

FLORES

Guatemala Mission

August 2 - 10, 2018



Health Mission Outreach

Established in September 2008 through the combined efforts of numerous volunteers, we were already active in the missionary field in various parts of the world. These health care professionals and student volunteers joined together for the purpose of providing comprehensive health care to impoverished people in under-developed countries in an efficient, responsive and sincere manner.

Our doctrine is to encourage volunteer participation to assist those who are underprivileged through compassion and empowerment.

Mission

The aim of Health Mission Outreach (HMO) is to promote partnerships between health care professionals and those that are in need, for mutual unique experiences from participation, and to create hope for the recipients, all directed towards the betterment of mankind.

Vision

Creating an environment that allows everyone an opportunity to access to health care.

Values

- To provide free medical and dental aid to the impoverished without discrimination;
- To enlighten people through participation and shared experiences;
- To empower people to realize their potential, and
- To contribute to the betterment of mankind by giving back to the world.



History and Geography of the City of Flores

FLORES is a northern Guatemalan city. It is located on San Andrés island in the southern part of Lake Petén Itzá, at an elevation of 449 feet (137 metres) above sea level. Once capital of the Itzá Maya, who successfully resisted Spanish attempts to conquer them until 1697, Flores is a major trade centre for the surrounding region. Chicle, timber, rubber, sugarcane, and cacao (the source of cocoa beans) are the principal products of the hinterland. Access to the city was very difficult until the opening of an airport on the mainland and the building of a causeway for road traffic. Roads lead from Flores across the surrounding area north and northwest to Mexico, east to Belize, and south to the Guatemalan highlands. It is the point of departure for expeditions to Tikal National Park and many other Mayan sites. The remaining Itzá Maya communities are concentrated in the Bio-Itzá Ecological Reserve north of Lake Petén Itzá. Pop. (2002) 16,122. The Itza are a Guatemalan people of Maya affiliation. They inhabit the Petén department of Guatemala in and around the city of Flores on Lake Petén Itzá.



2018 Flores, Guatemala, Mission

Objectives

- Provided free dental services that include cleaning, restorations, extractions, endodontic and oral hygiene instructions;
- Brought non-expired medication for full pharmacy need;
- Brought 2,500 pairs of used eye glasses for dispensing;
- Provided free general medical, gynecological and Papanicolaou services;
- General education in oral hygiene and general hygiene;
- Worked in conjunction with the Guatemalan healthcare professionals;
- Worked with the Guatemalan government to highlight the importance of volunteerism and to support the free clinic initiatives;
- Local media coverage to increase awareness of medical and dental services;
- Recruited local and national businesses, agencies as sponsors and raised funding to continue our ongoing efforts;
- Worked with Canadian and Guatemalan Universities to train dental students in outreach program;
- Collected data to monitor and support of our program and to our sponsors.

- 1 Free dental care to 1,500 indigenous people
- 2 1,500 general medicine
- 3 350 people served in gynecology
- 4 250 women served with Papanicolaou
- 5 1,800 people served in ophthalmology
- 6 Dispensed over 3,000 prescriptions
- 7 Distributed over 500 baby and children clothings
- 8 Distributed over 500 toys
- 9 Distributed over 2,000 toothbrushes and toothpastes

5,400 patients served in total

Estimated value of services provided — \$2,775,000.00

1 Free dental care

Health Mission Outreach provided free dental care to 1,500 indigenous people during the Flores mission

About 2,000 procedures in total

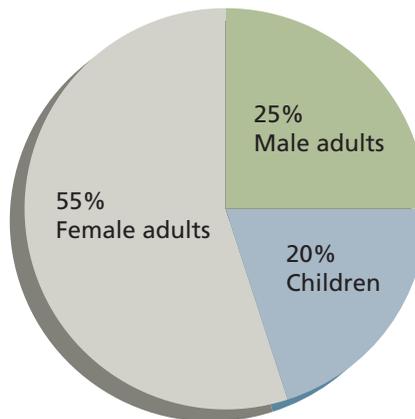
Estimated value of dental services — \$1 million

