



Belize Mission Project 2017



Announcing Fall 2017 Mission Trips

October 20—October 28, 2017 October 28—November 5, 2017

FOUNDERS REFLECTIONS



The 2016 Belize Mission Project trips were a big change for us. For the first time in 25 years, we were unable to make the trips. Although we certainly missed our “BMP family,” our absence presented a good opportunity for others to expand their leadership roles and enable us to continue to reduce our direct involvement. 2016 was a great year led by two very capable individuals: Drs. Gordon Gates for the first week and Phil Bangle for the second week. Many people pitched in and “carried the mail” so to speak so it would be a booming success.

As usual, we were able to provide dental, medical, audiology, fluoride varnish, and dental laboratory services. Our patients benefited significantly by expansion in both audiology and dental laboratory services.

Everyone was grateful that the weather was cooperative and didn't throw a lot of curve balls into the scheduling like last year. Our clinics were very busy in all of our locations. We find that word of our work spreads in local communities and demand for our programs continues to grow.

Many Belizean people help us year after year. Mr. David Ackerman, a community leader in Corozal, exemplifies the gratitude of his community by extending extraordinary hospitality to our teams and superior organization and management of clinic sites. He is very eager to add clinic sites in his region. Gordy, Phil, and Frank will be traveling to Belize this spring to evaluate the feasibility of new clinic locations.

The desire for our clinical services brings me to our need for more dentists and physicians. Whereas we are extremely grateful for our non-clinical volunteers, our primary mission is to provide general dentistry and primary medical services. Because we must limit the size of our groups (we will have somewhat smaller teams in 2017), we have to be sure we have enough dentists and physicians to effectively fulfill our mission. Please spread the word and do your best to recruit more dentists and physicians for 2017.

We hope you will join us in 2017. We are always delighted to welcome first time Belize Mission Project volunteers. We all work to create a family environment with many opportunities to flourish as friends and coworkers.

Yours in faith and service,

Bonnie and Frank Whipps

(Special thanks to Judi Barager-Kemper for producing our newsletter.)



Week 1 -2016 Volunteers



Week 2 -2016 Volunteers

“Well Oiled” Audiology Teams have Special Stories

2016 brought the very special blessing of two audiology teams to our Belizean communities. Stories from both teams demonstrate the indomitable qualities of extraordinary service ethic and simple generosity so common among our volunteers:

From Jean Bedell: Arturo and his seven year old son, Ramon, came together for a hearing evaluation for Arturo. The audiology team has a well-oiled process...The process takes 5-6 hours. Arturo was being treated while Ramon waited quietly. Ron, a team member, showed him a book to look at. Ramon read every word, and read three more books above grade level. We urged Arturo to go to a library for more books. “There is no library where we live,” he responded. That night the team went to a school supply store and chose 4 books for Ramon. Arturo’s eyes filled with tears, and he said, “This is even a greater gift than receiving a hearing aid.”

It is the little unexpected rewards...

Edith Burns shares a tale of a typically long and rewarding day: “On our last day we were working at the Cayo Deaf Institute. We knew it would be a busy day with no time for food breaks so we brought what was left of our beef jerky and a bag of M&Ms to keep us going along the way. We were booked on the very last flight back to San Pedro. We feared that we would not be able to see all of those waiting. With only a few minutes left, we were introduced to a couple who had been waiting for hours. They began their day on a bus from Sarteneja. After a 3-mile walk in the Caribbean sun, they arrived at our clinic without food. Our patient had lost his job as a surveyor due to a head injury and life-threatening medical conditions prevented his wife from working. They are dependent upon whatever their daughters can spare. After fitting with hearing aids, we asked our patient’s wife to stand behind him and ask a question. She said, “He won’t be able to hear me.” With some coaxing she asked him what he wanted for dinner. Without turning, he asked, “What do we have in the house?” Their reaction was “Praise God, our prayers are answered!”

After tears and hugs all around, the couple headed home with plans for him to attend church and begin job hunting. .. They were also carrying a bag of M&Ms and beef jerky to keep them going along the way...



Corozal: Local Community Spirit and Generosity Buys the Work of BMP Volunteers

The BMP provides our services with the single requirement that communities be able and willing to provide space for us to treat our patients. There is one community that stands alone as an example of community leadership and commitment to our work. Mr. David Ackerman of Corozal has been our partner in the community for many years. In 2016, he and his community sponsored the BMP to the tune of BZ \$10,000.

