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HAVING "UNA BLASTA" IN MISSIONS

By Clara Quay

My name is Clara Quay, and I've been on 3 mission trips to Mexico! I've been on two medical missions and one Christmas trip. I love going down to Mexico to get away from my everyday life and serve others. Through these trips I have had the opportunity to meet some incredible people! I've met doctors who get up early and go to sleep late, often in uncomfortable spots, just so that they can get up the next day to help the villagers. I've seen students who have been struggling to find a purpose in what they are doing be totally reaffirmed by the compassion they were able to show to the people through these mission trips. I've seen complete strangers turn into great friends after the ride on the long bumpy roads together.

I've seen love in its purest form displayed through the actions of each individual on these trips. I've seen the power of God working through people to accomplish His will. It's truly inspiring how God can take each separate person with their own individual talents and bring them together to utilize their skill sets for the advancement of His kingdom! When you are down in Mexico, the whole world with all of its worry, trials, and troubles melts away and you are able to grow closer to the Lord and his people. I went on the mission trip in March, and it was by far the most impactful mission I have experienced. I am 16, a junior in high school and I decided to go on this trip on my own, because I have been on a few before and the experience is unlike anything else.

I was the only teenager on this trip, but that wasn't something I had even considered until it was 5:45 am and I was standing in a room full of strangers. But God knew what He was doing, and over the course of the trip I got to know Dr. Kelly, Thad, Curtis, Sara, Emily, Cassidy, Dr. Ottis, Angelina and so many other inspiring adults! All of these people taught me something and they profoundly impacted the course of my life! All of them are like family to me, and while I was on the trip they took me under their wing. When I forgot a cot (rookie mistake I know), Thad and his family let me borrow one of theirs without thinking twice. When I forgot money, (another rookie mistake!) Dr. Kelly, Cassidy and Emily got me snacks! When I forgot lotion and chap stick, Angelina had my back and let me have some of hers.

This group watched out for me through the whole trip, even when they were sleep deprived. God truly brought us all together and it was amazing. We had "una blasta" (our Spanglish version of "blast") along the way!

Going to Mexico is always so special because we are able to observe a completely different lifestyle than what we are used to. Whenever we go down there we bring toys for the kids to play with and it always amazes me how excited the kids get whenever we pull out the soccer balls or the jump rope. The joy that the kids exhibit is so genuine and obvious not even a language barrier can hold it back! Another part of the trip that is touching is the church service. Kenny does a spectacular job of worship, and Kelly always gives a phenomenal message that Martin translates amazingly!

My favorite part of church is feeling the spirit move throughout the congregation, watching its impact on the villagers, and hearing the kids singing to the Lord. If you ever get the chance to go on one of these mission trips to Mexico go!!! God can use this experience to shape your life in a unique way that you would've never thought. You won't regret it and your life will be impacted forever!

NEW BOARD MEMBERS!

MEGAN JONES



Megan is a local Physical Therapist employed by the Hill Country Memorial Rehab Center. She has been on 3 medical mission trips with MDC in the past year!

JOSH ALLEN



Josh is a local entrepreneur. He is the owner of Jack and Adam's Bicycle Shop. Josh has experience in local fundraising and will serve the mission well here in Fredericksburg and Mexico.

CATHERINE ZENNER



Catherine has served as the Minister to Children & Young Families at First Baptist Church for 15 years. She has a heart for serving in every way. Catherine has provided Sunday school materials for the women of Mexico.

JASON BANKS



Jason has served as a local youth pastor, and has a heart for ministering to people. His vision for construction projects and youth ministry is much needed here at the mission.



A Life Saving Case

By Dr. Ottis Layne

Much of the medical work we do in Mision de Candelilla is routine. It's important, including seeing that the people of the ejidos don't run out of medications to control their high blood pressure or diabetes and seeing that they have something to soothe the pain of the arthritis that many of them have from the hard life they live in the desert. In fact, aches and pains are some of the main medical problems we treat in Mexico. But every now and then, not often, and not on every trip we have a case in which we have the chance to literally save someone's life. We saw such a case on the March, 2022 San Vicente trip.