FREE DENTAL CARE

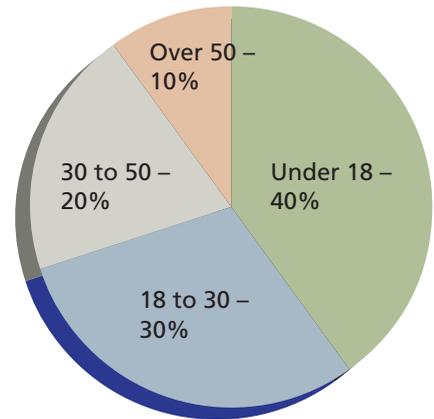
Procedures



Gender groups served



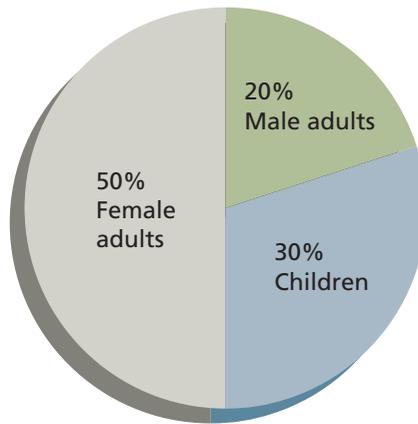
Age groups served



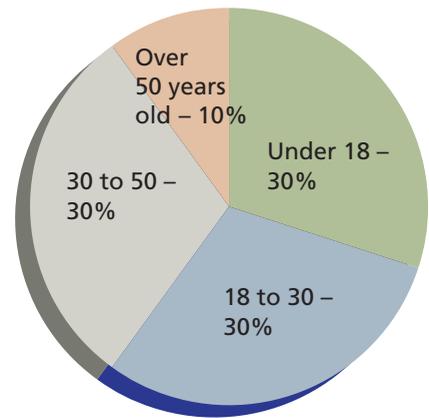
2 1,500 general medicine

Estimated value for the services — \$150,000.00

Gender groups served



Age groups served



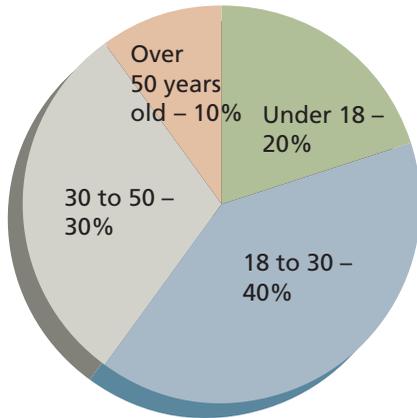
GENERAL MEDICINE



3 350 people served in gynecology

Estimated values of services – \$70,000.00

Age groups served



All patients are female



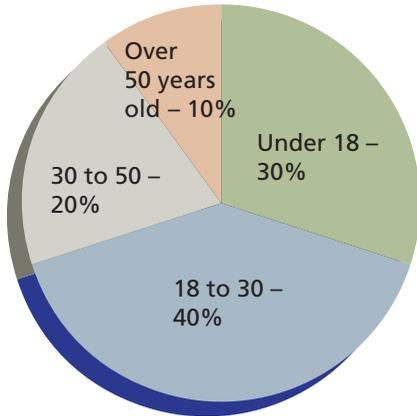
GYNECOLOGY



4 250 women served with Papanicolaou

Estimated values of services –
\$125,000.00

Age groups served



All patients are female



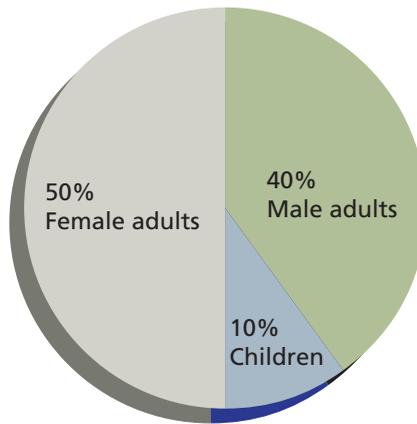
PAPANICOLAOU

5 1800 people served in ophthalmology

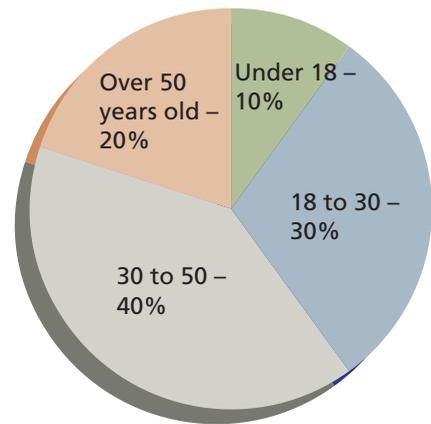
Dispensed 1,800 pairs of used glasses

Estimated value of services \$900,000.00

Gender groups served



Age groups served



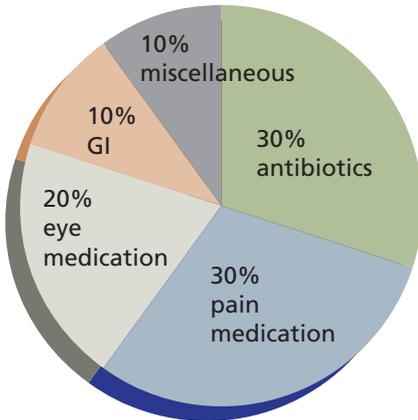
OPHTHALMOLOGY



6 Dispensed over 3,000 prescriptions

Estimated value of prescriptions served \$300,000.00

Prescriptions served



PRESCRIPTIONS



7 Distributed over 500 baby and children clothings

8 Distributed over 500 toys

9 Distributed over 2,000 toothbrushes and toothpastes

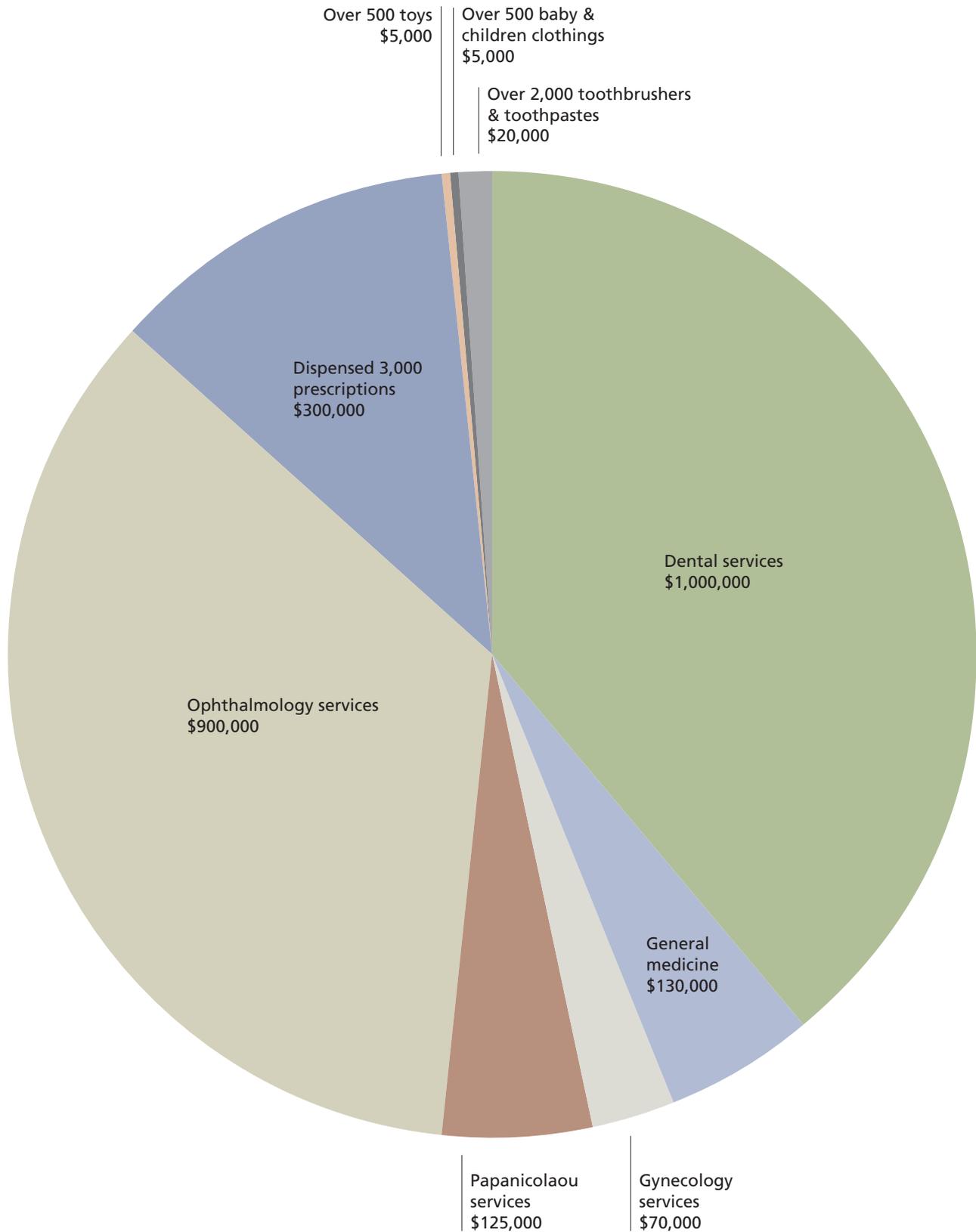
Estimated value — \$30,000.00



MISCELLANEOUS



