picked up by Dwight Tennet and met at border by Ismael Martinez. Approx 6 hour driving time. Benefit was substantial cost benefit. Decided it is worth it for a larger group but not if just one or 2 people are traveling. Also because Ismael has to drive all the way to the border, it does not give the advantage of people coming in and out at different times

**Accommodation**: First time staying at new hostel  
Hostal is outstanding!! Very comfortable. Beds are great. Bathrooms more than sufficient. Gathering central room works well for eating, meeting, devotional time, large meeting space (we used it for our annual meeting). Kitchen is modern and definitely sufficient for preparing large meals.

We hired Seiner's grandmother to do the cooking which worked out really well. She seems agreeable to doing this again.

Water pressure is great.

Electric works well in all rooms

Internet is a bit slow and at times you have to go out onto porch to have it work but it is sufficient.

Tim spent long days working on various projects – Additional wiring, Lighting on the front porch, Wiring and plumbing in the outdoor bathroom, shower area. Installation of large tank which will provide “warmer” water for our showers. Installation of pump so that water pressure is **greatly increased**. He also repaired burners on stove and worked on washing machine

Randy did numerous construction projects and he and Ismael began construction on a small separate office within the main office at the clinic. The layout will give Ismael a private space to do all of his administrative work. It will also change the layout of the room to make it easier to talk with patients in private when we are getting their histories.

## **Programs:**

### **Medical** **Cervical Cancer**

- Paps – 415 done

- Biopsies – 20
- LEEP – 3
- Cryo – 3
- Invasive Cancer – 3
- Referrals to INCAN – 3
  
- Referrals to San Benito for hysterectomy – 3
  
- First use of new portable colposcope. Purchased in Jan, 2018. Worked well. Good magnification. Able to keep records, send pictures and save information.
  
- Access to nitrous oxide more difficult. Cost skyrocketed from Q1000 to Q5000 so Ismael traveled 5 hours to get gas at same cost.
  
- Meeting with Dra. Xiomara and Veronica at Health District in Poptun. Talked about increasing our collaboration. They have had no 95% alcohol or stains since December. Their total number of paps was reported at 971 in 2017 **with no abnormals! (They recognize this has to be incorrect)** This total number has been gradually decreasing since 2014 when it was almost 4000.
  
- I learned that there are 3 health districts in the Peten –
  - Peten Norte (San Benito)
  - Poptun – Our clinic in Santa Ana is in this district
  - Sayaxche
  
- They would like us to provide them with the stains and alcohol. I told them we would work on this but we would have to have an agreement where we would be able to get the results of the paps and also have access to the slides (which we would return). Veronica thought they could do 600 per month.
  
- For now, they have 100 paps (total since last July) that need to be read. They would like to know if we could stain them. We agreed to if they will send us their results after we stain them. We thought Mayra could read the slides and evaluate the quality of the preparation of the slides.
  
- We had additional meeting with the Chief of Staff at San Benito Hospital to just reacquaint ourselves. He is appreciative of the work we are doing in Cervical Cancer. They continue to refer patients to us for cryo (cryo gun does not work) and biopsies and they seem happy to take our referrals to them for simple hysterectomies.
  
- I was embarrassed and apologetic that the ultrasound machine we gave them in November did not work. I am thinking it might be a nice gesture to buy them a cryo gun and bring it in May.

- There were some days that were not as busy as we would have liked. We felt this was because we had not had a social worker this last few months. We ended up contacting one (Claudia) who helped us find more patients
- We had one jornada to Santa Amelia (saw 99 patients) and one to Sayaxche (65 patients).

### **Other Medical**

- Mayra continues to do outstanding work. She put in long days with us and did most of the check-in. We did 2 of all of the paps and she will be reading them after we left
- The list of patients that are being followed for hypertension and diabetes was much smaller than I had anticipated. We talked about that and ways to expand that program.
- Mayra was eager to have a more specific list of her job responsibilities which I promised I would send her when I returned.
- Had meeting with Dra. Susanna in Las Cruces to talk about ways we could further collaborate. She said she would help us potentially find an additional 1-2 health promoters who could work in our clinic. She typically pays them Q100 per day and they outstanding work
- **Dra Deysi** worked with us on most days. I had the general impression that she is well trained. She seemed to consult with me about very appropriate cases. Seemed to have good knowledge of tropical medicine and was very helpful and eager to work.

She is willing to work with us now. We agreed on 3 days a week to start (at Q400 per day) which could grow if she becomes busy. She is actually applying to get into a surgery residency and if accepted, she would start next December. We are hoping that during these months, she will help to grow our program there and perhaps we can find another young doctor when she leaves. She had some potential ideas.

