

School of Health Professions : Nurse Anesthesia : Media



Medical Mission a First for Nurse Anesthesia Students

Three students from the KU Nurse Anesthesia program joined forces with the Kansas City-based Medical Mission Foundation to provide medical services in impoverished areas of Guatemala. Senior SRNAs Michelle Wray, Erin Gibson and Erica Swingle found the eight-day trip this summer to be an invaluable and extremely rewarding experience. A total of 500 patients were seen in the ear, nose, and throat clinic, and 160 procedures were performed during the week. An additional 150 patients were seen in the audiology clinic and 145 hearing aids were successfully fitted. Remarkably, they also completed 80 surgical procedures in four days while utilizing only four operating rooms.



The students, under supervision of volunteer anesthesiologists, were allowed to perform regional and general anesthesia techniques for individuals of all ages. Many of the patients were children with acute and chronic respiratory tract infections, and this necessitated removing their tonsils and adenoids. Health problems such as these are detrimental to life due to the lack of basic health care needs in these communities.

With language barriers, older anesthetic equipment and conservation efforts at the hospital, Wray, Gibson and Swingle faced tremendous challenges during the trip.

They were rewarded with an unbelievable amount of

gratitude from patients and their families, plus an experience that will serve them well in their careers. Upon reflection, the students expressed a desire to return for another medical mission trip and hoped to generate ongoing support for future nurse anesthesia students in pursuing similar causes.

The trip could not have been made possible without the support of the Medical Mission Foundation, the Department of Nurse Anesthesia Education and its chair [Donna Nyght, CRNA, MS](#), the volunteer anesthesiologists and the generous donations from the [University of Kansas Medical Center](#) community.



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