

Trip summary - July25-Aug 8, 209

Medical

See attached for patient diagnoses and numbers.

All the patients received testing for blood sugar, blood testing, urine testing if indicated. All had histories taken and almost all saw a doctor for an appropriate exam. They were given medications and if indicated, their case was discussed with the nurse running the clinic so they could follow-up there for additional medication. We plan on continuing to send meds and supplies to the clinic.

For pregnant patients, all received ultrasound, accurate dating, vitamins, education.

Visit to Sayache

We visited the hospital in Sayache and spent 2-3 hours with the Medical Director (Dr. Sandra Sanchenelli) and the one physician running the entire hospital. It is a 38 bed hospital that serves a region of 200,000 people. It was closed in 1976 but reopened 10 years later. The only regional hospital for the Peten (population at least 1 million) is in San Benito which is about 2 hours away.

Dr. Ray Flores is the health minister for the region and he had already given permission for us to have a surgical jornada there. While visiting the hospital, we were shown the patients who were currently being treated - 2 men with fractures, one boy with a deep laceration of the arm (suffered after he fell out of a raft on the river and the propeller of another boat lacerated his arm), 2 women were in labor and a young child lay in a small bed looking like he was near death.

The doctor explained to us that they do not have a blood bank but sometimes blood can be obtained from San Benito. In Guatemala, the universal blood type is O positive!!
Hmmmmm.....

They toured us through the entire hospital and allowed us to take pictures to use for planning purposes. They have an EKG machine but none of the doctors know how to interpret it. Sometimes they have visiting doctors from Cuba or Argentina - never the U.S. They have a list of 12 kids who need cleft lip repair and the surgeon there would like to learn how to do this. There is no pathologist in all of the Peten and any specimens are sent to Guatemala City.

Random Stories

Here's some little stories that we heard along the way. They are very reflective of all that we hear, that we hope to help, that seem very unfair.

A woman came to us complaining that her right leg has been weak and in pain ever since she had surgery at the government hospital. They told her that when she was put under anesthesia,

her leg fell off the table. I think of all the efforts that we go through in our own hospital to never let this happen. Why? Because we might be sued! There, there are no lawsuits.

A 49 year old woman thinks she is pregnant because she has not had a period. She is feeling "movement" but in reality it is just worms. She has no knowledge of pregnancy or worms. Think of her fear.

We heard countless times of women who had 10-15 babies but when they had the last baby, they had a C/S because then they were able to have their tubes tied. When we went to the government hospital and asked about what kind of surgeries we might do, they told us that we could do C/S on the women who had too many babies so that we could do sterilizations on them and tie their tubes. The doctors there don't know that there is a way to tie the tubes without doing a C/S. How easy it would be to teach them!

Dr. Reina found lots of unknown issues with pregnancy with her ultrasound. Twins! She was able to tell this woman who had had many babies at home that now she had twins and maybe now it was a good time to go to the hospital!

Lots of ladies only had 1 baby because they had a C/S. Was it because the surgery was such a mess that now their tubes were scarred or because the doctor just decided to tie their tubes? Again, who will know because there are no lawyers.

A woman came in with a blind eye. Why? Someone hit me when I was 5. Who? My mom.

A girl came in who was "retarded". Why? When she was a baby, her brother (age 4) was carrying her on his back. He forgot she was there and she fell off and hit her head.

Patient's daughter heard a gunshot and went into labor, baby died. Another example of "susto". Deena taught us about that. It is the belief that when something incredibly frightening happens, there are dire consequences. A little myth? A little truth?

Patient who thinks she had stroke. After prayer time, most of symptoms went away. She wanted to pray with us today to see if the remainder of the symptoms would also go away. How beautiful! And when you think about it, how true! How do we explain why some get better and some don't. Is it not God?

Doctor told her in San Benito that she could not have children because her uterus was the size of an infant's. How silly and yet, all these years, this is what she has believed.

Reasons' for children's deaths

Pneumonia, imperforate anus, diarrhea, meconium aspiration, dehydration, stillborn, birth defects, complication of delivery from breech, prematurity, epilepsy

Patient whose husband cut her wrist with a machete and threw a rock at son's head causing laceration requiring sutures. He did it because he was displeased with her. Sutures in for 20

days - now infected. We were able to remove the sutures and pray with her. We let her know that this is not God's will for her life

We were asked to go on a "house call" to see a baby with 3rd degree burns on his face. There was a candle lighting his house and the place went on fire. Now his mother has to look at him and he will have to live a life that none of us would want. Why? Stupidity? Lawlessness? No one cares? No one knows? His mother hopes that the gringos will make him better. Will we? We took pictures. Maybe we'll show them to a plastic surgeon and maybe he will help? Or maybe not?

One of our favorite little ninas in Pueblo Nuevo suffered a 2nd degree burn on her foot. Hot water came off the stove in the home. Her mom had some "natural remedy" going. As we looked at it, we saw maggots on the wound. Not even a bandage! How many more of our little "favorites" might die or suffer?

A 25 year old woman came in with a huge birth mark on her leg and even worse varicosities. They even extended to her toes. I never saw such a thing. I called home to a vascular surgeon. He knew of a syndrome that would cause this. Here, she would have several surgeries. There.....some gringos came who will send down some Jobst stockings. We won't cure her but maybe ease some pain.

A 56 year old lady came in with pain "all over". Her husband is alcoholic so she has to work. Doing what? Cutting the grass with a machete to keep the corn fields clean.! She walks 90 minutes each way to get to work! But it feeds her children !And we remember what our patients here complain of!

I found out on this trip that a lot of women are afraid to have a pap smear because they think I am taking out their uterus. Imagine living in a country where such ignorance is rampant. No one cares to educate these poor women.

Moment of realization/change. When doing the community assessment with Kim, we came across two little girls that were walking home from school. They were so happy to see us, that they brought us back to their house to see their family. (imagine in the US a little girl bringing home strangers to visit the family... that would totally not fly in my house) But, the parents were so welcoming, and like the other families in the village offered us seats before they took seats themselves, and made us feel as though we were valued guests. I felt so honored to be treated in this way. The willingness of the people of Pueblo Nuevo to welcome us, and give everything of themselves, including chairs, and insight into their private lives was truly a privilege. It inspired me to be more humble and accepting. I realized that basic human nature is good, and that we have a lot to learn ☺ I hope I get the opportunity to serve people that are so deserving, and to have more tolerance and understanding for all people and circumstance.

A lovely lady came in and said she never sees her husband because he is usually in Belize. He is a master woodworker. There is no work in Guatemala. She has to be separated from him. We told her that we would love to see his work next trip. Perhaps we could sell his work in U.S.

When we gave the midwives the bulb syringes for the babies, one described how someone had used it to remove stool and the rectum came out!

Endless stories of infidelity and men leaving them to go to U.S. with intention of sending money but soon they find another woman and the Guatemalan family is forgotten.

Another "susto" story - a woman came in with amenorrhea. She described how no one had told her about menses so when she had her first one, she became so frightened that she had "susto" and never had one again!

