

I had the privilege of traveling to the town of Gracias in the province of Lempira in the country of Honduras for a week in February 2015, to work in the PACU of a surgical center that was established by several surgeons from west Michigan. The surgeons are affiliated with a medical mission organization that partners with indigenous health care workers in forty locations around the world to care for the spiritual and physical needs of their own people. The surgeons from west Michigan have partnered in Gracias for twenty years; after several years and a great relationship developed, they built the surgery center. The surgery center is equipped with donated equipment and supplies. Our group of fourteen consisted of surgeons, anesthesia providers, RN's, and non-health care assistants. Our focus was orthopedic and gynecologic surgeries in two rooms. I worked in the PACU: most of the patients had spinal anesthesia, some general cases, and one child with a club foot.



A radio message is sent out to the country, and people travel up to twelve hours to see the surgeons. They are evaluated on Sunday and told when to return for their surgeries. All of the patients arrive first thing in the morning—they wait patiently for their surgery time up to several hours later. The surgery types included

knee arthroscopies for soccer and other injuries. The gynecologists performed three or four hysterectomies, often with AP repairs for severe uterine prolapse.



**Front entrance of the clinic.**

My resources for pain control and equipment were limited, and the anesthesiologist and surgeons orders were: 'use what you think you need; we are close if you need help'. It was a great collaborative experience! My 18 year old daughter who is non-medical accompanied me; she learned how to clean, wrap, and sterilize instruments, translated for me, and assisted in the OR's.



**My PACU staff (I'm on the right)**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Judith K. Stob, RN**