

The September 2016 Mission of Love Rehabilitation medical mission to Tecpan Guatemala was a resounding success. Mission of Love was able to assemble a team of volunteers from all major disciplines which operate acute rehab hospitals in the United States. An acute rehabilitation hospital delivers the most advanced rehab care available in the country. Our all volunteer team of physician, therapists, nurses treated over 270 patients and provided essential rehabilitation services and equipment to the native Mayan population who otherwise have no access to medical or rehabilitation care.

After arriving in Guatemala our team decided that the theme of our trip was going to be, expect miracles. Sometimes these miracles take the form of the day to day events before our very eyes. Let me explain.

On the first day of the Mission a young boy named Edwin arrived. Edwin was one of the sweetest, most affectionate, children I have ever met. He had a smile that could melt your heart and a gentle loving presence. Because of some developmental delay he had low muscle tone and difficulty supporting himself without help. Our team of therapists including Debbie Sams (Occupational Therapy) and Evgenia (Jane) Tararova (Physical Therapy) evaluated and treated this lovely young man providing exercises and family instruction to help build his strength. We asked Edwin and his family to return later in the week after the donated rehab equipment would arrive. We were able to find Edwin a pediatric walker that looked like it was made just for him. Jane helped get the walker properly adjusted and worked with Edwin and our whole team was able to share in a moment with his family to witness Edwin walking on his own without help for the first time in his life. This was just but one of the simple miracles created by the work and donations from the team at Mission of Love.



Our volunteer crew from Northeast Ohio was comprised of experts in multiple disciplines. Jane Terarova was our physical therapist from Children's Rehab in Cleveland. Don Pavlov, also from Cleveland, helped with translation and surgical equipment management. Volunteers from Hillside rehab hospital in Warren OH included myself, Dr. Daniel Winkle a specialist in physical medicine and rehabilitation as well as Debbie Sams from occupational therapy and Lotta Shafer a certified rehabilitation nurse. Other volunteers included Eric Broviak who helped run the pharmacy and manage supplies and Becky Spratt who helped both with nursing and translation. Kathy Price, the Mission of Love director. helped organize and make the impossible possible in many ways. The volunteers were not just from the United States but included a large group of people from Guatemala as well that were indispensable for the success of the mission.

We successfully delivered a wealth of equipment included standard wheelchairs, custom fit wheelchairs, walkers, back braces, orthotic braces, medicines, shoes, canes, standers, and food. The patients served in the clinic were able to be evaluated and we were able to vend equipment that was appropriate for the patient's size and met their individual functional needs. In Guatemala and in this population everything was needed. Walkers and canes helped village elders offload their joints and walk with less pain, wheelchairs helped families with disabled children to have easier transport, back braces helped relieve the pain of manual laborers, and walkers helped young children support themselves and walk for the first time in their lives.



The kindness and compassion of this team of volunteers and of the Mayan people will forever live in my heart. Mission of Love through its team of 100% volunteers is able to put all its resources to help those it aims to serve. I was able to witness just how its resources are put to work and remain proud to be part of the team.

Expect miracles, but the miracles might not be what you expect. If our aim was to expect miracles then our mission was certainly a success.

Daniel Winkle MD