A 14 year old came complaining of "anxiety". When we asked if she had any reason to be anxious, she described how her father had been murdered by a gang and now she and her family were constantly being threatened. She lives in fear even at school. She then went on to describe how a girl from her school was raped and murdered. Her "stomach was split open and they ripped out all her guts and left money for her funeral." And you think of the reasons we get anxious here!

A 60 year old comedrona came in complaining of a 20 pound weight loss. In talking with her, we found out that she had been imprisoned for a year. She had to sleep on a dirt floor and had minimal food. Why? Because she was accused of "trespassing" on the lawn of a wealthy family when she was going there to get a signature for a petition for a community issue.

As we were doing "house calls", a man in a pick-up truck stopped me and asked if we were "enfermeras". He wanted to know what he could take for constant pain that he had in his leg since an injury. He said they have no ibuprofen in Guatemala - even if you can afford it.

We visited a 66 year old woman in her home. She had a stroke 18 months before and had complete loss of use of the left side of her body. I expected to find decubiti and contractures. No, all her skin was smooth and her joints moved. In the entire 18 months, there was ALWAYS a family member at her side, rubbing her, caring for her, feeding her. Think of the condition of nursing home patients here when we spend endless dollars for health care. Where are the families?

When asking a young man in Pueblo Nuevo about his dreams for the future, he answered "All I think about is my dream - to go to the United States, to have a small house, a pretty wife and a job."

We saw many patients who were suffering the results of "botched surgeries" resulting in pelvic pain, blindness, arm paralysis. No lawyers!

A 29 year old woman came in for a pap. When asked if she was married, she became tearful and described how her husband had been murdered 3 weeks before. He was working as a day laborer and was not being paid. When he went one morning to collect his payment, he never came home. For 3 days, she searched for him and finally she went to a government municipality facility. There, she found pictures of him with a noose around his neck and his body badly beaten. The police had not been called. He was merely thrown in a nylon bag and buried with an X over his gravesite. The woman and her 4 children are now in a desperate financial

situation with little support. Tina, Ismael, Randy went to her home and provided her with the KAH food for at least 250 meals as well as vitamins, bibles, clothes and toothbrushes. Pictures were taken with promises to send them. The group prayed for strength and protection from God for this family.

We did home visits for several older people with diabetes. It was a great opportunity to teach the entire family about good nutrition and diabetes ... All of the members of the family had blood sugar testing and ALL seemed interested in this information as they have all witnessed first hand the devastating effects of uncontrolled diabetes

As we came back from the home visits and returned to the clinic, there was 2 year old with a deep laceration on her chin. We were able to repair this and we wondered what would have happened if we hadn't been there.

Distribution of Books in Colonia Tikal

We met with Nancy, the principal from the school in Colonia Tikal. She was SO grateful to Sr. Pam for all of her efforts in collecting the books for the children. She made a plan for the presentation of the books.

Ashley and Kim went with Pedro to the school and arrived at 8:30 AM. Every child in the school had already written a letter of gratitude to the people here who had donated the books! All the letters were bound and presented to Ashley.

There was an assembly in the church. The teacher was playing the keyboard and the kids were all "ooing and aahing" over the new books! The kids actively began reading the books aloud before they could even sit down.

Ashley talked about how to care for books and encouraged the kids to talk to their friends about the characters and stories they were reading. Would it be OK to color in your book?
NOOOOOO!!!! Would it be OK to leave your book in the rain?
NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!!

2 kids from each grade came up and books for that classroom were presented to them. Sr. Pam had chosen age appropriate books and sent enough so that the entire class could read the book. We found out that all the books in the school were in English and no one could read them! Two 4th grade girls spoke at the assembly and gave a heartfelt thank you and described how the books would be used and treasured.

The books were all organized. They included such favorites as Curious George, Umbrella, Frog and Toad, The Bridge to Terabithia, Amelia Bedelia and selections from C.S. Lewis and Junie B. Jones.

Ashley and Kim went into individual classes and watched the teachers read the books. Ashley described how they all showed so much enthusiasm! The kids all gathered around the teacher and the older kids were carefully looking at the choices picking their favorites! Ashley thought that the book project was a huge success and in the future, even used books would great.

School at Pueblo Nuevo

Health charts for each child had already been started by Dr. Coral and so these were added to and completed.

Kathy Curry spent days reading to the kids, playing with the puppet that Deena brought and just generally made the kids roar with laughter throughout the week!

Randy, Ashley and Deena assessed the school for needs. Most desperate need is to repair the 3rd classroom. It is a dirt floor with a leaking roof and no shelving. Seems like this would be an ideal project.

Latrine Project

10 latrines have been started and 8 are complete. They are being used and 12 other families are asking to have them installed. While doing our community assessments, we had many opportunities to talk about the health reasons for using them and everyone was very interested, particularly the young people.

Gardens

After great encouragement from Ismael and Randy, the group arrived one morning to find that a spot had been identified for a community garden and the fence had already been placed! Students and the teachers were waiting to get started!

Everyone pitched in (community members, our group) The soil was loosened, cleared of rocks and other debris. Manure was collected from surrounding pastures, pulverized into powder and worked into soil. The earth was piled into 7 rows, one for each school grade. Idea is that each grade will have their own row and whichever grade does the best job will win a prize. Large rocks were collected and used to make a border around the garden. Ismael has reported that after 2 weeks, the vegetables and fruit are already growing!

The pastor of the Nazarene Church, Abelino, came in the morning and told the children "No where in the Peten will you find a garden like this!"²

2 weeks after returning, we received a call from Ismael, joyfully reporting that the vegetables and fruits are growing. Jose and Abelino have also started gardens and 5 more families are requesting them!

Spiritual Growth

Pastor Truitt dispersed 100 bibles and had many opportunities to minister to the people and spread the Good News of Jesus. He talked a lot about God's words about sexual purity, abuse of women, the role of women. Deena and I prayed with several patients who were going through particularly difficult times. Our group tried to find God in our experiences as we shared in our evening meetings. Deena and Ashley taught the kids 4 new Christian songs and they performed for us.

Pastor Truitt started the week off in a powerful way as he preached about the message that there is only one true church - that is Jesus Christ. That church is a church of power. The Devil is not a spirit of Love. As Christians, we have the power and passion of the Holy Spirit who gives us self control and a sound mind. Satan's biggest lie is to tell us that we can't help ourselves. When we knowingly sin, we often tell ourselves that "we can't help it." That is the devil's lie!! Pastor Truitt asked each of us on the team, and all the Pueblo Nuevo "What kind of religion do you have? One of power? One of love? One of self-control?"

The trip was successful in bringing the 4 churches together in many ways. By just emphasizing that we were a church of Christ and NOT a denomination, we broke down many stereotypes. We encouraged the power of the church in the community but most importantly how the churches can do so much more for the community if they work together.

Bible Verses

Matthew 7:7 Ask and it will be given to you, seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

Galations 6:9,10 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

Philippians 4:4-9 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again; Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me - put into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

Colossians 3:17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

2 Timothy 4:5 But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

1 Peter 4:12 Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.

James 5:10 Brothers, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

John 15:16 You did not choose me but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. This is my command. Love each other.