Late in the afternoon of our last clinic day Jose Wislar came to ask us for something to give him relief of the intense pain he had felt in his knees for some time. He suffered from advanced degenerative arthritis in the knees that cushion each step were gone and he walked "bone on bone." He looked miserable as I saw him walk into the clinic. But it was not his knees that were putting his life at risk. In fact, he was completely unaware he had a life-threatening heart problem.

We always take vital signs when our patients register to be seen in clinic. He had a heart rate of 166, well above the normal range of 60 to 100 beats per minute. I asked him the usual questions that go with a medical evaluation for rapid heart rate.

"Do you have palpitations?"

"Do you have any chest pain?"

"Do you have any indigestion?"

"Do you feel short of breath?"

"Do you feel faint?"

"Have your legs been swollen?"

"Do you have heart problems?"

He simply shook his head to each question.

I went through a brief physical exam before sending him into the next room for an EKG. When I listened to his heart I heard a very rapid and irregular rhythm. The EKG confirmed he had an abnormal heart rhythm called atrial fibrillation. The natural pacemaker in his heart was overridden by multiple electrical impulses that arose in an upper chamber of his heart. These impulses drove his heart into the rapid, irregular heart rhythm I heard with the stethoscope and saw on the EKG.

He had a very unusual case of atrial fibrillation. Over my years of work in hospital ER's I have seen this heart rhythm problem many, many times, but this is the only time I have seen a case of rapid atrial fibrillation in someone who had no idea he had it. The usual symptoms are palpitations, faintness, and shortness of breath, because the heart doesn't pump blood well in cases of rapid atrial fibrillation. If the rate is slow there may be none of these symptoms but I have never seen anyone with rapid atrial fibrillation with a rate like Jose had without symptoms of some kind. But Jose's heart was very strong and able to keep his blood pressure up despite the rapid, irregular rhythm.



People with rapid atrial fibrillation can always tell their doctors the exact time of onset of atrial fibrillation because the symptoms typically begin suddenly. But with no symptoms I had no way of estimating the time of onset for Jose. I can only say it must have been relatively recent since he was doing so well.

Jose's abnormal heart rhythm put him at high risk of two potentially life-threatening outcomes. First the rapid heart rate causes the heart to fatigue and someone with persistent rapid atrial fibrillation can go into congestive heart failure. This occurs when the heart is no longer pumping blood well and fluid backs up in the lungs and causes severe shortness of breath.

Second, chronic atrial fibrillation, whether with a rapid rate or a controlled one, puts people at risk of stroke. This can happen if the blood is not moving smoothly through the heart because of a lack of co-ordinated contraction of the heart muscle. Small clots can develop in the heart, and if they break free from the muscle inside the heart they can go to the brain and produce a stroke.

Jose had no clue he was seriously ill, he only knew his knees hurt very badly. But he could have dropped dead from a stroke at any moment or he could have gradually slipped into congestive heart failure and smothered to death in the desert before he could reach medical care.

We were not able to convert Jose's heart to a normal rhythm, but we were able to take the first step toward correcting the problem. In cases of rapid atrial fibrillation the initial treatment is to give medication to control the rate so there is less risk of congestive heart failure. This then gives time to evaluate the heart better and determine the best treatment for returning the heart to a normal rhythm.

More important than the medication was the fact that we identified that Jose had a life-threatening condition, one that he knew nothing about. We were able to explain the importance of taking our medication and then seeing a cardiologist as soon as possible for more definitive care.

Oh yes, we also got him something for his painful knees.



How the Holy Spirit moves is difficult to describe as it is difficult to describe the wind. He is most evidently exemplified in how we lay down our lives for others when we put other's needs before our own. That's the heart and point of the mission. Not to be served, but to serve. Words fall short to fully incapsulate how the Holy Spirit moved on my first trip. All I can say is what a dear friend told me, "you just have to come to know." If you're considering serving, donating, or volunteering, pray and let the Holy Spirit give you the courage to step forth in faith and say "here I am Lord."

