

PERU HEALTHCARE PARTNERSHIP PROJECT

Hearts with Hope Foundation was founded by Dr. Juan Alejos a pediatric cardiologist at UCLA. The organization's mission is to provide medical and humanitarian assistance to children in Latin America with congenital heart disease. An equally important goal is the education of local medical personnel in the treatment of these children. To date there have been three large scale missions to Arequipa, the second largest city in Peru to provide care to children with congenital heart disease. In January 2006, the first large scale trip for this organization 26 medical and humanitarian volunteers spent 2 weeks screening children for congenital heart disease via physical exam, ECHO and when necessary, cardiac catheterization. Treatment included cardiac surgical repair and interventional catheterizations. UCLA Anesthesiologists Michael Sopher and Swati Patel have accompanied this group on all three missions and have worked in collaboration with the local anesthesiologists to provide care for the patients.

The 2007 medical mission to Arequipa expanded to include a dental team to provide much needed care to this patient population. We performed 17 surgeries and over 30 interventional catheterizations. Furthermore, thanks to the hard work of our dental team well over 100 teeth found their way to the tooth fairy and dozens more were treated. All in all, over 800 children were evaluated for cardiac or dental disease throughout Arequipa and Cuzco.

Our most recent trip in October 2008 was the busiest trip to date. The team expanded to 54 medical and humanitarian volunteers. The anesthesia team was expanded accordingly to include Dr. Lisa Feintech (a former graduate of the UCLA Anesthesiology residency) and Dr. Michael Trimming (CA-3 resident). Working closely with local cardiologists, anesthesiologists and intensivists, the team screened over 1500 patients for dental and congenital heart disease including performing cardiac ECHO's in over 300 kids. 16 children had surgical repair of their congenital heart disease and 33 received interventional cath repair of their lesions. Furthermore, most of the 1500 kids screened received fluoride treatment and dental hygiene training. Over 1000 teeth were extracted and another 1000 received fillings.

RESIDENT DR. MICHAEL TRIMMING'S COMMENTS:

From an educational standpoint, the trip to Peru with Heart with Hope Foundation was some of the most valuable time spent during my training. I was able to be involved with the entire perioperative process, honing my cardiac physical exam skills in the field, performing ECHOs, preparing and administering anesthesia in the field, the OR and cath labs and finally caring for the patients in the ICU postoperatively. We truly saw every aspect from start to finish.

From a personal standpoint, it was one of the most gratifying things I have been a part of. I've never worked with more amazing people, both our own and the local staff that greeted us as soon as we arrived and treated us like family the entirety of the trip. The interactions with the kids were terrific, they seemed so happy with so little. It was an honor to be a part of something that truly changed their lives and I hope to participate for years to come.