1 Thessalonians 2:4 We speak as men approved by God to be entrusted with the Gospel. We are not trying to please men but God, who tests our hearts

Amos 5:24 But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!

2 Tim 1:7 For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a Spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline

Acts 4:12

Ephesians 6:12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Letters from Anne and Melinda

July 25

First leg of the trip went well. Only glitch was that Truett's flight out of Detroit was cancelled so he missed his connecting flight in Guatemala City. But he is set up at a great b&b near the airport and he'll be here in the morn by 7 30. Getting through customs was pretty hilarious. They were getting ready to go through all our bags and confiscate the medications. They asked me if we had any meds so I launched into a detailed discussion of Pap smears and cervical cancer and biopsies of female organs and finally, the man looked so distraught that he just told us to move on!

We just had a great meeting. This is a wonderful, enthusiastic and very positive group with great faith. We re all a little weary but looking forward to the week. We re heading out to pueblo nuevo in the morning for a worship service and we'll be spending a little time with the people planning

the week. Please keep us in your prayers.

Anne

July 25

Hello Loved Ones,

First thing this morning, 6am, six of us troopers, including myself, went for a 3 mile jog in 100% humidity.

After breakfast it was off to the village of Pueblo Nuevo for church. We taught the children children's Bible songs. We all thoroughly enjoyed it. There was a church service that brought 4 churches from the village together as one. The people who attended the service seemed to enjoy it and we hope to see them tomorrow when we return to the village.

The children really enjoyed being photographed and being able to instantly see the pictures. The boys even held bunny ears behind the little girls heads. I thought it was a north american tradition. It's actually innate behavior.

We ended with the traditional Guatemelan meal. Hamburgers and french fries. LOL

Now everyone is sitting behind me at the internet cafe helping me write this email. Tina is kinda loud...

Christine is trying to direct my every tap of the keyboard...Deena wants me to write this in spanish...Ashley spends alot of time on the one phone on the island...Kate is mastering the past tense in Spjanish...Kim won't stop talking...Bruce and Randy ate all our extra food and snacks...Meredith drank the water...Kathy stinks.....her toiletries didnt arrive,,,Renee, AKA, Reina is living up to her Guatemalan princess name...Sue and Melinda are so sweet, they were attacked by fire ants...Patrick slept through church...Lauren is studying to be a Dentist tomorrow...Audrey is always there to pick up Tina and Melinda when they fall...Tina's willing to share her food with Melinda, Melinda not so much...Anne's spanish has really improved but she has forgotten how to speak english...Truett arrived safely one day late...If you've read this far you must really care...

BEWARE, THE NEXT WILL BE IN SPANISH...

Love,

Melinda and friends

July 27

Hi loved ones,

We had a wonderful day in the village of Pueblo Nuevo.

Tina and Christine cooked lunch for the village. We used our rice mixture from kids against hunger. We also had watermelon and pineapple.

Deena translated for Renee and Sue who saw 21 patients in the clinic. Kate, Audrey and Lauren took turns assisting Renee and Sue.

Bruce and Patrick did Blood Pressure and blood suger testing.

Randy ran all over town with Ischmael rounding up supplies and organizing chaos.

Anne and Kim went to 4 village homes and did a health assesment. Mind you, each home has at least 8-10 children. This way we can see what their needs are for the futrure.

Truett prayed for all of us and help translated where needed.

Meredith, Ashley and Melinda brush and gave flouride varnish treatments to 38 children.

Kathy played with the children, made paper airplanes etc, held babies and entertained all.

We have a wonderful group and are truly blessed to have all of your loved ones with us. Thank you for sharing them and helping them to be who they are today.

Good Night,

Melinda

July 28

Hi all,

This is going to be short and sweet. One group worked in the clinic at Mango for 12 hours today. We saw 92 patients. The second group went to the school. We just finished dinner. Everyone is safe and sound.

Love,

Melinda and friends

August 15

Hi everyone,

I'm sure like myself, you're still adjusting back to our "other life". I'm still feeling overwhelmed by the order and cleanliness of my office!! It really is SOOOO much easier to see patients when you speak their language!! One of the most frustrating things about being a gynecologist in Guatemala is the 20 minutes that takes to convince each patient to "scooch" down the table!! It's been a bit of a whirlwind the last few months so I'm looking forward to find some quiet time to absorb it all and make some meaningful plans for the future.

We've had "evaluation forms" in the past but I feel like people often come up with fairly trite answers to silly questions! Of course, no one wants to be critical (well, usually!) and often, people do it in a hurry.

This year, I'd like to try something different.

I'd like each of you to send me your own "evaluation". This really was an incredible group and I just saw God acting in each of you in countless ways. Yes, serving the people there was the purpose but for me, seeing each of you bring out the real goodness in yourselves was a huge bonus.

This trip just opened up so many doors and maybe for the first time, I see some real direction and feel that if we continue, maybe this work will bring a group of people there some hope and who knows, maybe even change. I have a sense that those kids in Pueblo Nuevo really might have a different outcome because of what you have all started. And maybe we just might do some surgeries down the road that might ease suffering for some people. And maybe there will be at least ONE government clinic in Guatemala that runs well! And yes, most of all, maybe we did bring the true knowledge of Christ's love to someone.

I'm getting my trip summary together - so many thoughts are whirling around!

I'm asking that each of you take some time and write your thoughts. If you would like to have them shared with everyone, please let me know that. If you'd like to keep them more private with me so that I can consider them as we move forward, just let me know that also.

I'd really like to know good and bad. As far as the "details" of the trip, that's unimportant.

Logistics of what went well or didn't are obvious to Melinda and I. Some of those are out of our control and some we learn from. I'm more interested in your thoughts about our approach, our philosophy of caring for people, whether you really think that this trip was God-centered, whether it changed your life in any way. Did you feel the battle is hopeless? Are we arrogant to even think we can make changes? Did you feel loved by the group during this trip? (Randy, you don't count!) Rather than make suggestions for the future, I'd like to know how you really felt during and after the trip.

Can you also send me 2 experiences that you had. First, a time or a person that really moved you and maybe even changed you - maybe a realization that you had for the first time. Second, your funniest story! I want to keep these and share them with everyone. There were so many! I still can break out laughing when I think about Melinda's doll being violated at the airport!!!

I'm so looking forward to seeing you next Sunday at Reina's!!

Fondly,

Anne

July 31

Hi everyone,

> Well today I was the first casualty of travelers diarrhea. Everyone has been ordered to take Cipro ASAP. I stayed in bed all day. From what I heard many patients were seen. We return to Santa Ana tomorrow for 60 patients. Yes, we are getting very tired and expect to hopefully rest on Sunday. Please pray for us. Anne told us this is the hardest they have ever worked here. I believe it. If you ever wanted to see what it felt like to be a rock star this is pretty close. I went outside of the clinic yesterday to sit with Kathy and the children and immediately a woman came over to me with her son who had webbed fingers to see if we could fix it. That was difficult knowing we could not. Renee, Kathy, Christine and Tina are on the way to the airport to fly into Guatemala City for the night. Please pray for a safe flight for all. Everyone received their letter yesterday and were very touched. Thanks Mom. Got to go. Remember, we are leaving for Naranjo on Monday and I do not know if we have access to email, so please do not worry if you do not hear from us after Monday. This is a pretty special group. We watch each other like mother hens. XOXOXO, Melinda and FAMILY

August 1

Hello all,

Last night our leader, Anne was our next casualty. She is better today. This sickness only lasts 24 hours and you pretty much sleep through it. No one else is sick. We think we caught it early enough to prevent the others from getting sick.