Total value of distributions and services of the entire Guatemalan mission



An experience in giving back

Written by Theodora Stamos, one of the HMO board members that attended the Guatemala mission.

Our Health Mission Outreach trip to Flores, Guatemala, August 2-10, 2018

Our mission to Flores Guatemala started on August 2 when 24 students, Lun, Cheryl, Mena, John, Kathryn, Little Breanna and I, met at Toronto Pearson International Airport to start our adventure.

24 bright eyed dental students eager to take on this new chapter in their lives, and some of our regular frequent fliers are ready to board the plane. After a short briefing we boarded our flight to San Salvador. We arrived 4.5 hour later and made it to the gate for our Guatemala flight with no time to spare.

Our next flight was only 40 minutes and before we knew it we arrived in Guatemala City!

Even though Ginna Lopes de Escobar was there (Mayor Edwin Escobar's wife) things did not seem to go faster at the airport. Every time we come and have all the paperwork for the medicine we bring we always end up at the airport for hours to release the medications.

As soon as we walked out of the airport we felt the stifling heat even at 9pm! The local team with our body guards was faithfully waiting outside for us!

Loading almost 70 pieces of luggage on the trucks was something!

Off to the hotel we went for a meal and a nights rest! By this time everyone is exhausted and we all went to our rooms for some rest. My roomie is my bestie Mena

We are supposed to be up at 4 am as we have a flight to Flores which is in the North part of Guatemala at 6 am!

Unfortunately when you are tired 4 am comes way too fast! Up we went and boarded our bus for the drive to the airport. Checking in almost 70 suitcases is not easy and it always seem to take forever!!! We board our flight with a little propeller airplane that I call putt-putt and off to Flores we go!!! In about 40 minutes we start our decent to Flores.

All you see is a tiny little empty airport surrounded by mountains trees and nothing else! It was strange and almost felt as if we had taken a private jet in a private runway.

Once we get inside the terminal it's a small area with a few solders. The carousel is literally a "hole in the wall" and they pass the suitcases in from there!! Everyone is eager to get going but having so many luggage's always takes a while to gather.

At the entrance we see Hector, our Guatemala dentist. He was here with Karen setting our clinic up, before we arrived! Our faithful security team was there as well they drove all night (9) hours to get here to meet us.

So again we load the luggage on the bus and off to our hotel we go. We are staying at the Ramada in Flores.

