

# Health Talents International

March 1-8, 2024, Harding Mobile Team

Trip Participants: **Physician:** Laurie Harris-Ford; **RN:** Meghan Hickerson; **Harding Grad Pre-Med:** Olivia Leach; **Harding Pre-Dental:** Carson Stewart; **Harding Pre-PT:** Kent Cates; **ASU Pre-Dental Hygiene:** Morgan Gray; **Translator & Poet:** Drew Bennie; **Team Leader:** Rick Harper

We were small in number and mighty in spirit; we were called to serve and serve we did. Joining with our Chichi area ministry team we served 326 patients over the course of four clinic days.

First-timer, Dr. Laurie Harris-Ford is already planning her return in 2024, and we almost persuaded her stay for two weeks. Rookie, Carson Stewart, who begins dental school in July so enjoyed his time in Chichi that he is applying for our six-week Medical Evangelism Training program and RN, Meghan Hickerson, an HTI novice, did stay for two weeks...she will be back for more!

Day 1 and 2 were primarily travel days, flying from the US into Guatemala City and getting settled into Hotel Barcelo on Saturday, then a three-hour ride to Chichicastenango and Hotel Santo Tomas on Sunday morning. We enjoyed a late lunch, a stroll through the market and worship with the Chichi church that evening.

Monday, day three, we traveled to Paxot Tercero, our mobile clinic home for the next two days.

(Translator/Poet, Drew Bennie is in the blue Health Talents shirt, Dr. Laurie is looking over the patient chart recorded by future physical therapist, Kent Cates.)



Working with students brings so much joy, watching their curiosity, desire to serve and intentional efforts to learn. Their confidence grows day by day, even hourly. Such was the case of Morgan Gray who graduates from Arkansas State University this year and begins her dental hygiene training. Health Talents nurse, Ottoniel has been trained as a hygienist and he in turn trained Morgan. Observing first, then gaining enough confidence to begin applying fluoride, basically painting the teeth with a cotton swab. Morgan soon advanced to 'polishing' and graduated to use the cavitrons before the end of the week.

On Thursday, we gave one young man a choice...the male hygienist from Guatemala, or the red-heading female in training from Arkansas. He chose wisely, grinning broadly...the sweet redhead!



Meghan Hickerson, an RN from Ohio, and graduate of Harding's Carr College of Nursing was making her first trip to Guatemala, a two-week stint as she traveled to Clinica Ezell Hospital at weeks' end to join the Eye/Ortho surgical team. Whether it was assisting with vitals or comforting a child, her winning smile crossed the communication barrier with love shining through.

Days 4 & 5 found us at Chuchipaca for two days.



Olivia Leach made her second trip to Chichi, she still dreams of a career in medicine she can't wait to get her husband here. (Olivia is the one with the long red hair in the photo below.)



We got away on Friday morning without a group picture that included Dr. Laurie or Drew, but I have one last entry. Another group was staying at Hotel Santo Tomas, and they hired a maricachi band to come perform. Requiring very little encouragement, Carson and Morgan joined the festivities for their singing and dancing debut!

Memories were made, hearts touched, lives transformed and God was glorified...makes for a pretty good week and a great story!