- I reviewed the current written protocols that Mayra is following (written by Dra. Susanna). They are very complete and helpful. They will be discussed at our next Medical Committee meeting

- Mayra had ordered all meds and supplies that we needed prior to our trip

## **Education**

- Students continue to be extremely excited to come to school. They appear happy, well behaved and eager
- Students now receive a small breakfast when they arrive (ramon cookie and milk) as well as the KAH meal (with added vegetables) after class
- Seiner continues to be excited and animated with his job.
- We hired a new teacher named Lorena. There were 7 applicants in less than one day after Hanssel Martinez posted the job on facebook. We had all the applicants take the math test that we had given to Seiner (math word problems – 6<sup>th</sup> grade level). All applicants failed the test but Rachel picked the 2 best and she interviewed them and picked one, Lorena. She met with Seiner and was observed for one day working in the class and all agreed that she was a reasonable choice given the very limited options. She cannot multiply and we are not sure of her level of reading but she is very enthusiastic and excellent with the children. She is eager to learn and we hope that she will gradually improve in her knowledge.
- Rachel took pics of all the students for Roxanne to use for our Student Sponsorship program at LEAP
- Students made cards for their sponsors
- Rose Ciesla spent 2 days with the children in the classroom. Gloria and Marge had made them this incredible felt wall hanging with many felt pieces that could be put on it to use creatively in many ways
- Rachel spent time in the classroom and will provide an evaluation in a separate report.
- **Field Trip to Tikal**  
Tiffany, Rose and Seiner accompanied 25 children to Tikal. Antonio served as the guide. Sounds like it was an excellent learning experience and overall very successful day.

## **Public Health Projects**

- **Women's co-op** continues to be very successful with 11 women. They had a meeting while we were there. Chicken program has been successful and they had 150 chickens which were all raised and sold for a profit. The women paid SewHope back for the investment in the project. Their only difficulty selling the chickens was that the people thought they should sell them for less than the usual because SewHope had helped. After long discussion, the women decided to raise 200 chickens in the next round.
- Elder is doing an outstanding job planting and harvesting the vegetables and fruits. We have watermelon, cantaloupe, maringa, tomatoes, numerous fruit trees, cilantro, whiskil, yucca, quilote, more?? The women were especially excited about the quilote since this has been historically hard to grow and they love it in their soups and stews.
- Discussion with Ismael, Randy and Elder about building a small tienda to sell the products and also bread products (such as quesadillas, pan de yucca, pan de banana) that could be baked in the large horno
- We took 2 trips to 2 separate villages, Santa Ana Viejo and Rosalita – both are a short distance from our clinic and are in the Santa Ana municipality
- Mayra gave a PowerPoint presentation about the importance of adequate water intake and the need for potable water. She discussed how water becomes contaminated and how contaminated water affects us. She touched on issues regarding keeping animals out of the house, ways to decontaminate the water (boiling, chloride and water filters). She demonstrated one of our water filters and told the communities that they could talk with Ismael about getting one of the “Clean Water for the World” large filters.
- She showed a short video about how cholera was spread in a village in Africa and how it can be prevented.
- We talked to them about cervical cancer and offered free paps on the following day to all the women in the community. About 20 women from each village came.
- Mayra and Ismael also talked with them about opportunity to start a women's garden co-op that could be done in their community.
- Also talked about the “polloton” (stove that we have in outdoor kitchen). They were excited to hear about the size of it, the safety in terms of keeping fire away from children, no smoke in the kitchen and the need for far less wood. A group of them came to our clinic the following day to get a

presentation from Ismael and Orfe about it. Ismael explained it would cost approximately Q200 but could be discounted if they built the base and did much of the work)

- Our translator, JJ, had prepared a Community Health Survey which we had people in our group fill out with the people in the community. From the survey, we learned that average monthly income was about Q400 – Q2000 for each family. Most live in wood shacks with dirt floors, no running water or latrines. Most of the men do agriculture “day-jobs” working for the local plantation owner

### **Fourth Annual Meeting of Board of Directors in Guatemala**

In attendance:

Ismael Martinez, Rudy Gonzalez, Anne Ruch, Luckey Hernandez, Tita Balsells, Tim Kuhn, Randy Ruch.

Minutes to be forwarded to our Board by Rachel Easley

### **Other issues**

- Orfe returned to the clinic on Feb 21. She was given a very, very warm welcome from all. She asked for a specific job description which Rachel and I wrote up for her. She agreed to return working part time (7:30am to 1PM) each day. (her job description attached)

During this trip, it was obvious that not having her there is detrimental to our program and we are delighted that she has returned

- We had a lengthy discussion about what happened with Emily Roxanna being put in the convent. At first, Ismael wanted us to hire a lawyer that could be called to help us if these type issues happen again. My feeling was that we are not a big enough organization to handle these things and although they are heartbreaking, we are not in a position to find answers and it is too dangerous for our employees. This is a subject that can be discussed at next board meeting.
- Major problem with translator that was hired who went far beyond what he was hired to do. It left a bad feeling with Ismael. In the future, we will make sure that Ismael is responsible for hiring a translator and we can look elsewhere only with his approval
- We had one fourth year med student, Tiffany Slutz work with us. She was hard working and incredibly helpful.

- We had a visit to the Ramon “factory” to talk to them about ways we might be able to collaborate. Their president was not there but Orfe will follow up with her. We are hoping to use their product to provide extra nutrition for the children in the program.
- We went to church at Ismael’s Nazarene Church on one Sunday but I felt that a spiritual component to our trip was definitely lacking. Hope to work on that for future trips.