Flores is a beautiful small town close to Tikal ruins and the newly discovered ruins in the Guatemalan Jungle. The only way to access the new ruins is by a 3 day hike or a Helicopter ride. Only a few people a year have the privilege of going there. Thanks to Ginna Lopez de Escobar, 4 people from our group had the once in a lifetime opportunity to go there for the day and meet the incredible Richard Hanson, the archaeologist/anthropologist that is doing the dig in the Guatemalan jungle

For further info for those who are interested go to;

Sprawling Maya network discovered under Guatemala jungle - BBC News

So back to Flores; Flores is a town in Petén, Guatemala. The town proper is an island on Lago Petén Itzá, connected to land by a causeway, on the other side of which lie the

twin towns Santa Elena and San Benito. All three are often referred to as Flores.

Flores is surrounded by a huge lake. From what I hear from the locals it's got the best tasting white fish in Guatemala! My sterilizing assistant Jose says he travels 9 hours by car to come here fishing to catch the white delicious fish that swims in these waters!!!!

You can take a little boat and go around the lake for a few quetzals (multiply the US dollar by 7 to get the amount in quetzals or divide the quetzals by 7 to get price in US dollars). As well the area is known for their wood crafts. Due to the jungle close by their wood crafts are amazing!!

The weather here is very similar to the Amazon Jungle and even though it is their winter the temperatures range from 30-35 degrees plus humidity. Summer is insanely hot at 40-50 degrees and with humidity it becomes unbearable yet everyone seems to be used to this. Us Canadians are soaked to the bone every day.

There are very small picturesque streets with vendors selling the local crafts, small little hotels and small little restaurants with local food that is delicious...some cobblestone roads and thousands of little small black birds. If you are out around dusk you will see them flying and sitting on the electricity lines. It is quite the sight!

Our mission starts on Friday morning at around 7:30 as we have just arrived at Flores Airport.

We get into a school bus for our 20 minute ride to the hotel, After we arrived at the Ramada Hotel we checked in brought our luggage to our room and got ready for clinic.

We board the same bus again to go to the clinic.

As we arrive we see that the clinic is a sort of meeting hall with a tin roof and huge windows with bars. On the two entrances there are huge canopies with chairs and full of people waiting. There must be about 500 people waiting to get in. The heat even at 8:30 am is unbearable!

The set up begins! We were lucky that Ginna, Hector and Karen were here ahead of us and set all the stations up with the equipment we had left behind last time! We start opening the suitcases and unpacking the supplies.

It's unbelievable how fast the interior of this room gets filled with people. There are different stations. This time we have four distinct areas. The medical, the dental the pharmacy and the eye care.

Once the set up is complete our fearless leader Lun starts to triage people and they go on their "waiting" stations.

It is unbelievable how organized everything is! The sterilization area is up and running and the process begins.

As the day progresses the heat intensified. I cannot remember another mission I attended that felt as hot as this one. Everyone is drenched in sweat scrubs sticking on their bodies sweat dripping from their foreheads. As the day passes it is only getting worse. Around 3 pm we are called to lunch. They have set canopies across the street at the park and this is where we are going to eat. Not a leaf is moving the air is still the heat is incredible.

As the end of the day is coming to a close I can honestly say that everyone is exhausted and cannot wait to get to the hotel for a shower. As we go to get to our bus we see that we now have our air conditioned bus with our security detail. Let me tell you getting into that airconditioned bus was the best gift we could have received!!!!

Mena and I opted not to join the group for dinner. We are exhausted and all we wanted to do is eat shower and go to bed.

The next day came too quickly, but now with a bit of rest under our belt we are ready to face our second day. Walking into clinic I was ecstatic to see a fan in my station and I felt a sigh of relief.

As I look around the clinic I start to notice the people...children with babies on their hips, the elderly, children running around playing, teenagers...we have a resident young man a permanent visitor in the clinic. His name is Pablo. He

seems to be about 15-16 very tall and always with a smile in his face. He is autistic and craves attention. I made it my mission to make sure I give him lots of goodies every day. He comes to clinic in the morning and hangs around all day.

Today was another scorcher of a day! Fortunately enough I have lots of help today. Local nursing students, Karen's nephew Jose and Gina's youngest son Felipe are my right and left hands! Just so you know Felipe is 9 years old but is determined to learn what I do and does it to perfection. One of the brightest children I have met. I neglected to mention that Felipe has his own business. He has a beehive and sells the honey so that he has his "own money" he says.

