

Guatemala Mission Trip 2006

June Surgical Mission treats many Guatemalan Children

Drs. Justin and Maj StormoGipson, and RN's Mary Sibulsky and Denise Buettner recently returned from a Mission trip to Nuevo Progreso, Guatemala in June of 2006.

Joining a team of ophthalmic surgeons from the San Francisco Bay area, along with team members from throughout the country, the North Idaho Mission Team Members worked at Hospital de la Familia. Providing additional support in the role of OR circulator and patient screening were Elisabeth Sibulsky and Kate StormoGipson. Luke StormoGipson was the team videographer.

Many patients



with all types of visual problems were seen during the 10 day trip, seven of those ten days were spent operating on a variety of surgical problems. The patients line up in the street outside the clinic waiting patiently to be seen, hoping to have a cure for whatever diseases they suffer from. Among the cases seen in just over a week were multiple cataract and glaucoma patients, patients with cysts of the eye, deformities of the lid and lid structures as well as a very rare pediatric eye tumor. Dr. StormoGipson was able to do surgery on 45 eyes during the 7 days of operating including one emergency treatment for acute glaucoma. Patients travel from far and wide to be seen. Many of the families are able to stay with their children, but that is not always



the case. One young boy (age 9) was brought in by his father who walked many hours with him to the clinic. When it was decided to do strabismus surgery the next day on both eyes, this father had to leave the child alone in the hospital so he could return to his work. The young boy bravely faced the surgery crew and anesthesia without a single complaint from the time he went in to surgery until he went home. When we saw him postoperatively the next day, he was so excited "They fed me wonderful food last

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night" was all he could think of to say. His father was able to return the day after surgery to take him on the long walk home.

Dianne Nishikawa, CRNA provides the following information about the facility where we work:

"Hospital de la Familia had its origin during 1972, when an American, exploring Mexico and Central America in his light plane, visited Nuevo Progreso, Guatemala.



The flyer, Jack Younger, met the Padre Cayetano Bertoldo and a lasting friendship ensued. Padre was a priest dedicated to improving the welfare of poor Mayan Indian Families. Jack, an experienced

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builder from the San Francisco Bay area was also a member of a men's club; named

the Family. With his friends in the club, Jack raised the necessary \$100,000.00 to begin construction of Hospital de la Familia. Mr. Younger's vision became a reality on February 8, 1976 when Hospital de la Familia was formally dedicated to the medical and surgical treatment of native Guatemalans.

Today, Hospital de la Familia has a full time staff caring for an average of 15,000 patients a year. Surgical teams from the U.S. and Canada provide highly skilled treatment and perform over 14,000 surgeries every year. In addition to the medical operations, Hospital de la Familia runs a Malnutrition Therapy Clinic for malnourished children."



Patients are asked to pay on a sliding what they are able to afford for care. Oftentimes, they can afford nothing but try to bring something to share or help in someway.

The anesthesia



team this year was led by Dr. Laura Roland from Stanford and Dr. Simone Fogarossi of Children's Hospital in New Orleans. The patients who needed general anesthesia were skillfully put to sleep in sometimes challenging circumstances that included frequent power outages in the middle of the surgical case. The start of the rainy season in Guatemala is June, and not a day went by that there weren't downpours and often booming thunder and lightning.

This is one of the many trips Dr. StormoGipson has participated in, traveling to many



countries in Central America to donate his surgical skills, as have Drs. Moss and Parden. If you want to help support the North Idaho Eye Mission Team, contact Karen Sines, Administrator or Dr. StormoGipson. You can arrange for your group or organization to view the DVD about this and other mission trips by contacting Dr. StormoGipson, Karen Sines, Administrator or Mary Sibulsky, RN by e-mail at:

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North Idaho Eye Institute Mission Team 2006