

Refuge International

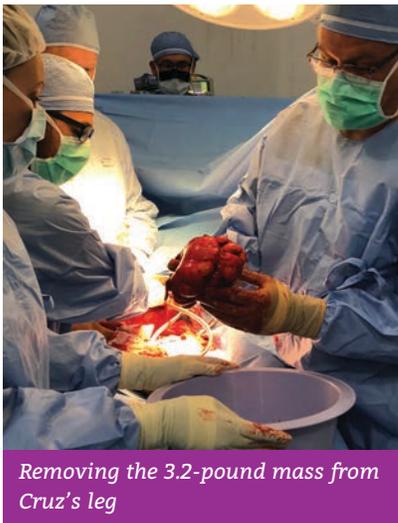
ANNUAL NEWSLETTER 2018

Delivering Clean Water • Improving Healthcare • Reducing Illiteracy

Cruz's Story

Kimberly Johnson

Cruz Ajqui Ixquiactep, a shy, quiet 27-year-old from Xojola (pronounced “show-ho-la”), came to the Chocolá clinic during our July mission trip for a consult on a possible small hydrocele.



Removing the 3.2-pound mass from Cruz's leg

During the exam, however, Refuge International volunteer Dr. Jason Murry noted the presence of a large mass on Cruz's right thigh (and no hydrocele issues).

Cruz told Dr. Murry that the “bump” had been there for a few months and caused him pain and irritation. Dr. Murry noted that the mass was likely benign, but given the size and location, said it would best be removed by an orthopedic surgeon—

one of whom would be arriving with our next mission trip in San Raymundo just two weeks later.

When pathology confirmed that the mass was a benign lipoma, the Refuge team coordinated with Dr. Sergio Castillo, the local physician we work with in Chocolá, to bring Cruz to San Raymundo (a 4-hour drive from Chocolá).

Orthopedic surgeon Dr. JB Parker removed the 3.2-pound mass from Cruz's thigh, and after a couple of days recovering in the San Raymundo hospital, Cruz and his brother, who came with him for support, made the journey home.



Cruz and his brother prepare to return home

In November, on the last day of another Refuge mission trip to Chocolá, a truck pulled into the hospital yard and Cruz, along with 22 members of his family, climbed out. Cruz had come back for a follow-up exam, and Dr. Ken Eveland confirmed that the leg had healed perfectly. Multiple generations of the family had all come to show their appreciation, and we were thrilled to see Cruz's proud, beaming smile!



Cruz's family celebrate his recovery

2018 At a Glance

Patients cared for during medical missions:	2,942
Surgeries performed:	337
Dental services:	275
Vision services:	745
Volunteers working with Refuge International:	276
Patients seen in the Hiway 80 clinic:	422 patients with 133 volunteers
Patients cared for in the Sarstun clinic:	626
Village visits:	6,774 throughout the year

Volunteer Spotlight

DeAnn Vickles



Connelly in 2012

Connelly Cowan started gathering school supplies through donations from her church, family, and friends at the early age of 7 years old. She is now 14 years old.

I asked Connelly what drives her to continue to support Refuge International. Connelly replied, "I see the good things that Refuge International does and what an impact it makes on people in Guatemala.

I want to continue to help children have access to educational tools." The school supplies that we receive today in Longview will help the multiple schools that we collaborate with in Guatemala.



Connelly in 2018

Anita Lowe, MSN, RN is a clinical instructor at the University of Texas at Tyler School of Nursing—Longview University Center.

I had the pleasure of speaking with Anita about why she continues to bring nursing students to help with sorting medical supplies at the Longview office, and volunteering in the bi-weekly clinic at Hiway 80 Rescue Mission. She replied:



Anita Lowe and UT Tyler School of Nursing students

"Refuge International assists vulnerable populations both locally and internationally. Their primary focus on basic healthcare, adequate nutrition, and education serves not only the remote areas of Guatemala but also our local homeless population. In collaboration with Hiway 80 Rescue Mission and local volunteer doctors and nurses, they serve to meet these needs here at home. This offers me a unique

opportunity to grow student nurses in the service of these populations. Nowhere else can they learn the skills of how to therapeutically communicate with the vulnerable homeless population and create a partnership to improve their healthcare. This is accomplished with improved access to healthcare and a nurturing environment that promotes the self-efficacy the patients need to transition out of homelessness. Refuge International significantly enriches my life, and the lives of my students, as they serve the vulnerable here in Longview, Texas."



Jennifer

Jennifer McGuffee has been an employee of Refuge International for 9 years. She has been a part of each piece of Refuge that makes it whole, and one of those parts is sorting medical supplies and starting a volunteer sorting program. She wanted to share how important it is for Refuge International to have volunteer sorting teams:

"These individuals have been life savers! They range in age from 16 to 72. Anyone can do it. I enjoy going to

different schools and facilities and giving presentations about what we do and what we need. This always sparks an interest in these special people. I make a monthly trip to Dallas Children's Hospital and pick up a truck load of supplies. We also get weekly supplies donated from other sources locally that need to be sorted through. This sorting allows us to figure out what we can use and what we can outsource to help Refuge International financially."



Longview High School volunteers

This year, Refuge International was fortunate to meet **Sue Gillette, RN** from Denver, CO. She attended a medical mission trip to Sarstun and traveled with a medical bag of supplies from our office. She inquired how we get these supplies and how she could help out, and she became our traveling nurse, picking up donated supplies. Sue has helped Refuge not only by getting free medical supplies from facilities, but also by delivering them to our office in Longview, Texas. She has put many miles on her vehicle.



Sue and others on Sarstun medical mission, March 2018

When we asked why she would travel from Denver to Grand Junction to East Texas, Sue replied: "The waste in our country is a treasure for the people of Guatemala! The need is great, and if you can save money and time procuring the equipment and supplies needed for a medical mission trip, you are helping these amazing people!"

Refuge International could not continue without these amazing volunteers.

About Refuge International

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