We went to Santa Ana until 1:30 today and then to a historical museum to learn about their civil war. We are going to a nice restaurant tonight. Sorry Renee, Kathy, Christine, Tina, Truett, Bruce, Sue and Patrick.

Sue, Truett, Bruce and Patrick flew to Guatemala City for the night and then they fly home tomorrow.

Thanks for all of your prayers.

Love,

Melinda & Family

August 2 Hello from Guatemala,

> Anne sent Deena and I out looking for more work for
> next year, she never stops...Anyone know where we can get a
> portable surgical unit, 2 OR Nurses, 1 scrub tech, 2 recovery
> room nurses, one for day and one for night, a plastic
> surgeon and 2 french hens oh yea and a partridge in a pear
> tree that speaks spanish.
> The med students, Audrey, Kate, Lauren and Meredith
> went to Tikal today. It sounds like they really enjoyed it.
> Kim shopped and read on the roof top. Ashley was our 3rd
> casualty. She got the funk and slept all day. She is much
> better now. Im telling you, it wipes you out dead for 24
> hours then youre fine.
> Anne, Deena and I went to a hospital 1&1/2 hours
> away to check it out to do surgeries next year.
> Tomorrow is Annes bday so we are celebrating
> tonight.
> This may be the last email because we leave in the
> morning for Naranjo.

- > We will be staying in Guatemala City Friday Night so
- > you may hear something then but we get there around 11pm
- > your time.
- > Keep on praying,
- > Melinda & Family

August 29, 2009

Hello all!

Sorry you haven't heard much from me. It's been a whirlwind. The group has been phenomenal. EVERYONE has worked non-stop with compassion and love and everyone has really struggled to find things within themselves that they didn't even know they had. I know that whether we succeed or fail in certain things, good will come because of all the love that has been shared.

The Spanish language is just flowing from some of the med students and yes, even I'm getting better! The med students are able to do gynecology exams now and they haven't even started their clinical rotations!! Bruce and Pat work so well together that they are considering starting their own business for uninsured patients in the U.S.!! Kathy is the new Papi of Guatemala. The kids just go CRAZY for her when they see her. She is truly like a rock star!!

Melinda, Deena, Ashley and Randy have become quite the team - their laughter is infectious! They keep us all inspired! We miss Tina - as always she keeps the group uplifted. Ashley is considering moving to Guatemala - she told me that she is trying to change her plane ticket so that she can stay another month! (SURE.....) Doctora Reina is also greatly missed!! She was an unbelievable teacher and caregiver! Sue Sommer is pretty much ready to take on all the midwives of Guatemala and is already planning a 3 day conference for them next spring. Our office manager, Christine, continued to work as office manager here and worked hard to get the office CLOSED every evening! And as for Truett, I don't know what to say! I can only pray that when I am 81, I will have his steadfastness, his love for God and his devotion to spreading the word of Jesus that is love.

As far as Guatemala goes.....every trip teaches me new things - or maybe the same things that I see in a different light. Everyone has been working non-stop from morning to night. It's hot and the patients are truly sucking the life out of us!

I guess the hardest thing has been realizing once again that health is really not about medicine but often about the choices we make in life and the environment that we live in. Almost everything that we see here is the result of people falling so short of the potentially wonderful life that could be theirs. OF course there are lots of exceptions but for the most part, the real issues are social and not medical. For example, some of the group were in a store in Flores the other night. This idiot was on a motorcycle with his 18 month old baby. He was teaching the baby to rev the engine. So they were making this big racket annoying everyone around. The baby of course thought it was hilarious. So guess what? There's the baby fooling around on this motorcycle and the next thing, he touches this hot part and burns his leg! OK...a trip to a pathetic hospital all because the father is so stupid. And then we have SOOOO many women coming in with aches and pains

because of this incredibly hard physical work that they have to do. They actually work cleaning the milpas!! Milpas are corn fields. They are out there all day on their hands and knees cleaning the rows of corn, cutting the leaves with machetes to make the corn grow stronger!! And why????? Because they have so many children to feed and their husbands are gone! The husbands have either left to go to the U.S. and now have found another woman there or they have left them for another woman here or they are alcoholic and not working anyway. AND, pretty much all the women in this area admit that their husbands are with other women so they want to be treated for STD's. They don't even get it that I can treat them but they will get it

again the next time they have sex. Most of the women don't even want more children but they're afraid their husbands might kill them if they don't. One woman came in with the tendons in her hand cut by her husband because she threatened to leave him.

We've been trying to improve things in Pueblo Nuevo with the vitamins, deworming pills, latrines, clean water, a fruit and vegetable garden and education in the school. What an uphill battle! Ischmael said that every time he had a meeting about starting the garden, less and less people came. At first, they were all excited and 20 were involved. When they realized how hard they would have to work, 19 bowed out!!! So now there's one!! But Randy and Ischmael and him are going ahead with it. Ischmael says that maybe they'll realize 3 months from now what they're missing when the one man has beautiful watermelons and pineapples! Ashley tried to work in the school all week. She was very well received and honestly, she did great work. But there are 3 teachers and every day at least one teacher didn't show up. When the teacher doesn't come, then the kids go home. And on Monday and Friday, they just closed the school for no reason!! Ischmael says it just goes with the whole attitude of the culture. He is an inspiration though because he has such a different attitude and he's doing it with his own kids.

I saw a lady during the week who came in for a pap. Somehow although we had a hundred patients waiting I decided to stop and spend time talking with her. I quickly realized that her problem was huge so I had Deena come in and translate. She is 31 with 5 children. She has a wonderful family and her kids are actually all in school and they lead good lives. Her husband was working as a day laborer. Anyway, he wasn't getting paid so he went one morning to get his paycheck. This was 3 weeks ago. So he never came back. She frantically called everywhere to try to find him - the hospitals, the police, etc. Finally, she went to some municipality place and found pictures of him dead with a noose around neck and his body beaten up. When they found him, they didn't even bother to notify the police or do an investigation or find out who the family was. They just put him in a nylon bag and threw him in the ground and put XX over the site! So now she has no money and no husband. Her extended family is kind of crazy so she can't live with them so some old couple took them in. Can you imagine???? It was heartbreaking. So anyway, our group got a gift bag together for her. They gave her a load of the Kids Against Hunger food which should at least do them for a few weeks. Renee Mason gave her 2 beautiful skirts. The woman put one of them on right away - she was so excited! We gave the kids books and some other things. Turned out it was one of the kids birthdays. They really were so happy with these things - somehow I know that's nice but it makes me feel even sadder to think that such small things could seem so great here.