ANGELINA VANNICOLA, FREDERICKSBURG UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



MISSION CALENDAR

May 11-15: Medical Trip to Boquillas, Las Norias, and Jaboncillos

June 2-6: Holy Ghost Lutheran youth trip to Jaboncillos

August 20th- Fiesta Fundraiser

September 21-25: Medical Trip to San Vicente, La Union, and San Miguel

October 12-16: Medical Trip to Alamos de Marquez, Paso de San Antonio, and Alamos de San Antonio

November 2-6: Medical Trip to Boquillas, Las Norias, and Jaboncillos

December 8- Well Child Clinic to Centinela



DIRECTORS REPORT

Thank you! First of all, to all of those who generously gave at the end of last year! Misión De Candelilla supporters are ever faithful, so I thank you for allowing us to continue to serve God through medical missions! While the medicine we provide saves lives, I have no doubt, we also have an opportunity to minister to the souls of God's Children. Myself a child of God, I must always be reminded my security is in the Lord, our treasure is in heaven and our fears have no place here on earth!

CHRISTMAS TRIPS

Since you last heard from us we have had several successful trips. We had our well child clinic on December 10th which is a partnership with Piedras Negras and Fredericksburg Evening Rotary. These are a one-day trip to a village called Centinela west of Piedras Negras. The clinic is a basic health check up. Furthermore, we give each of the kids vitamins. This year we passed out over 6,000 vitamins in Centinela. It is really fun to watch the kids as they anticipate the day and the gifts provided by Rotary!

Later in December, we had 2 Christmas trips La Union and San Vicente with Holy Ghost Lutheran Youth and Fredericksburg United Methodist respectively. They provided gifts for every family in the villages, as well as providing a BBQ meal for everyone! First Baptist also provided gifts for the families of Ejido Jabocillos Chicos! It was a special time of celebration with our dearest friends on both sides of the Rio Grande.

MEDICAL TRIPS

We just completed our first two Spring trip to San Vicente and Los Alamos. We had a great group of 15, many of whom hadn't been since the pandemic. Fortunately we had a pediatrician on this trip with the elevated number of child patients! We again passed out a little over 7,000 vitamins. Sara and Curtis came on this trip, which was such a blessing to have them back and to see them reunite with the villagers.

We have our next trip shortly to Boquillas. There is still time to sign up!

WISH LIST!

We have had some unexpected repairs on our vans. For those of you that have been on trips, you know that the roads and conditions are not forgiving! We recently had a van repairs in excess of \$3,000 and the other is in some need also. If you could help us get to a repair goal of \$6,000 that would be very appreciated.



NEW TRAILER!

Thank you to everyone that gave towards the trailer. We have custom ordered it directly from the factory and it will soon be in our possession! Praise God!

WANT TO HELP US ON THIS SIDE OF THE BORDER?

There are small jobs around each trip that we could always use help completing such as cleaning out the boxes, coolers, coffee items, and preparing them for the next trip.

Local Missions Week: Local Missions Week with Heritage School is set for the evening of July 24th to morning of the 29th. We are looking for people that can help volunteer either at work sites helping direct and chaperone, as well as those who can help prepare meals. To any bakers out there that would like to help us make snacks and cookies for the group, your help would be greatly appreciated!

We will also be looking for service projects. If you know of a community or personal need please contact us so we can get a visitation set up.

Hygiene packs, if you or your church would like to gather supplies please contact Kelly.

SHOUT OUTS!

Fredericksburg Evening rotary who made carts for our EKG to be left in each village! This is a big help to travel with lighter loads.

Bridge Church and Gayle Long for getting the next round of Hygiene Packs.

Value-Med for always helping in a pinch with medications.

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Would you consider becoming a monthly donor? Scan the QR Code to give online now!

mdcmexico.org/donate



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