

Past Participants - Journey of Giving Medical/Dental Expedition



Jan Van Someren (nurse)

When we first started to talk about doing a "medical trip" about a year ago, the idea was to "give back to the people of Mexico", I had no idea I would take home more than I could possibly "give". Working with the Mexican medical staff and the Canadians who came together on this trip has to be the most wonderful experience of my Nursing career.

Assisting the Mexican Doctors, doing simple procedures such as Blood Pressures, Glucometer checks, and simply finding the correct medication to dispense, communicating through a spanish/english dictionary, a few words and a lot of hand signals proved to be very effective and most appreciated by the patients we were serving (not to mention caused a lot of laughter between us all).

To watch the smiles on the peoples faces as they tried on a pair of old, used prescription glasses and could see clearly, was amazing. To see the Doctor tend to her patient sitting at one end of a kitchen table and a dental procedure taking place at the other end of the table while the family dog looked on as he lay beneath the table with his chin on the Doctors foot, was amazing. To watch an ultrasound of a newly pregnant woman and see the tears of happiness of the people and a few community members peeking in at the u/s screen, was amazing. To see the children with big smiles on their faces run around with a soccer ball or playing with a frizbee or doing a craft for the first time was amazing.

Sharing this experience with our new found Mexican and Canadian friends is an experience I will keep with me forever, and I only hope that others will be able to share in this experience and that we can continue to expand on this truly wonderful experience.

Thank You Panterra!



Riny Van Someren (builder)

This trip was a great experience. We were able to help the local people in a very real way and as a bonus got to know some really super people, enjoy the beautiful scenery, and see amazing wildlife.

Seeing the gratitude of the people for building a simple palapa for them was heartwarming. Then to see the affect of the medical services was even more touching. The big smile when someone put on a pair of glasses and was able to see again; or had a tooth fixed; or had aches and pains relieved by chiropractic work; or had ailments and concerns eased by the doctors. It was amazing.

The icing on the cake was providing toys and gifts to the children of these small communities. The smiles and laughter brought by a simple thing like blowing bubbles ...

I can't say enough about the other people on this trip. Their genuine concern for the local people and willingness to do anything they could to help them; their high spirits and friendliness. There was a great sense of camaraderie that made the trip fun. And, of course, there were the beaches, the desert, the mountains, and the ocean to enjoy on the off hours. Whales, sea lions, dolphins, birds and fish were all there for us.

Would I do it again? In a heartbeat.



Bob, Liz and Liam Tinworth (builders)

The chance to be part of this years "Journey of Giving" has been an amazing experience. We always find such gratification in giving to communities in little ways but, to be part of a team that was bringing health and well-being in a bigger way is awe inspiring. We really weren't sure what our part would be in the project, as we are not medical or dental professionals. We did want to contribute in whatever way we could though.

This is our 5th trip to the Baja with Panterra, and with each visit we experience just how beautiful the people here are, both inside and out. Each day was a different project palapas, double roofed palapas, walls, benches, gifts, sharing with the people. After each day, it was like wow, that was a great day, and we felt like we had given something to these amazing people. Even if it was a bench that was too big, not square, uneven. The community thought it was perfect.

The highlight for us was our last day with the children. When children are part of the mix, you feel that there is life everywhere. We had young and old, and that is exactly what life is about families, working and sharing together in good times and bad. We felt like we were in a movie or television show, these just weren't things that we see on a day to day basis, or ever for that matter. We have been blessed to have met Lela and to have become part of the Panterra family.

Each of our children have come away from a trip to the Baja with life changing experiences that will stay with them as they journey through their own lives. I know that giving back will always be a part of who we are. We hope that someday when our loved ones are no longer with us that Heaven can be a little bit like the amazing beauty and peacefulness that we have experienced on this trip to the Sea of Cortez.



Louise Sauve (nurse)

I would like to thank Lela and Stasia from the bottom of my heart for the chance of a life time. To experience the most precious people of Mexico; it is really a "Journey of Giving", not only of what we can give to these people but the giving in return of smiles and hugs and true gratitude.

Special thanks to the crew as well. Thank you for giving me the best holiday ever!



Kraeg Minett (builder)

Pulling together this many people and having it come off looking like there was no effort is a challenge unto itself and participating in a charitable event where you can see the results of every dollar donated is very rare, but that's what we saw here. Well done Lela.



Anna Kajda Minett (certified dental assistant)

Just to add a short note to everything that Craig mentioned.... I want to express my heartfelt thanks to Lela, Stasia, the crew and all of the volunteers on the boat. The friends that we made on this journey will be forever beautiful. To have been given the opportunity to serve the people we did on this trip and to have seen all that the Sea of Cortez has to offer, is something I will never forget. My travel companions were excited for me to see dolphins as I mentioned that I would probably start crying if I did. I didn't cry at the sight of dolphins but thinking about all the great people that I was lucky enough to share this with and of course, the fantastic crew, brings a tear to my eye.

Thank you to everyone again...from the bottom of my heart!!



Dr. Christopher Chung (chiropractor)

Today is day 5 of our journey and we're heading back to La Paz. This experience for me has been absolutely beautiful. To have been given the opportunity to serve the people we did on this trip and to have seen all that the Sea of Cortez has to offer, is something I will never forget. My travel companions were excited for me to see dolphins as I mentioned that I would probably start crying if I did. I didn't cry at the sight of dolphins but thinking about all the great people that I was lucky enough to share this with and of course, the fantastic crew, brings a tear to my eye.

Thank you Sergio, Guillermo, Eleazar, Captain Martin, Ester, Paloma, Stasia and Lela. This Journey of Giving has changed my life forever and I will always remember your kindness and hospitality.



Michelle Guiguet (recent certified dental assistant graduate)

This has truly been the adventure of a lifetime. One of the many wonderful aspects of this journey has been the many new friendships that have developed, and hearing many intriguing stories about others and their lives. It has been full of learning, adapting, and achieving mutual goals while in turn helping each unique community in a way that will be forever remembered. For me personally, working with our dental team of three girls with no suction or running water while having the time of our lives doing it was amazing. The look on one little boy's face as Edna gave him a "glove balloon" after not only extracting a tooth but restoring another will be forever engraved in my heart.

The nights on the bow of the ship relaxing together with some beers further developed our newly acquired friendships. The wildlife brought this adventure to a whole new level.... holding the colors of the Baja in my hand (stones of the ocean) and having a butterfly land on them while gazing out over the glass of an ocean made me realize that I have been blessed. Witnessing a brand new sea lion pup and mother interact and watching Blue Footed Boobie birds dance with each other, then returning to the boat only to see whales and dolphins in front of the boat has rounded out this magical adventure.

So many beautiful people have been involved in changing, completing, and mentoring many people's lives and hearts. It has been a true privilege to have been a part of this journey! Thank you from the bottom of my heart.



Lucas Zimmerman (recent nursing graduate)

The Journey of Giving was an experience unlike any other. The feeling of satisfaction was a reward unlike any I have ever felt before. I will never forget this trip or the people involved in making it happen. I went without knowing anyone and I came out with a boat load of friends.

The people and the culture of the Baja is something that I wish every individual could take part in, and I only hope that I will get the chance to participate in this adventure again.

"The purpose of life, after all, is to live it, to taste experience to the utmost, to reach out eagerly and without fear for newer and richer experiences." - Eleanor Roosevelt