Then I had a 14 year old girl come in yesterday with multiple complaints - i.e. [seeing spots, feeling dizzy, blackouts, pain everywhere]. I had a sense that something bad had happened to her. So the story just went on and on and became worse by the minute. Her father had gone to the bank to get money to bring her to a doctor. Some men stole his money and beat him up. He went to the hospital where the criminals were afraid that he would turn them in so they attacked him and killed him. Now they've been threatening her and her family. They killed her brother. They come to her school and threaten her. She knows it's all drug related but she doesn't know what to do. Then she talks about a friend of her mother's who ran out of gas on the road and then some men came and raped her. But the worst is yet to come! A twelve year old girl from her church was found dead. She had her stomach ripped open and all the organs were taken out. The killers had left money inside her stomach to pay for her grave!!

I wouldn't even believe these stories if they weren't so detailed and were coming from all the patients in one form or another. The drug problem and the fact that the men are all leaving for

the U.S. is really at the root of a lot of the issues. The other problem is that people don't have any sense of logic. They all believe this mysterious quasi-spiritual stuff where everything seems out of their control. Deena had talked about susto in our spanish class. Susto is when something really scares you and then something awful happens to you. And they really believe it!! One of the midwives explained to us that one of the women recently had a baby die within her. She says it happened because the women heard a gunshot. It gave her the susto and so the baby died. Another 41 year old woman came in and said she never had periods. Being the gynecologist that I am, I tried to explore this and said [You NEVER had a period?] So she responds [Well, I had one when I was 14 but I didn't know about them and it scared me so much that I got the susto and then I never had another one.

There's this prevalent theme of [Everything is out of my control]. This makes it easy to do nothing to try to change it. So...I know I'm just rambling but these are the kind of things we're up against.

Anyway....random thoughts.

I guess I only tell you these stories to emphasize that it is not just lack of medical care that's the issue. Things will never change until people do know the message that comes from Christ - that we do have control over our lives and there is a better way. Things really can change with the love that comes from His Word. We see many glimmers of hope and yes, we do see some direction for the future.

Also, for you families! We are completely safe and well fed!

I have a meeting this morning at the government hospital with the head administrator. We're hoping that he'll allow us to do surgeries in the future. We'll see. THANK YOU ALL for your prayers and support. THANKS for sharing these wonderful people!

Blessings, Anne

August 3, 2009

Anne Ruch

We're finally leaving for Naranjo! You should see the bus! It's my birthday. They bought me a very cool indigenous mayan outfit. I just need to get a little shorter!

For my birthday, I would love to be with my new little Nikhil but I'm stuck with these crazy people. They're planning a coup d'etat. Melinda and Deena are plotting a takeover if I change the plans one more time.

Oh, we have so many stories.

For those of you who have power, please tell Promedia that I'm quitting but I'd still like to get paid. Dr. Reina is willing to see all my patients for free and Anne will turn the problems away.

We won't be in touch until Friday.

I love you kids (my own, I mean!)

Adios,

Abuelita Anna

August 3, 2009

Oh my.....

Yes, it's almost midnight here but I just have to write before I forget this day! It's a birthday I will never forget!

I think that only you guys who have left will fully appreciate this. We packed up the van this morning loaded with usn, colpo, cryo tank, albendazole, speculums, etc, etc and oh, yes, KY jelly.

Off we go....3 hours later after a fairly uneventful and actually very pretty ride we start pulling into NARANJO! For myself, it just reminded me of a western town in one of those old movies where you arrive and pretty soon some cowboys come out with pistols and horses that keep jumping up on 2 feet. We pull into the clinic which is next to a small building labeled Iglesia Catolico.

Out comes Doctor Kate. Didn't really receive a welcome - more of a come-on, lets get going - the ladies need to quita their ropas. No, change that, let's eat lunch-mmmmmmmmm. It was one on those meats that they used to eat during the depression that they would slow cook. Only here they didn't slow cook it so we'll just call it VERY CHEWY! They show us how to do the dishes and off we go to work.

So now I find out about VIA. Yes, I've read articles about it the New England Journal of Medicine and even, Lancet. But here I am going to see it in action! So here's all these health promoters who can barely read who are struggling to find the cervix, much less diagnose cervical dysplasia-cancer based on looking at a cervix with vinegar and a flashlight! And oh yes, those vaginal walls kept falling in !

At one point, one of the ladies asked Deena what she thought about the cervix! Can't you all just imagine Deena's response!

So I tried to be open minded. I struggled away at examining this cervix with my little mag light fortified by my powerful acetic acid. I even turned it into an official research project. After the inspection, I did colpos and then paps and had the students officially trained in taking great care to document all the information so we could have a very scientific prospective study! In the meantime, Dr. Kate seemed mysteriously indifferent to the needs of the patients. When they would all complain about their le-dueles, she would just shrug her shoulders. Apparently, ALL the women of Guatemala have le-dueles in their sinturas! So as we're busily running from room to room stamping out disease and saving lives, Senora Deena comes into my room to tell me we're having a big problem. Apparently, the police just brought a man in who's been shot; Ashley is crying, Kate is ready to barf and Kim is just not looking well!!! So I go into the room with the new patient

and here's the completely wasted, drunk guy laying on the table (yes, a real table) with his leg now getting wrapped. Apparently, Melinda had already triaged him. Dr. KATE wanted to know if Ischmael could drive this drunk, bleeding guy to San Benito for medical care. Can you imagine!!!!!!

So Ischmael said he preferred not to get involved. So, they called the police back and they took him away. At this point, Ashley can take it no longer and decides to go back with Randy and Ismael. Out first casualty. So we struggle along and get done around 7. Dr. Kate then tells us that she didn't think that things ran real smoothly so we should debrief to see how we can make things go better tomorrow. The staff at the clinic were about as interested as they were in Santa Ana. Now our next meal - melted beans with a block of cheese. Melinda described the taste of the cheese as similar to when you eat your shoes after they've been in Guatemala all day. But the ladies assured us that it took them 3 hours to make the cheese so we did our best. Now for time to unwind and go to the hotel. WE pick up our personal bags - the handle on Melinda's now breaks so she has to really struggle. We go through this REALLY SEEDY town with all these weirdos looking at us

and arrive at the hotel which (I am not kidding you) looks like a prison. Dr. Kate tries to make us feel better by reassuring us that these are the migrants that are staying there. In my mind, I'm thinking, do you mean the illegals migrants who have those coyote guys to smuggle them across the border. And, oh yes, we are just a few miles from Mexico!

