

Rachel Easley's Trip Log – November 2019

Saturday, Nov. 2

Travel Day – Rachel Easley, Laura Swan, Anne Ruch

- Flew United: Detroit to Houston to Guatemala City. Not too early of a flight, but the connection in Houston was a little tight.
- Overnight at the Hyatt Centric in Guatemala City (Zona 10); super luxurious! Plenty of space in the hotel room, with two full-sized beds and a rollaway cot. Found a tasty Italian restaurant in a cute little plaza nearby the hotel, and wandered around a bookstore for a bit afterward.

Sunday, Nov. 3

Guatemalan Board Meeting & Travel Day (+ Jacob Snow)

- Ate breakfast at the hotel buffet, then prepped for the board meeting and headed over to Tita Balsell's office (right across the street from the hotel). Laura read some slides while the board met.
- Tita and Anne went to the central market in downtown Guatemala City to find some wall décor for the Santa Ana hostel; Anne reports that this market is better than even the market in Antigua.
- Rachel and Laura grabbed lunch at a fancy food court in the mall attached to the Hyatt Centric (on Lucky's recommendation).
- Tita dropped Anne off at the airport; Rachel and Laura took the Hyatt Centric shuttle with the baggage (there was a \$10/person fee to take the shuttle back to the airport).
- Flew TAG: Guatemala City to Flores. They were enforcing baggage weights & fees today; 20 lbs of checked baggage per person, with a \$1/lb fee beyond that. Carry-on bags were limited to 10lbs, with a \$1/lb fee (one of the checked bags was carry-on sized, so we ended up with 5 checked bags and one carry-on (paying almost \$200 for the extra weight), plus personal items for each of us (which were not weighed).
- After waiting at the Flores airport for an hour, we realized that Mayra had been there the whole time in the café section of the airport, and she had been watching for us but not seen us arrive; so then we met up with Mayra, Jacob Snow (who had flown in from Belize about forty minutes ahead of us), Sylvi (who would be our translator for the trip), and Melani (Mayra's daughter). We went to the MaxiDispensa across the street from the airport for groceries, then headed to the hostel to unpack baggage and settle in for the night. Anne is in Room 1, Rachel and Laura are in Room 2, and Jacob is in the bunk room.

Monday, Nov. 4

At the Clinic

- Laura read slides; Rachel worked on administrative tasks and took photos around the property, Anne saw returning patients (for treatments and other follow-up), and Jacob saw patients (children, as well as adults who were not gynecology patients).

- With guidance from Singly and Seiner, the students have prepared food (empanadas and tostadas) and homemade goods (natural deodorant, Jamaica jam, disinfectant, candles) to sell during the jornada.
- Power was out for an hour or so in the late afternoon... most affected was Laura, who can't use the microscope without electricity.
- In the evening, we celebrated Rachel and Elder's birthday (both October 31) with cake and tostadas. Afterwards, we held a staff meeting;

Tuesday, Nov. 5

At the Clinic

- Dr. Anne and Jacob stayed busy all morning with patients; Laura stayed busy screening slides. Rachel worked on miscellaneous administrative tasks and took some photos.
- A planned afternoon meeting with a delegation from the Sayaxche area of health was cancelled; one of the doctor's parents passed away suddenly, and the other doctor had a visit from an inspector from the Ministry of Health.
- In the late afternoon, Rachel, Anne, and Mayra (with translation help from Jacob) met with Karen Dubois from FUNDAECO (a Guatemalan NGO that works mostly in the south on environmental conservation efforts but has also expanded into women's health and education issues).
 - Would SewHope be able to help train their staff to take better quality pap smears?
 - Would SewHope be able to read paps for them, to ensure more accurate and timely results?
 - FUNDAECO is part of a Guatemalan consortium on preventing cervical cancer; Karen will pass along information about the next consortium meeting so that SewHope may be able to get involved. This would be a good opportunity to present our data about cervical cancer in the Petén and seek partnerships with major NGOs and government bodies who are working to improve women's health.
- Mayra reported that the green truck is out of commission again; this time it's trouble with the brake lines. She's not sure if it's worth the cost and effort of repairing it, given all the issues the truck seems to be having.

Wednesday, Nov. 6

Poptún

- Anne, Jacob, Mayra, Laura, and Silvi went to Poptún for a pap/pediatrics jornada. The organizers there had announced that the first 30 women in the door would get their paps read on the same day, so Laura headed out with staining supplies and microscope.
- Rachel stayed at the hostel for the day and rested, on account of being tired and pregnant.
- Anne took 72 paps; Laura read 35 slides; Jacob saw 40 pediatric patients.

Thursday, Nov. 7

Homeward Bound

- Due to not feeling well, Rachel flew back to the States. Better to be sick and pregnant in the U.S. than in Guatemala!