This sponsorship came in the form of transportation of our 20-member team from our base to Corozal, lodging, three meals per day, evening cultural entertainment, and organized and well-staffed clinical sites. The whole-hearted support of Mr. Ackerman and other community leaders resulted in a downtown street being blocked off and a tent erected to shelter our many patients awaiting oral surgery and general dental care.

Our oral surgeon was challenged immediately upon arrival when he learned that many needy patients did not have the proper diagnostic x-rays. That was no problem for Corozal. Community members quickly gathered all of these patients into a van and drove them to Mexico where they purchased the needed x-rays and came home with the proper diagnostic tools for treatment. All were treated thanks to an involved community.



Medical Team is an Answer to Prayer

As we continue to serve new and underserved cities and communities in Belize, the 2016 group planned to send two physicians and four nurses to Trios, a community new to us that did not receive government medical care on a regular basis. Unfortunately, our local contact was unable to secure reliable transportation to get our team to a clinic site.

Frank always reminds us that “flexibility” is critical to our success. We reached out to Mahogany Heights to see if they could use a medical team. Upon hearing from us, our local contact exclaimed, “You are an answer to our prayers!”

Arrangements were made and the excited and grateful community of Mahogany Heights welcomed our team for one day with expectant patients numbering over 200. We were told that the community had not been visited by a doctor for two years. They were literally praying for medical help.

Dr. Gordon Gates, week 1 team leader, remarked, “This experience helped me realize how God is working through the Belize Mission Project to serve the needs of His people in this part of the world.”



Fluoride Varnish Project is a Family Affair

Our new members are often our best emissaries. Here are a few words submitted by Marc and Sara Orjansen. “There are not adequate words to tell you how very much the BMP means to our family. We will forever be grateful for your leadership, your passion, and your love for the people of Belize. “

“It was our first night in Belize when our daughter, Vaniesa, started planning next year’s trip. We thought, of course the kids would want to come back, but let’s see how they feel after the first day of work...their excitement only grew after each day...and so did their relationships with other team members and the people of Belize. As parents, it was truly the most incredible, almost overwhelming, feeling to witness our kids pitch in, do what was asked of them, serve, and experience the love of Jesus in action. There was something

unique to watch our kids interact with other kids in Belize. Thank you for the opportunity!”



Essie Oborn, fluoride project co-leader, reported, “...Over 9,000 children were treated in two weeks. Some schools had adopted tooth brushing into the curriculum—students brushed in the morning upon arrival and again before going home at the end of the day. Returning to some schools was like visiting “old friends” we had made in previous years. “

“This year, we added many new schools who had heard of our program and were excited to have us there. Now that 2017 has arrived, we are planning and preparing for our next trip. Every-

one is working hard to acquire donations of fluoride and toothbrushes. We hope to see you there!”

“You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in Heaven.” Matthew 5:14-16

Labs were “Crankin” in 2016

2016 was the best year ever for dental laboratory participation and production. Eight techs shared their talents over our two-weeks of service. Dave Dorman has served the BMP for many years, making him the senior tech for the project. He reports, “Two techs served both weeks and I believe all are returning for 2017, with three so far stating intentions to serve both weeks. Our denture tech had a family emergency and had to leave early Wednesday morning, and first timer Andy Larson stepped up and saved the day completing the six full dentures Mike started as well as helping with the two week total of 117 appliances (dentures and partials), a BMP record! Considering all but two of the techs are crown and bridge technicians, this was an amazing display of teamwork, willingness to learn, and a great ‘get the job done’ attitude! It was an honor to work with such an elite group of professionals; both in the lab and those that provided care/services at the Lion’s Den.”



Bonnie and Frank,

You were sorely missed by all!

On behalf of the Belize Mission Project family, we thank you both for your inexhaustible and indispensable service to this project and our world. Your leadership for more than 25 years has blessed tens of thousands of Belizean lives, and those of hundreds of volunteers. Our lives have been immeasurably touched, our spirits raised, our hands put to service. Thank you.

Phil Bangle, Week 2 Team Leader

Gordy Gates, Week 1 Team leader



The Belize Mission Project provides both medical and dental services. The trip is very comfortable and non-threatening. The citizens of Belize are welcoming and gracious. We endeavor to create a respectful, collegial, and family-oriented work and social environment. Everyone is welcome...dentists, dental technicians, dental hygienists, dental assistants, physicians, physician assistants, nurses, nurse practitioners, and non-clinical volunteers.

General dentists and physicians are especially needed in 2017.

For information or to sign up contact:

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Space is limited. Many have already signed up for 2017 so.....DON'T WAIT!