So we walk in and guess what, they have no room for us. Now mind you, I have already sent \$2000 to Dr. Kate for all the costs involved in this jornada! So we are all lugging these stupid suitcases down the street with these outlaws staring at us. Then Dr. Kate hails a tuk-tuk for us to put our suitcases in . Then she tells her 6 year old daughter to get into the tuk tuk (by herself!)

and direct the driver back to the clinic!!!! The daughter refused thank God!!!!
So now we go by this even SEEDIER hotel and Dr. Kate now goes in to see if they have rooms. They show us their BEST, CLEANEST room. Right next door are 4 disgusting, smoking drinking guys with few teeth just smiling at us. I'm like, Oh My LOrd, Dr. Jacobs will have me arrested"! So I finally speak up and say "No, Kate, we really won't be staying here. So now Deena pulls me aside and reminds me that she has this supernatural power to know when something just isn't right and this REALLY ISN'T RIGHT! So I call Randy and ask him to come back (they've already been driving for an hour). So I break it to Kate that we've decided to change course and go back to Flores. She is astounded! I remind her that I'm the leader of the med students from a real university and I have to be somewhat responsible. This isn't about comfort, it's about safety. She makes some snide comment about how maybe we are confusing our feelings and it really is about comfort. So then, I make a valiant effort to be kind and we start unpacking tons of things to leave there. She and her daughter sit there watching me. The group comes to my rescue. We all felt like fugitives! So Randy and Ismael arrive and we load up the van and off we go through the windy roads for 3 hours in the dark! We got stopped by government police at one point. They checked us all out. Can you imagine if the drunk, bullet loaded guy was in there!!!!
Anyway, we're back at Casa Amelia which now looks like the Taj Maja! When we arrived, Meredith practically screamed out "ROSANDO, I'M SO HAPPY TO SEE YOU!!!!!!!"
So we re all safe and sound and getting ready for a good sleep. We gave Ischmael the morning off and we're going to regroup in the morning. Who knows what awaits! Something....I'm sure. Pat and Bruce.....where were you!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
Love you all and miss you! Doctora Ana



August 19

Christine McMahon

Okay here goes and I will try to be brief. I have mixed feelings, one minute I feel that we can't possibly help because there are too many problems and the next minute I say if we don't go who will? I'm trying to reconcile the energy money and time put into the medical care. Honestly I think we just put a Band-Aid on their health care issues so I have to ask myself if the time money and resources would be better served another way. I understand that they need health care but feel other needs are greater. I believe education is the way out of the poverty they currently live in, so the school needs to be improved. On the other hand we can buy all the supplies in the world but if they don't have good teachers what is the point. Then I rationalize that the children who are a step ahead of the majority will benefit from better learning tools and maybe they will have a chance to build a better life. (And I'm speaking strictly about Pueblo Neuvo, due to the fact that it appears that their existence is the most marginal.) As you can see I go back and forth with myself on this topic and pray for guidance because I don't really come up with concrete answers. Now if you want to know my funniest moment on the trip it was on Tuesday

when we were all hanging around Sonya's house waiting on someone to come and pick us up. Tina nonchalantly states, "Look at those two roosters fighting." I say, "They aren't fighting." Randy chimes in, "That is a hen under there. We all cracked up. I also thoroughly enjoyed the bus trips everyday to and from the clinics. We always joked and laughed so much that at times I thought I would wet myself. All in all I did have fun, which I think you have to try and do to keep from crying. In the three years that I have gone down there this is by far the best group that I have went with. We had great medical students and everyone got along.

August 26

Hello all,

Yes, it's late but we just heard such good news that I wanted to share it with you all.

We've ALL struggled (some longer than others!) with whether these trips are worth it.... Yes, I did pray so many times to God and He promised "Seek and you will find. Knock and the door will be opened to you."

We've always known that nothing will happen unless the people themselves see some hope and believe they can do something.

Well, we just got off the phone from Ismael....and as we are sitting her planning the next step, the people themselves are doing the next step! Yes, after all our prodding and educating, not only is one garden growing. But 2 more are also growing and 5 more families are lined up to start their's also! This after years of telling themselves that the ground wouldn't grow anything! And.....they have already fixed the roof on the 3rd classroom! It's been leaking for years, but just us coming convinced them to fix it! And yes, the "No tire basura" signs are all over!"

I highly recommend the Sunday NYT article to you all about "Why Women's Rights are the Cause of Our Time". In it, they urge President Obama to spend a large investment in educating girls around the world. This plan would also double as a population policy for it would significantly reduce birthrates and thus help poor countries overcome the demographic obstacles to economic growth. Maybe if we keep trying, those beautiful little girls will get an education and will decide NOT to have 12 children of their own. This is so much more important than just bringing birth control without the hope of a better life and most importantly, the better life that really knowing Christ brings.

Bottom line.....Ashley is probably more important than Doctora Ana and the med students!

Let's keep working together to make what we have started succeed!

Good night and yes, God bless us all.

Thanks for sowing seeds with us!

Anne

Evaluations

August 19

Christine McMahon

Okay here goes and I will try to be brief. I have mixed feelings, one minute I feel that we can't possibly help because there are too many problems and the next minute I say if we don't go who will? I'm trying to reconcile the energy money and time put into the medical care. Honestly I think we just put a Band-Aid on their health care issues so I have to ask myself if the time money and resources would be better served another way. I understand that they need health care but feel other needs are greater. I believe education is the way out of the poverty they currently live in, so the school needs to be improved. On the other hand we can buy all the supplies in the world but if they don't have good teachers what is the point. Then I rationalize that the children who are a step ahead of the majority will benefit from better learning tools and maybe they will have a chance to build a better life. (And I'm speaking strictly about Pueblo Neuvo, due to the fact that it appears that their existence is the most marginal.) As you can see I go back and forth with myself on this topic and pray for guidance because I don't really come up with concrete answers. Now if you want to know my funniest moment on the trip it was on Tuesday when we were all hanging around Sonya's house waiting on someone to come and pick us up. Tina nonchalantly states, "Look at those two roosters fighting." I say, "They aren't fighting." Randy chimes in, "That is a hen under there. We all cracked up. I also thoroughly enjoyed the bus trips everyday to and from the clinics. We always joked and laughed so much that at times I thought I would wet myself. All in all I did have fun, which I think you have to try and do to keep from crying. In the three years that I have gone down there this is by far the best group that I have went with. We had great medical students and everyone got along.

Kate Myers

Dr. Ruch –

Here are my thoughts about the trip... I will try to organize them in the best way possible! Sorry if it is a little scatterbrained! I may throw some questions in too, since this is my first trip I may not have as much valuable insight into how to change things.

First, on our approach... I felt most comfortable in Pueblo Nuevo. I think it was very beneficial to make that initial bond during church on Sunday. It was nice to see familiar faces and to build trust with the women throughout the week. In Mango and Santa Ana I was a bit overwhelmed at first. For me, I felt like I wasn't connecting enough with the patients and I'm sure part of that has to do with the language barrier. I think it was also partially because it felt rushed and intimidating at times because of the number of patients. I wish I knew more about the Guatemalan women too, and their own expectations and concerns about the care we tried to provide. Maybe a short group counseling session would be good at each clinic? I wish we had more time to build

relationships.

On our philosophy for caring for people... In theory, our philosophy was great. I think it got lost at times as we tried to get through the large volume of patients.

On the God-centered aspect... I felt most prepared when we prayed together at the beginning of the day, and I think this only happened one time when we felt overwhelmed in Santa Ana. It's difficult because it is always so busy setting up clinic, unpacking meds, etc. Maybe we should take a few minutes every morning to ask for guidance... Also, I liked the small groups in the evening. It seemed that everyone opened up more and we all got to go more in depth about how we were feeling, our struggles, etc.

