

Healing the Children
Medical Mission Trip for Foot Surgery
Saint-Paul Hospital
Hanoi, Viet Nam

March 23-31, 2007

Thanks to the initial contacts made by the HTC Plastic Surgery Team with Hanoi Saint-Paul Hospital during their pre-mission tour of northern Vietnam in November, 2006, a first-time HTC Foot Surgery Team was organized to go to Hanoi in March 2007 headed by Team Leader Dr. Stephen Miller.



Special recognition goes to Dr. Rob Gertler and Ms. Yen Flanagin who arranged for the contacts and conducted so many of the negotiations that made the medical mission possible. Yen generously volunteered to return with the Foot Surgery Team to make sure the negotiations continued in a complementary process. Her translation skills with the hospital staff proved invaluable. The result was an invitation from Director Le Van Diem of Saint-Paul Hospital. Dr. Nguyen Thai Son, Deputy Director, was the hospital liaison.

There were 24 volunteer team members who sacrificed their time, skills and personal resources to travel half-way around the world to reach out to the children of Hanoi and vicinity. The team carried 39 bags of medical supplies and equipment, returning with only 14 after substantial use and donations. Arriving by Friday gave the team all of Saturday to tour Hanoi, get settled into their modest hotel within walking distance of the hospital, and share their first breakfast, lunch and dinner together. Getting acquainted is essential to the start of an intense week of working closely together in unfamiliar surroundings to give top-notch care to the local children. The goal for the team was to treat all children of need at no cost to them or their families.



Visiting the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum, the Museum of Vietnamese Ethnology, and many other attractions was a great introduction to Hanoi. Saint-Paul Hospital is located on the southern edge the Ba Dinh District and the hotels were nearby. Everyday the team walked by the ancient Van Mieu Temple University of Literature on the way to the hospital. The first half of the week was spent at the Hanoi Holidays Hotel and the second half across the street at the Van Mieu Hotel.

On Sunday morning the OR crew went in to organize and set up all the equipment and supplies transported by the team in the two operating rooms generously reserved for the team for one week by the hospital. The doctors met with the hospital staff who came in on their day off with a host of doctors, students and residents to help with the translation for the screening of the children. In the end, 63 children were screened, some from as far as 1,000 km away, and 29 were selected for surgery. The children's needs were prioritized and a five-day, two-room operating schedule devised. Brenda and Khanh did an outstanding job of organizing the data and schedules on their dueling laptop computers. During the week, local Vietnamese hospital staff always seemed available to help and various doctors



came and went to observe and ask questions. In the future, we would like to see more of them scrub in. Our liaison Dr. Son, himself an orthopedic surgeon, was available frequently during the week.

Over five days, the team surgeons operated on 38 feet in 26 children. Three cases had to be cancelled due to infection, fever and congenital malformations. There were 9 clubfoot reconstructions in 6 of the young patients, probably the most gratifying of the surgeries. Nevertheless, the team actively taught the Ponseti casting technique for nonsurgical treatment of the pediatric clubfoot, including serial casting of one patient twice during the week. Deformities that were congenital as well as those due to spina bifida, cerebral palsy, post-polio and paralysis were all treated and many postoperative casts applied. A lot of tendon surgery was done as well. Some children trickled in during the week for further screenings and surgery or referrals. They seemed to have good radiology and rehabilitation services available at the hospital.

One of the goals of the HTC Foot Surgery Medical Missions is to provide as much education as possible. So, on Thursday afternoon, the team doctors conducted a PowerPoint Seminar presenting subjects such as: The Ponseti Casting Technique, Pediatric Foot and Ankle Fractures, Tendon Transfers About the Foot and Ankle, the Popliteal Nerve Block and the High risk Diabetic Foot. Local doctors were present to provide translation and then they surprised the American team with a guest faculty orthopedic surgeon (never did get his name) in his nineties who shared his experience with his own modified Ilizarov external frame design that he had been using for years to correct clubfoot deformities. Complete with his own PowerPoint show of before and after treatment cases. The team felt honored to be in the presence of such a learned and experienced surgeon. It was amazing he could do so much with so little.



During the seminar, time was taken for the team to donate several pieces of medical equipment to the hospital. Dr. Miller presented to Dr. Diem and Saint-Paul Hospital two full Synthes fracture repair screw/plate/instrument sets as well as a set of large fragment screws for the Department of Orthopedics. Donated separately to Dr. Son were an extra supply of screws and plates plus bone allografts, bone anchors, medical books and a DVD on tendon transfers. At the end of the week, Dr. Baldini donated to the Department of Anesthesia an inhalation anesthesia machine, nerve stimulators, an oxygen sensor and a generous supply of masks and intubation equipment. The staff seemed somewhat surprised and very pleased with these gestures of good-will from the HTC Medical Mission Team.

