



# The Boletín



Medicos-en-Accion/Antigua

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## From volcanoes, power outages and moving hotels, Mission 2015 was like no other!

The Medicos-en-Accion 2015 mission to Guatemala took place January 30 to February 14, 2015. The surgical team and hearing clinic personnel worked at the Santo Hermano Pedro Hospital in Antigua, Guatemala.

The team was made up of 35 volunteers, including 25 who had volunteered previously with Medicos in Guatemala. Team members came from Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta, British Columbia and New York state.

### Physicians

General Surgeons: 1, Gynecologists: 1, ENT Surgeons: 2, Anesthesiologists: 6.

### Nurses

OR Nurses: 10, PAR Nurses: 8

### Audiologists: 2

Five other volunteers assisted in the hearing clinic support and as translators.

Thank you everyone for your enthusiastic participation!

### Super-Sunday Clinic

We followed the same pattern as in previous years with a large intake clinic following the hospital tour on the initial Sunday. Surgeons screened patients for surgery and those selected for surgery were seen by anesthesiologists. OR and PAR nurses unpacked supplies and stocked their work areas while the hearing clinic set up for their clinics. One of the PAR RNs entered OR bookings into the computer system at the hospital. The OR booking process steps have been documented, which should make it easier for other team members in future years.

As usual, ENT sees a large number of patients seeking surgery who do not require surgery. A lot of time is spent with these patients and families to explain what the best treatment options are. With two ENT surgeons, additional clinics

were held during the afternoon of the first operative week and identified more patients requiring surgical procedures, which were then scheduled and completed during the team's time at the hospital.



Work carried on with the assistance of headlamps after a power failure.  
Photo: Joanne Richards

### OR Schedule

Four OR's were run Monday to Friday on week one and Sunday to Tuesday on week 2. With only one gynecologist and general surgeon, one of the anesthesiologists volunteered to assist in those ORs.

Changes in the hospital's schedule resulted in an overlap with another team in the second week. Hospital staff supported our team doing surgery on the Sunday at the start of our second week. We completed our surgical schedules on Tuesday and packed up all our equipment and supplies that day so the next team could set up and run a surgical slate on the Wednesday.

Days operating: 8

Surgical procedures performed: 125

### Primary Surgery Types:

- ♦ ENT - Tonsillectomies, Septoplasties, Adenectomies, Turbinectomies, Tympanoplasties
- ♦ General - Hernia repairs, Laparoscopic Cholecystectomies. One patient had a 2 cm stone in CBD requiring an ERCP and exploration in Guatemala City.
- ♦ Gynecology – Total Abdominal Hysterectomies, Conizations

### Hearing Clinic:

The Hearing Clinic operated from February 2-6 only.

Hearing aids dispensed: 73  
Molds made: 74  
Repairs: 23

### Challenges:

There was a widespread power outage during the afternoon on Feb. 4 and surgeries underway were completed via flashlight. Four surgeries (1 Gyne, 3 ENT) were rescheduled to the next day.

The eruption of the volcano Fuego on



Arch in the ash fallout from Fuego

Feb. 7<sup>th</sup> created a large cloud of fine ash that settled on Antigua and closed the





Medicos-en-Accion Antigua: Team 2015!

highway connection to Guatemala City as well as the airport for several hours. Some team members experienced minor respiratory symptoms for a couple of days.

In addition to the alteration of the working schedule, the group relocated from the Quinta after the first week. Alternate accommodation for our large team, recommended by Florrie McCallum and secured by Cindy Reimer, was greatly appreciated by the team. Cindy also did a great job of organizing in-country transportation logistics, ensuring that everyone got to Antigua from the airport and back for their departures home.

With the shorter work schedule this year, team members who had already booked their flights before the schedule change was known were left with three days on their own and many used that time to explore Antigua and other areas of Guatemala.

By: Brenda Uhrynuk

## Why do we make a donation and where does the money go?

Medicos Guatemala requires that each person participating in the mission to Antigua make a personal donation, in addition to covering their own travel and accommodation costs. Your donation goes towards the purchase of all medications used during surgery (anaesthetics, narcotics, and oxygen), intravenous fluids, and a daily charge per volunteer for breakfast and lunch at the hospital. A per patient donation of \$25 US helps to support the operations of the surgical suites and post-operative care areas. We also make an annual donation in support of *Casa de Fe*, a temporary home in Antigua where patients who travel from remote areas of Guatemala to Antigua for surgery can stay pre and post operation.

The hospital is one part of the Association Obras Sociales del Santo Hermano Pedro <http://www.obrashermanopedro.org/>. This association operates nine residential homes of permanent care for children, young adults and elderly of both sexes with severe physical and mental disabilities and abandoned, providing food, clothing, education, medicines, and everything else required. The association estimates that the monthly cost to support each disabled patient is US\$250. A special residential program at the hospital fights the malnourishment in Guatemala by providing attention to babies with severe weight problems. In addition, Obras Sociales operates a daycare centre for children of single, working mothers (mostly from the Municipal Market), as well as a drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre.