Today we decided to hand out the childrens clothes. We have a total of 4 suitcases and I leave the task with Katheryn and Breanna. Once the locals realize what is going on there is a huge line that forms and the clothes go out in less than 2 hours.

I was impressed by the optical station. There is amazing equipment that has been brought in to check patients and the glasses we brought. This is the only mission that we had expert help. There are hundreds of people lining up every day to have their eyes checked.

The pharmacy is impressive as well. We have brought in hundreds of thousands worth in drugs prescribed and over the counter. The way this

works is the patients see the physician then the prescribes the medication and they pick it up at the pharmacy station. From vitamins to antibiotics to anti inflammatories we have brought it all.

From the amount of the crowds I anticipate that In dental we see about 500 patients per day. Medical and Optical each sees a great deal more I would say maybe 700-900 each per day.

This is probably one of the largest missions I have attended this far.

This day is a bit smother than the first but I believe the heat is intensified..it's hard to work under this intense heat! At the end of the clinic we all head back to the hotel. Mena and I go straight to the swimming pool to cool off...

Everyone is to meet at 7 to go to dinner.

Due to the intense heat everyone is drained. Our hotel lacks hot water so everyday we take cold showers I guess in a way it helps with the intense heat, our room ac is cranked up this is such a welcomed change at the end of the day.

The days come and go and the heat does not seem to get better. Clinics are always full. This time I don't have much interaction with the patients but once in a while I get some hugs as I give out the toys I have brought.

All our students work very hard you can see the sweat in their scrubs

and dripping down their foreheads. It is very hard to work under these conditions but they are all trouper trying to see as many patients as they can. There are a lot of children and this time I notice a lot more disabled and autistic children. Of course as soon as I see one of those gentle souls I go for a hug. There are an awful lot of elderly as well with worn old weathered clothing and huge smiles. Everyone is grateful and I keep getting "god bless you" over and over again.

The lead of our security is a lovely young man called Joshua...we got pretty close to him during this trip. He is married to the love of his life and has a beautiful little boy. He goes to university part time to become a lawyer so that he can give a better life to his family. He is a wonderful young man and is very attentive to all of us. The whole security detail is wonderful. We have grown to be family during the last few years. In this trip I found out that they all fight to be our security team because we treat them like family and not servants. This is why they work hard next to us with set up and take down. Sometimes they go with very few hours of sleep but they always have the hugest smile on their faces.

The students are lucky as they have tons of mentor ship. Roberto and Hector mentor the surgical students and Lun, Cheryl and a couple of the local Dr's are with the restorative students.

The close of the clinic came fast on Monday and the free days were here, the first day our group went up a near by park that offered suspending bridges hiking and zip lining...there were animals and swings with hammocks and it felt as though we were in the jungle. Some of us took all the security guards and went for ice cream.

A select group of 4 of our team got the once in a life opportunity to visit the newly discovered ruins of a Mayan city in the jungle. Ginna arranged for them to go in with a helicopter and they actually met the celebrity Richard Hanson, that is responsible for this excavation.

The next day a trip to Tikal was planned. A large group went to see the ruins there and they climbed the pyramids.

The following day Thursday we had an early flight back to Guatemala City. We checked into the Barcelos Hotel in Guatemala City.



Today we had two outings planned half of the group went to the volcanoes with horseback and the rest went to Antigua for shopping and to pick up some of the delicious Barista Coffee.

On route to Antigua we stopped at a small little coffee shop called "El Injerto" our friend Roberto (he is a Guatemala'n surgeon) suggested we go and check out this coffee that is amazing. These people have won the First Place Award for their coffee every year for the past 10 years. Brewing the coffee was an art form as we saw them make a sample coffee for us. They have turn coffee into an art form. Feel free to check out their website.

Today we are supposed to go for dinner to one of the best steakhouses in Guatemala.