Did it change my life? In sooo many ways this trip opened my eyes to the needs in Guatemala and helped me to also imagine the needs in the rest of the world. I definitely want to continue in medical missionary work through medical school in and my career as a physician. Of course, I now look at what I have with a greater appreciation. I think the biggest change of all is in how privileged I feel to be a medical student... and how I will use the knowledge and skills that I gain to serve others.

Is the battle hopeless? Absolutely not. I think the battle is worth fighting. I loved our varying approach through healthcare and community building (with the garden, help in school, etc). Small things that bring people together can make a huge difference...

Are we arrogant to think we can change anything? At first I thought so... seeing so many people in dire need... so many people willing to sit all day long in the heat and humidity for a bag of Tylenol... but once you make a connection with one person you can feel the change beginning. In so many ways we are able to empower and inspire the people, and I think we were able to do that several times throughout the trip.

Did I feel loved? I felt very loved! I still feel such a great bond with everyone who was on the trip, and I gained so much strength and encouragement through each person.

Suggestions for the future. Definitely continue relations with Pueblo Nuevo, Santa Ana and Mango. Continue relations with the midwives, perhaps help them to train younger women to follow in their footsteps. Continue relations with church leaders, encourage the churches to come together to improve the community. More community meetings to encourage collaboration between leaders to improve the school, etc. Group sessions with clinic patients to explain why we are here, what a pap smear is, when the results will be back, what happens next, etc. Perhaps also including education on different forms of birth control and how they affect a woman's menstruation cycle, sexual drive, etc.

How I felt before and after the trip. Before the trip I felt scared! I had no idea if my Spanish would return to me, or if I would be of any use in the clinic, etc. I was also very anxious to see if I functioned well in medical missionary work. After the trip I felt a mixture of emotions. I felt a little bit of guilt... returning to the US, leaving all of the struggles and hardship of the Guatemalan people as an afterthought. I struggled with deciding whether the care we had given them is substantial... I hope to see some of the longer term benefits if I am able to return next summer. I

also feel satisfaction for the obvious positive changes and the relationships that I was able to form. (the garden, being the most visible change.. and relationships with the little girls in Pueblo Nuevo... and some relationships formed through deep conversation in the clinic with patients were most rewarding)

Moment of realization/change. When doing the community assessment with Kim, we came across two little girls that were walking home from school. They were so happy to see us, that they brought us back to their house to see their family. (imagine in the US a little girl bringing home strangers to visit the family... that would totally not fly in my house) But, the parents were so welcoming, and like the other families in the village offered us seats before they took seats themselves, and made us feel as though we were valued guests. I felt so honored to be treated in this way. The willingness of the people of Pueblo Nuevo to welcome us, and give everything of themselves, including chairs, and insight into their private lives was truly a priveledge. It inspired me to be more humble and accepting. I realized that basic human nature is good, and that we have a lot to learn ☺ I hope I get the opportunity to serve people that are so deserving, and to have more tolerance and understanding for all people and circumstance.

Funniest story. Oh gosh... there are so many funny stories. The funniest has to be when a patient in Santa Ana (who was very timid) tried to brace herself when climbing off of the examining table and ended up breaking the sink off of the wall!! The patient's daughter was in the room to help interpret the language difference and was absolutely floored that her mother had broken the sink! For hours to come the daughter would visit me to laugh and chat about the sink!!

Kim Collins

Hi Dr. Ruch!

So I'd like to give you my "evaluation" of the trip! And also wanted to thank you for everything you've done for us and how you support us and make us think and encourage us and everything. This trip was harder for me for a lot of reasons, and part of it is just that I came out of third year feeling somewhat beaten down and hopeless about my own abilities, and that made it harder to see how I was making a difference in Guatemala, and so the weight of all the problems really brought me down. Also, I think I had felt so optimistic and hopeful after last year, naively thinking that working with that clinic and hospital was obviously going to be something wonderful that would last a long time...and with everything that happened, I feel like I'm more cautious to hope that alliances will last and that we'll be able to work with the same people long enough to see significant changes.

But anyway, I think that the trip WAS good. We definitely provided some support for people and some entertainment to others. I'm not sure whether positive change on a very big scale is likely, but I know it's possible on an individual level, so there is hope, even if it is subtle. I definitely think that spending time with people is key. In triage, I think it's really hard, because we'd be trying to move people through quickly, but then it often times felt rude. I know I got somewhat cynical, with everyone wanting an ultrasound, and I felt like I became less kind as a result. It was hard to know how to be the right person for the job.

Was our trip God-centered? I think it was a subtle God-centeredness. We certainly practiced generosity and forgiveness as we dealt with members of our group and others we encountered. Could we have been more God-centered? Probably. Isn't that always the case? I think it's hard being a Christian mission team from the US in a country where many of the most faithful Christians have a more conservative lifestyle. I feel like the problems with alcoholism and sexuality are so society-crippling in impoverished areas that many may see a very strict prohibition as the only possible escape from the hell that it causes. I feel like we're so fortunate to come from a place where you can have a drink now and then completely free of negative consequences or wear a short skirt and not end up pregnant at 15. Now I personally believe that knowing Jesus and living a life following him, with a spirit of love and service and humility, is way more important than following a strict behavioral code, although being responsible in decision making is clearly an act of love toward God. But sometimes I wonder whether we take our liberties too lightly. It's hard, because everyone wants to have a good time, which is good and healthy, I just hope that it's not seen badly by the Christian communities in Guatemala if we're holding ourselves to less strict standards on our trips. We can accuse them of being intolerant or not understanding Jesus as well as we do, but in the end, I know I haven't had to live their life, so I feel like it's not my place to judge their attempts at controlling their society and what measures they might feel necessary to try to keep people from harm. The issue of "if I'm more faithful, will God be able to use me more?" is one that I've struggled with and haven't come up with an answer yet. I feel like I personally would have liked to have spent more time learning about God and sharing how we saw Him working on the trip, but I know that everyone is at a different place in their walk with God, so I think it's difficult to figure out how much time to spend talking about God or praying, and how much to just spend showing Him through our actions. Oh, the one thing I thought of that we probably could have done, that would have been in the spirit of Jesus, would have been to pray for Dr. Kate and Concern America and the people of El Naranjo. I really think that town desperately needs God, but I also think that we

weren't the ones chosen to show Jesus' love there. We got through the horror of it all by laughing about some of the odd happenings there and different personalities we encountered. But it seems like now the right thing to do is just pray for them, accept that it didn't work out, forgive them, and move on to where God is calling us.

My life is being changed continually and this trip surely added something to it. I'm just not sure what yet.

I struggle with whether it is arrogant and paternalistic to try to change someone else's society. I think that just offering suggestions and support, like we're doing, is positive. We're helping others to have possibility for reforming their society in certain ways, but the choice is ultimately up to them. We are a support which they can accept or reject. And I don't think offering a hand is inherently arrogant.

