

Medical Missions Trips Lead to Shalom Surgery Center by Allison Bender

An 18-member team led by Shalom Vice President Tommy Sanders and Shalom's new Director of Programs Cindy Bhavsar left Nashville headed to Guatemala City for the fall Surgical Medical Missions Trip on Saturday, September 27. Children in desperate need of surgical treatment will receive the care they need at no cost to their family. Many children have waited years for these procedures. This is the fourth Surgery Mission Trip sponsored by The Shalom Foundation. Last December, 42 children received face, ear, nose and throat surgical repairs.

Doctors, surgeons, nurses and other staff members from Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt prepared for several months collecting and packing medical supplies. They have spent hours together building the team bonds that would prepare them for the intense surgical schedule ahead.

Maria Jose de Gallardo, Shalom Foundation's Director of Programs – Guatemala, worked with our Guatemalan medical partners to screen children who are candidates for surgery. Families travel from throughout Guatemala to Guatemala City for these screenings.

The Shalom Surgical Team will bring their surgical skills and hope to families whose children have facial birth defects, or head, face or neck growths-- but this trip is extra special-- the team members and The Shalom Foundation will also bring good news.

"We are announcing a capitol campaign to fund a hospital in Guatemala City providing a modern facility that will be a permanent home to this program," said Cindy Bhavsar, Director of Programs for The Shalom Foundation. "Funds raised will cover the purchase of the facility earlier this year as well as the renovations and equipment needed to create a surgery center with the amenities expected by medical teams from the United States," said Bhavsar.

The Shalom Foundation's campaign was kicked off in August with [**"Breaking Ground – A Celebration of Hope"**](#) held at Saffire Restaurant, chaired by Shalom Board Member Tony Harris. The Foundation seeks to raise nearly \$1.5 million for a 12,000-square-foot facility with the following features: 3 operating rooms, 17 recovery beds, 5 pre-operative beds, along with other facilities.

John W. Brock III, M.D. Surgeon-in-Chief of the Children's Hospital and director of Pediatric Urology, and Harry Jacobson, M.D., vice-chancellor for Health Affairs at Vanderbilt Medical Center announced a \$75,000 contribution to fund an operating room at the proposed Shalom Surgery Center.

"Treating the children of Guatemala has been a personal passion of mine for more than a decade," Brock said. "It's gratifying to know that this facility will make it possible to offer these children these life-altering procedures near their home communities, where they can remain with their families."

"The Shalom Surgery Center will be the most ambitious effort undertaken by The Shalom Foundation and its partners. We are very excited about this new chapter in our foundation's history," said Shalom Foundation President, Steve Moore. "We know that fulfilling this need in Guatemala will literally transform lives, and we have faith

that the generous hearts of our friends and partners will help us to achieve this goal."

Between international Shalom Surgical Team trips physicians and medical professionals with Manos de Amor Clinic in Guatemala City will keep the Shalom Surgery Center open for follow-up appointments. The Shalom Surgery Center will also serve as a much-needed birthing center for the community.

"The surgery center will become an international post for other surgical teams beyond Vanderbilt," said Amy Casseri, chief community and business development officer for the Children's Hospital. "We liked the fact that Shalom's goal is a long-term one: to bring teaching resources along with the the proper facilities to help train Guatemalan medical personnel so that high level care is permanent."

The Shalom Surgical Team arrives in Guatemala City on Saturday, September 27 to set up the OR's and begin a week of pediatric surgeries including: facial birth defect repairs like cleft lip, removal of masses, birth defect or scar reduction and other ear, nose and throat procedures.

The Medical Team includes surgeons: Steve Goudy, M.D. and Shelagh Cofer, M.D.; surgical resident Maria Wittkopf, M.D.; anesthesiologists: Chris Lemelle, M.D. and Scott Watkins, M.D.; anesthesia fellow Rachel Cambray, M.D.; nurse anesthetists: Jill Moore and Roni Nylander; operating room nurses: Lori Graves, R.N., Brenda Sandlin, R.N., Jacque Lee, L.P.N.; Scrub Techs: Kate Rafferty and Glenda Sullivan; and acute care nurses: Ladonna Reyka, R.N., Sandra Tidwell, R.N., Alison Newton, R.N.

Click on the link below to view images and read blog postings from team member Lori Graves, R.N. http://www.vanderbiltchildrens.com/atw_blog/?cat=56

Click on the link below to read about "Breaking Ground – A Celebration of Hope". http://www.theshalomfoundation.org/gi_breakingground.php