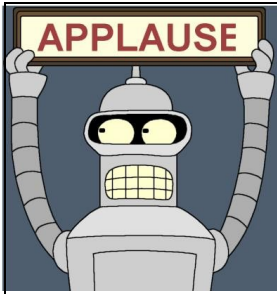
The Obras Sociales is currently building *Virgen del Socorro*, a permanent home for the children and adults with special needs currently living in the hospital complex. Once construction of this facility is completed and everyone relocated (in late 2015), a project to construct three new operating rooms and support facilities will begin at the hospital.



Photo left: Construction of the new residential facility is on schedule for a late 2015 opening.

Photo: Obras Sociales del Santo Hermano Pedro.





Our work in Guatemala is only possible through the generous donation of time, talent and supplies by our enthusiastic volunteers and supporters.

This year we especially thank Nancy Levesque and Jean-Gregoire Roveda from Ottawa, Sarah Sugden and Sarah Brady from Watertown, New York, Joyce Johnson from Toledo, Ohio, and Christa Maguire and Ruth Moen from Kamloops, BC for the donation of hearing aids and batteries.

**Thank you/Gracias!**



Every year, the team comes together the first Saturday night for a Welcome Party that includes, chili, guacamole, salsa and cornbread. Es muy bueno! Thanks Norm, Joanne and all the prep people for this great tradition.

## Jalapeno-Cheddar Cornbread

### INGREDIENTS

YIELD: Makes one 8"x8" pan

- 1 tablespoon salted butter
- 1/2 to 3/4 cup (packed) chopped green onions
- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup yellow cornmeal
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 2 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 3/4 teaspoon coarse kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 cup chilled butter cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 1 1/2 cups (packed) coarsely grated yellow extra-sharp cheddar cheese
- 1 large egg
- 3/4 cup (about) buttermilk
- 1/3 cup finely chopped Jalapeno pepper

### PREPARATION

Position rack in center of oven; preheat to 375°F. Melt 1 tablespoon butter in non-stick skillet over medium heat. Add jalapeno pepper and green onions and sauté 2 minutes to soften slightly. Remove from heat.

Blend flour, cornmeal, sugar, baking powder, salt, and baking soda in processor. Add 1/2 cup chilled butter; cut in using on/off turns until mixture resembles coarse meal. Add cheese; cut in using on/off turns. Transfer flour mixture to large bowl. Whisk 1 egg and stir in buttermilk. Stir in green-onion mixture and jalapeno mixture. Make well in centre of dry ingredients. Pour buttermilk mixture into well; mix just until evenly moistened.

Scrape batter into greased 8 inch square pan. Bake in 375 degree oven for ~ 40-45 minutes or until toothpick inserted into centre comes out clean.

Cool on rack 5 minutes. Serve warm.





## Guatemala Division of Medicos-en-Accion

Following the 2012 Guatemala mission, the executive of Medicos-en-Accion voted to focus their efforts on the development of a surgical and education program in The Gambia.

The Medicos-en-Accion Executive is supporting the establishment of a Guatemala Division. A Division follows the Constitution and Bylaws of the parent organization, but is issued its own charitable donation number by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and must submit its own financial reports to the CRA.

A motion to create the Antigua Division will be put forward at the Annual General Meeting in August. It is expected to be well-supported by Medicos members. In the meantime, a small group is forming a Division Executive to move this work forward.

The CRA requirements have been reviewed and the submission to establish a Division is being prepared.

While Medicos-en-Accion and The Gambia team is from the Kamloops area, the Antigua Division is composed of volunteers from across Canada. This has provided a variety of challenges in terms of communications and logistics. Thank goodness for social media and the internet!

Watch for news in the coming months as we report on the development of the Branch and planning for Mission 2016 to Antigua.



### About Medicos -en-Accion Canada

Formed in 2001, Medicos-en-Accion's volunteers provide surgical services, community health and education support in Guatemala and The Gambia.

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### Medicos-en-Accion Board

President: Anna Peron  
Vice President/Team Leader The Gambia: Jon Just  
Vice President Antigua: Brenda Uhrynuk (appointed until 2015 AGM)  
Vice President /Team Leader Medicine Guatemala : Brian Poelzer:  
Treasurer: Dennis Wallis  
Secretary: Christa McGuire  
Fundraising Chair: Ruth Moen  
Website: Blake Farren

### For Medicos-en-Accion/Guatemala Division:

President: Brenda Uhrynuk  
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Secretary: Cindy Reimer  
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Medicos-en-Accion is a registered charity in Canada.