Such a focused and productive medial mission could not be possible without a lot of networking, assistance and donations from many generous people and organizations. The Oregon and Western Washington Chapter of HTC provided the foundation and logistical support to make this happen with special thanks to Medical Director Dr. Don Van Nimwegan and office manager JoAnn DeLazzari. Much-needed support was greatly appreciated from the Fidalgo Island Rotary Club and Anaortes Rotary



Club, each of which donated \$1,000 to defray costs of special purchases and shipping. Corporate donors included Ellman International (radiosurgery cautery units), Stryker Corporation (loaner power surgery sets), 3M Medical Division (cast material), Cardinal Health (surgical gowns), the Musculoskeletal Transplant Foundation (bone allografts), Dupuy Orthopedics (screws, plates and instrument sets) and Orthomed Inc. (K-wires and Steinman pins). Local help from Chris Hardy of Chris Hardy Medical who organized the internal fixation equipment was indispensable.

By the end of the week skeptical minds were opened, bridges of friendship established, and the lives of many children improved for more opportunities. The invitation not only for the Foot Surgery Team to return but for any other specialty medical mission team from Healing the Children attests to the overall success of this medical mission.

“Healing the world.....one child at a time.”

Stephen J. Miller, DPM

SUMMARY REPORT

Healing the Children – Medical Mission Trip for Foot Surgery Saint-Paul Hospital Hanoi, Viet Nam

March 23-31, 2007

Hospital Director: Le Van Diem, MD

Hospital Deputy Director and Liason: Nguyen Thai Son, MD, PhD

Team Leader: Stephen J. Miller, DPM

Team Administrator: Brenda Burr

Liason Negotiator: Yen Flanigan

Surgeons: William Boegel, DPM

Matt Williams, DPM

Kai Olms, MD

Anesthesiologists:

Dan Baldini, MD

Geoffrey S Hui MD

Tom Balestreri, MD

Mriana Williams, CRNA

Anacortes, WA

LaConnor, WA

Sammamish, WA

Seattle, WA

Lynnwood, WA

Germany

Seattle, WA

Mercer Island, WA

Anacortes, WA

Redmond, WA

Medical: James Monahan, MD	Bothell, WA
Robert Apter, MD	LaConnor, WA
Resident: Mitzi Williams D.P.M.	San Diego CA
Translation: Ha Nguyen	Bellevue, WA
Khanh Nguyen	Bellevue, WA
OR Nurses: Bojen Kuure, RN	Anacortes, WA
Susan Stewart, RN	Park Ridge, NJ
Michelle McCormick Lindsey, RN	Olalla WA
Ronda G. Bradshaw R.N.	Anacortes, WA
PACU Nurses: Kathy Shea, RN	Seattle, WA
Judy Rams, RN	Kirkland, WA
Logistics Coordinator: David Rapella	Anacortes, WA
Photographer/Historian: Sandy Carter	Anacortes, WA
Student Assistant: Ryan Miller	Anacortes, WA

SUMMARY:

Total Children Screened:	63
Total Children Scheduled for Surgery	29
Surgeries Cancelled	3
Total Children Treated Surgically:	26
Total Feet Reconstructed:	38
Total Number of Surgical Procedures:	61
Referrals (local)	6

- There were no stateside referrals

PowerPoint Seminar: One-half Day (4 hours)

Distributed Ponseti Casting Technique Vietnamese Translation – 4 sets

Donated anesthesia inhalation machine

Donated nerve stimulators (two) and oxygen sensor

Donated anesthesia masks and intubation equipment

Donated Supplies: Cast material, dressings, gowns, drapes (est. \$2,500)

Donated Rehabilitation Goods: Crutches, splints, cast boots, surgical shoes (est. \$400)

Donated Instruments: Mini frag, Small frag screw/plate fixation sets (est. \$40,000)

Donated Screws & Plates: Large frag 6.5 screw set plus extra screws and plates (est. \$10,000)

Donated bone allografts: 5 (\$5,000)

Donated Soft Tissue Bone Anchors: 4 (\$1,000)

Donated Medical Textbooks (est. \$350)

Stephen J. Miller, DPM