One woman who we talked to who was in an unhealthy relationship where her partner would devalue her really moved me. Sometimes, in my own life, when I am criticized by preceptors for being too quiet or unassertive, I take it personally and feel unworthy, as though I'm really not cut out to be a doctor. But now when I think about my bad evaluations or start feeling bad about myself, I remember how you told this woman that nobody can ever make you feel worthless, that they don't have that power, and I realize that even if some people don't see potential in me, that doesn't mean that I don't have it. And I remember how lucky I am that the people who are close to me are the ones encouraging me, it's only the ones who don't know me well that make me feel inferior.

I'm having a really hard time thinking of a funny story. I need to have a better memory for the funny moments!

Anyway, those are a few thoughts on everything...

Thanks again! And I hope other people write a lot of positive things about the trip in these evaluations! :)

Kim

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| Reply | Reply All | Forward | Reply | ▼ |
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Guatemala Sew Hope Mission Report

July 25 – August 8, 2009

Tuesday, July 28, 2009 Mango, Guatemala

Arrive 9:30am Depart 8:15pm

Room 1 Renee Mason

Room 2 Sue Sommer

Room 3 Anne Ruch

Time # of Patients with running total

| | | | |
|-------|----|----|-------|
| 12:25 | 9 | 6 | 8=22 |
| 13:40 | 13 | 7 | 11=31 |
| 16:00 | 20 | 12 | 16=58 |
| 18:00 | 23 | 17 | 30=70 |
| 19:10 | 28 | 21 | 38=87 |
| 19:45 | 29 | 22 | 41=92 |

Wednesday, July 29, 2009 Mango, Guatemala

Arrive 8:30am Depart 6:30pm

| | | | |
|-------|----|----|-----------------|
| 11:00 | 3 | 7 | 7=17 |
| 12:25 | 6 | 11 | 12=29 |
| 13:40 | 8 | 16 | 13=37 |
| 14:40 | 12 | 19 | 17=48 |
| 15:40 | 14 | 22 | 20=56 |
| 16:40 | 16 | 25 | 21=62 |
| 17:40 | 19 | 28 | 26=73 |
| 18:15 | 21 | 29 | 29=79+Hall14=93 |

Thursday, July 30, 2009

Santa Ana

Arrive 8:30am Depart 6:45pm

Room 1 Renee Mason

Room 2 Sue Sommer

Room 3 Anne Ruch

| | | | |
|-------|----|----|-------|
| 10:00 | 3 | 3 | 3=9 |
| 11:00 | 4 | 6 | 5=15 |
| 12:00 | 9 | 7 | 7=23 |
| 13:00 | 10 | 11 | 11=32 |
| 14:00 | 13 | 13 | 12=38 |
| 15:00 | 16 | 17 | 17=50 |
| 16:00 | 18 | 19 | 19=56 |
| 17:00 | 20 | 23 | 23=66 |
| 18:45 | 25 | 25 | 28=78 |

Requested Supplies for Pueblo Nuevo School

Microphone system

Amplifier

Megaphones

CD Player

Voice Recorder

Reading Books in Spanish and in Spanish/English

Permanent markers

Poster Board

Pencils and Color Pencils

Pencil Sharpeners

Mechanical Pencils

Notebooks

Puzzles

Stapler and Stapler Gun

Hole Punch

Dry Erase Markers

White Boards

Construction Paper

Computer

Requests from Marleny in Mango

Stethoscope

Meds: Ibuprophen, metformin, glimeprimide, lamzoprozoltes, antacids, prenatal and children's vitamins, enalapril, antibiotic creams, amoxicillin, Tylenol, children's Tylenol,metronidazole cream, clotrimazole)

Glucometers with strips

Pregnancy tests

Pregnancy dating "wheels"

Nebulizer

Otoscope

Measuring tapes

Needs we noted

1. Walkie talkies
2. height charts
3. name tags
4. luggage tags
5. medication baggies from blessings international
6. lidocaine and sutures
7. drug book
8. melinda's special age chart
9. hard candy
10. TCA



Community Assessment Findings

Observations

Dirt floors, clothes hanging on ropes, chickens walking in and out, generator in corner of room, photos of their dead children on the wall surrounded by religious symbols, hammocks for sleeping, large mattresses take up most of the floor, toddlers sleeping all over, no doors between rooms, a "bed" based in concrete with a thin mattress over it, children eating on dirt floor

Reasons for moving to Pueblo Nuevo

Closer to work

Ability to grow corn and beans

To be a pastor

"Cosecha" (Harvest)

To be closer to a school

There is water

It is safe

What do you like most about your community?

Good place to live

Tranquil - no violence

Easy to get to Mango

"It is pretty. Bad people don't live here."

"Safe. Like the customs."

"Health problems are better since SewHope has been coming!"

Jobs

Farming

What would you like to have to change about your community?

"Lot's of things. There's no work. No money. Not enough clothes. We don't know how to grow fruits or vegetables. Sometimes there's not enough corn

To not have to work so hard

To be able to grow fruits

To be able to make more money

2 families have problems with alcohol abuse

Would like electricity

Would like running water in the house - think people would pay for it. It's too hard to carry the water on their heads and then boil it before drinking. They have to go to the well 5-6 times a day. They use rain water for drinking and well water for cleaning. Sometimes there is a "drought".

Need a health care center/clinic

Need vitamins for children

They don't trust the mayor because nothing changes.

No school past 6th grade. They would like to send their daughter to Mango but there is no transportation

Lots of men don't go to church

Husbands sometimes have to travel far to work because of poor weather for farming in this region.

"If God wants there to be a clinic, there will be one."

Food

Sometimes we have meat, cheese, crème, corn, meat, beans, chicken

Eat meat once a month

Want fruit and vegetables

In the summer there's not enough to eat and we are hungry

Medical Issues

Arthritis, gastritis, Cough, flu, headaches, diarrhea, Sore throat

3 year old with polio

20 year old daughter murdered recently while in Santa Elena. Now they are raising her daughter.

Dengue

Eye problems from smoke in homes

Daughter died of epilepsy

Diabetes

Some have toothbrushes but no toothpaste

One woman went to hospital for 5 days due to stomach pain but only felt worse while she was there. They wouldn't let her family visit.

Prenatal Care

Deliver children at home with help of friends. Only go to a doctor if something is wrong.

One woman had 5 stillborn children

Where do you go for medical care?

Santa Elena Dr. Asuria

San Benito - Dr. Cameron

Going to a clinic is too expensive

Costs 60 Q to have a tooth pulled

Nurses from Mango come each month

It's not easy to go to Santa Elena or San Benito - too expensive

No other teams besides SewHope have visited there

We "trust in God".

Go to clinic in Mango

Do you get vaccinations?

"Think so" - not sure which or when

"Our older kids had vaccines and then our niece had a vaccine and went "limp" so we don't get them anymore. We used to get vaccine for measles, varicella, pertussis and tetanus

Nurse from Santa Ana and Mango given babies vaccines

Church?

Nazarene

Assembly of God

Catholic

Universal Prophecy Church

Most go to church 3-6 times a week

Latrines?

We use the pit latrine. The 2 hole latrine is not finished. We think it is for when we have visitors.

Like the idea of composting latrines and want to use compost for a vegetable garden. They think changes help a lot.

They use the neighbor's latrine