

Guatemala student dental mission trip



Hug Line inside Clinic Courtyard

Spring Break March 17–24, 2018, was another highly effective time for sharing skills, talents, and love from a group of dental students and dental hygiene students from two Texas dental schools, Texas A&M at Houston and Texas A&M at Dallas. A total team of 60 gathered on Saturday to set up for the eventual care of over 850 people, primarily children in grade schools near the San Raymundo Hospital Compound. A large group of dentist mentors and hygienist mentors did one-on-one mentoring for these students and provided much of the care given. The response by those served is highlighted by the hug line on Friday that tells a story by itself.

One of the extracurricular activities on the midweek break day was to visit the University of Francisco Marroquin for a tour and an hour with three US Embassy representatives who explained the relationship of the Embassy with groups such as ours. It was a unique time for our group, the Embassy team and the Dental School leadership.

That was followed up with a tour of the historical Museum of Central American History, “Museo Popol Vuh.” Our group makes a concerted effort to become familiar with the history and culture of the area we serve while enjoying the special tourist locations, their Central Market and exciting La Aurora Zoo.



Inside Exhibit Case in Museo Popol Vuh



Inside La Aurora Zoo



Visit with US Embassy Representatives

A highlight of this year was the integration of some 50 of the UFM dental students into our team effort under the supervision of some of the UFM faculty that also joined us throughout the week. This is the largest number of dental students from UFM to join us in the 7-year history of this GUA mission. It represents our influence in not only encouraging our predoctoral students to become active in charity but also bringing along another country's predoctoral students into the concept of local, national, and international humanitarian service.

Not to be missed in this is the wonderful faculty of UFM that is so encouraging of these cross-cultural relationships and the synergy that results from joint projects. Many of their students express deep appreciation for our coming to their country to serve with them. The faculty and Dean of UFM are such highly respected leaders in not only GUA dentistry but also have name recognition within both the Central American dental community and international dental community.

Dr. Estuardo Zachrisson, Head of Pediatric Dentistry (Univ. Southern California) for UFM and a devoted Rotarian, serves ADI as the Central American Regent and is doing a great job of growing the effectiveness of the developing Chapter in Guatemala. Many new young dentists are becoming fellows due to their character and recognized service to the region.



Dr. T. Bob and Dr. Estuardo Zachrisson with some of the UFM students

A sad note was the passing of Dr. Ramiro Alfaro, Founding Dean and moving force behind the fantastic new campus under development, who died early Summer 2017. His legacy is being

honored by the appointment of Dr. Estuardo Mata as the new Dean, an Endodontist (Temple University, Philadelphia) with excellent credentials and history with the growth of the school. Dr. Ramiro Alfaro, an Oral Surgeon (University of Pennsylvania) was the first Central America Regent for ADI and had a huge heart for what ADI represents. His legacy will live on in the extension of the school into greater service in the years to come.

Another highlight of the break day is the evening dinner for all in one of the signature Guatemala restaurants. We have been honored to have the leadership from UFM School of Dentistry join us for a delicious gastronomic experience each year as we solidify our friendships and plan for the future.



From Left to Right, Front Row, Dr. Mata, Dr. Alfaro, Dr. T. Bob, Dr. Shade, Dr. Meyer, Dr. Yarbro, Dr. Nix, Dr. Zachrisson.

From Left to Right, Back Row, Dr. Luan, Dr. Nuyens, Dr. Sperry, Dr. Murphey, Dr. Suarez.

Photo from 2017 GUA Trip.

As you can see from the photograph, ADI is strong and active in Guatemala.

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