

Salud Juntos 2010 Eye Brigade to Punta Ocote



Saturday 2 January 2010

Thanks for getting us off the ground!

Happily, we are sitting on a Continental Flight from Tucson to Houston the Saturday after New Years- and plans to transfer to Pedro San Sula, Honduras yet tonight.

Thanks to all who made this trip happen-

Norma Peal PhD, God rest her soul, for getting the UPHH Ophthalmology Residency Program underway;

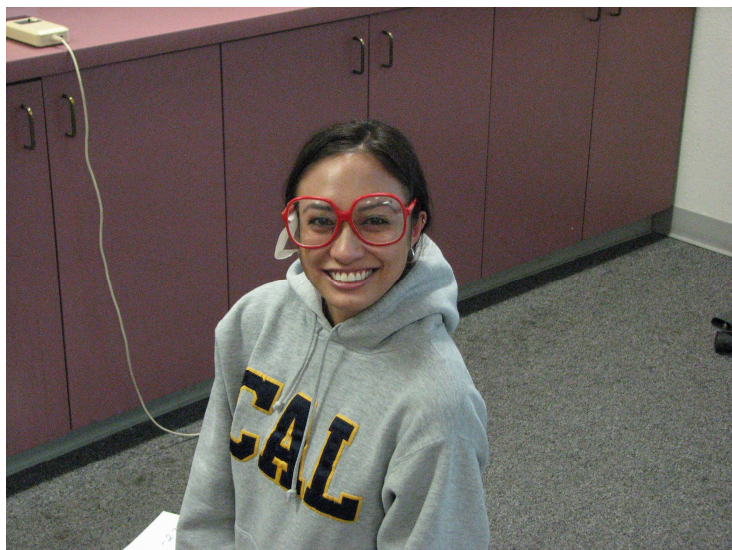
Pat Broyles, our residency coordinator, arranging the details;

Dale Reiger, and the leaders of Salud Juntos, for providing the support for our little trip; and

Sally and Bill Manley, from ALERT - the Lions Club Eyeglass Recycling Program, who helped us gather together the stock of eyeglasses for distribution.



Here we go- Leslie Garay MD, Carmen Felix-Tacoronte MD, Laura Miller, and Joe Miller MD MPH, with our supplies. Each of us had 35 pounds of eyeglasses and donated eye drops as part of our personal luggage.



And Dawn De Castro MD and Matthew Feng MD, for all the help getting the supplies sorted and counted!



It was mayhem for a while- in the background you see Sarah and Laura sorting through washed donated glasses looking for the elusive aphakic spectacle – none in 8

boxes of spectacles. This is good for us (nearly everyone in the US now has intraocular lens implants) but bad for the few people that we will likely meet next week who had cataract surgery but now IOL implants. These folks need “Mr Magoo” glasses and without them they are functionally blind. We may need to purchase some glasses while we are in country.



Leslie is sorting out the hyperopic (farsighted) glasses that were purchased for the trip with the help of Dan Twelker OD PhD.

Why the folks in Honduras need so many hyperopic glasses remains somewhat of a mystery. In the US, most of the donated eyeglasses are to correct myopia (nearsightedness); indeed about one person in four in the US is myopic. It is easily flipped in Honduras- last year we gave out far more hyperopic (farsighted) specs, as predicted by Terry Tack OD and Dan Twelker OD PhD. So, this year with the help of the Lions Eyeglass Recycling program, we played fish and hopefully will have the right distribution of specs.

The Back-Story

We indeed are fortunate to be able to practice ophthalmology, and our specialty is rich in the tradition of sharing our skills with those less fortunate. Project Orbis (the flying eye operating room) is one example; Surgical Eye Expeditions International (SEE International), at one time directed by Jorge Rodríguez MD, is another.

When the opportunity came to create a new residency program in ophthalmology at UPH Hospital, and define the educational objectives and mission statement, care for the rural and underserved, and an international understanding of ophthalmic medicine were placed high on the list.

While our faculty try and teach cultural competence in all we do, actually traveling and getting outside the comfort zone is necessary as well.

First things first- The first year international experience

We are fortunate to have two faculty members who practice in Nogales Sonora, and who host our first year residents for “Immersion Ophthalmic Spanish” for two weeks.



Thank you Dra. Ramirez and Dr. Alvarez for hosting our first year residents





Here are our first year UPHH Kino Residents- Drs. Thiripurasundari Pugazhendi and Matthew Feng, preparing to cross the border to Nogales Sonora, and be met by Dr. Alvarez.

And then for the airplane ride...

Drs. Garay and Felix-Tacoronte were agreeable to the second international rotation, for senior residents in the UPHH residency, conducted in partnership with Salud Juntos.

Final Details

We are not yet in country, and things may change, but here is our plan:

Saturday Night, Jan 2, 2010

El Progreso, Honduras- The Hotel Casa Blanca.

Sunday – Thursday, Jan 3-7, 2010

Yoro, Honduras- Marquez Hotel

Friday and Saturday

El Progreso, Honduras- The Hotel Casa Blanca.

While we are in country, Mr. Dale Reiger will be carrying his cell phone.

Dale Reiger

We have travel insurance- US phone is 1-800-654-1908.