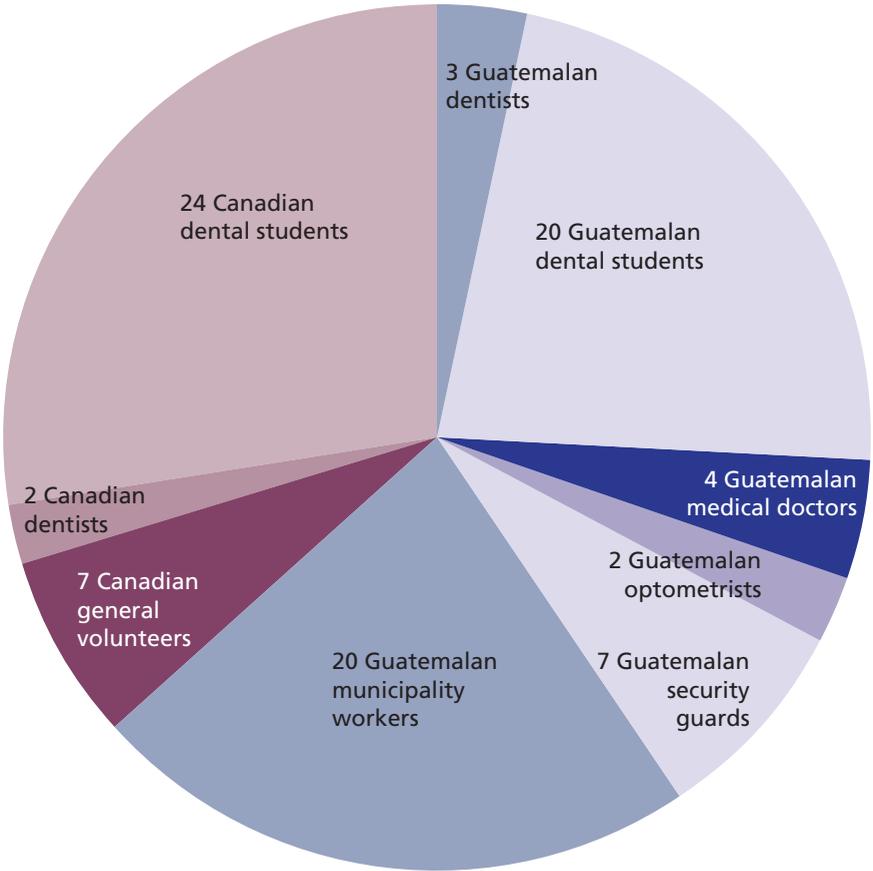
I was one of the groups that went to Antigua. The intense traffic there and back amazed me. It took us three times the time to get there and back and I was shocked at the amount of pollution and fumes on the streets of Guatemala. There are thousands of motorcycles and the lanes are only a suggestion, people make their own lanes and traffic is insane. What I noticed most about Guatemala City is people in the middle of the street selling flowers a little boy by himself sitting down on the sidewalk, vendors selling food and chips and everything covered by smoke. There are expensive stores and not so expensive stores, 4 people on a motorcycle and pick up truck

cabs full of people. This world is so different but the people are so beautiful. It is a pleasure, joy and an honour to be here to help.

Unfortunately the working hours and intense heat got the best of me. I missed out on the amazing steak house instead I stayed in the hotel and got some much needed rest for our early flight back home tomorrow. Four o'clock came too fast and the wake up call came. Time to pack into the bus and head to the airport for the trip back. Once again this was an amazing, life changing experience. The people we worked with became family and our bond grew.

On closing, I have to tell you that I feel fortunate to be able to come to these missions, to meet life long friends, to help the children to change lives and to make memories. My life has been enriched by all the amazing people and I am blessed to be able to make a small difference in the world.

Volunteers for the Guatemala mission



Conclusion

Health Mission Outreach has donated 25 portable dental units, all supporting equipment and sundries to Guatemala. This will allow local governments and healthcare professionals to host weekly free clinics around the country.

In conjunction with cooperation with the universities, the dental students can extend their training in outreach and understand the spirit of “giving back” and change someone’s life. In return, enriching their professional life.

Thank you

We would like to thank the Oral Health Foundation – Pierre Fauchard Academy, for the generous support of the \$10,000 US funding to make this mission possible.

Thank you to Sinclair Dental for all the technical and financial support.

We will continue our best effort to provide the best possible medical and dental services to the needy.

*Thank you to
all our sponsors
and volunteers*