



Canada-Guyana Outreach Mission

Health Care for Guyana

REPORT OF THE 2015 MISSION TO GUYANA

Pre-Mission Visits by the Organizing Team

On October 27, Conrad Joseph and Yvonne Joseph Triesman, two members of the Organizing Team of the Canada-Guyana Outreach Mission's (a.k.a. *CanGO*) left Toronto for Guyana. They were preceded by Judith Harrison, another member of the Organizing Team, on October 23. Our task was to finalize plans for the upcoming mission. Also on the October 27 flight was Marleen (Annie) Joseph, another *CanGO* member.

The Organizing Team met with Ms. Anyin Choo, Head of the Diaspora Unit and Sophia Darlington, Foreign Officer (both of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and the Minister of Indigenous Affairs, Hon. Sydney Allicock. The Team also met with Mr. Trevor Thomas (Permanent Secretary), Ms. Adams (Deputy Permanent Secretary), and Ms. Leoita Hudson (International Desk) of the Ministry of Public Health. Discussions centered on *CanGO*'s vision for Guyana and the healthcare needs of the Guyanese people.

Remaining Members of the *CanGO* Team Arrive in Guyana

Arriving in Guyana on November 7 from Alberta, Toronto, Vermont and New York were: Dr. Breanna Chen (Pediatrician), Ms. Chandra Chunilall (Nurse), Dr. Joyce Dobbertin (Family Physician), Dr. Anne Galante (Gynaecologist), **Dr. Murad Husein (Otolaryngologist)**, Dr. Alison Marr (Family Physician), Mr. Robert McKenzie (Nurse), Dr. Clare Mitchell (Pediatrician), Ms. Linnet Mohabeer (Nurse), **Dr. Andrew Morrissey (Otolaryngologist)**, Dr. Erin Peebles (Pediatrician), Dr. Mitra Persaud (Pediatrician/Allergist), Ms. Nancy Persaud (Nurse), Dr. David Sommerfreund (Anaestheologist), **Dr. Leigh Sowerby (Otolaryngologist)**, Ms. Esther Trott (Critical Care Triager) and Ms. Shannon Walters (Physiotherapist). All members were welcomed by a Customs Officer on the tarmac at the Cheddi Jagan International Airport and ushered through Customs without having to join the long lines. They were then transported to Project DAWN in Liliendaal by bus, compliments of the Ministry of Public Health.

Clinic at Charity

On November 8, the *CanGO* team left Georgetown for Charity. The relaxing ferry ride across the Essequibo River and the scenery along the way were enjoyed by all. On arrival in Charity, the team booked into the WD's Hotel and Mall. The team was then divided into two (2) groups.

On November 9 & 10, the larger group ran clinics at the Oscar Joseph District Hospital (OJDH). They were met by dozens of patients who had arrived very early each morning. At this location patients were seen from Charity, areas along the Essequibo coast, and from Amerindian settlements up and down the Pomeroon River. A few very sick patients had to be referred to the Suddie Hospital for specific tests and follow-up treatment.

On November 10, Dr. Clare Mitchell (Developmental Paediatrician) and Ms. Shannon Walters (Physiotherapist) saw a number of children with developmental disorders and specialized needs who had been made aware of the clinic from the local healthcare providers. Some of the children had been seen during the 2014 Mission.

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Clinic at Karawab Health Post

On Monday, November 9, while the larger group was working in Charity, the smaller group traveled up the Pomeroon River to Karawab Health Post, a one-hour boat ride from Charity. The population of this Amerindian Village is approx. 700. The group was greeted warmly by Ms. Rosita Simon, the Community Health Worker, and numerous patients who were awaiting their arrival.

Clinic at St. Monica Health Post

On Tuesday, November 10, the smaller group traveled up the Pomeroon River again, this time to St. Monica Health Post, a 45-minute boat ride from Charity. The population of this Amerindian Village is approx. 600. Here again, the group was greeted warmly by Mr. James Miguel, the Toshao for both Karawab and St. Monica, Ms. Kesharie Courtman and Ms. Monica Samuels, the Community Health Worker and the midwife of the Health Post, respectively, and many patients.

Clinic at Project DAWN

At the completion of this very busy week, clinics were run at Project DAWN in Liliendaal on November 12 and 13. These clinics were mainly to provide healthcare to the people of Liliendaal, Sophia and surrounding areas.

Total Patient Visits:

OJDH (2 days)	381
Karawab Health Post (1 day)	97
St. Monica Health Post (1 day)	112
Project DAWN (2 days)	<u>128</u>
TOTAL	<u>718</u>

Other Initiatives

In addition to running clinics in the various areas, some of our members were pursuing other healthcare initiatives in Georgetown.

Developmental Paediatrics

On November 12, Dr. Clare Mitchell and Ms. Shannon Walters saw patients with developmental disorders at the Ptolemy Reid Centre. The children were accompanied by their parents as well as nurses and therapists from the Centre. Dr. Mitchell and Ms. Walters also did bedside teaching with the Paediatric residents at Georgetown Hospital as part of the Guyana-Paediatrics Training Program. The next day they saw additional patients and gave a talk on the Management of Cerebral Palsy. Ms. Walters remained at the Centre for the afternoon to assess children in the specialized day nursery.

Paediatric Resident Education Program

On November 13 the Paediatric residents came to the Ptolemy Reid Centre and saw patients with Dr. Mitchell. Later that day, Drs. Mitchell and Peebles gave lectures to the Paediatric residents on Cerebral Palsy, Neurobehavioral Disorders and Acid-Base Disorders. These lectures are part of the Developmental Curriculum of the Guyana-Paediatric Training Program that is being delivered over two (2) years. This program is coordinated with additional lectures provided from Canada via video conferencing.

Surgery at the Georgetown Public Hospital

On November 9 and 11, Drs. **Murad Husein**, David Sommerfreund and **Leigh Sowerby**, together with Dr. Sharma (a local Otolaryngologist) saw patients in clinic and in the Intensive Care Unit at the Georgetown Public Hospital. On November 12 and 13, six (6) sinus surgeries and three (3) complex pediatric airway cases, along with sclerotherapy for a massive neck cyst, were performed. These surgeries were done together with the local Otolaryngologists who were being taught new surgical techniques.

Training Program in Otolaryngology – Head & Neck Surgery

Dr. Leigh Sowerby continues to make progress with developing an Otolaryngology Training Program in Guyana. This Program will be administered in partnership with the Global Health Division of the Canadian Society of Otolaryngology – Head & Neck Surgery.

Continuing Medical Education (C.M.E.)

On November 11 and 13, C.M.E. lectures were given to the local physicians, residents and medical students by **Drs. Leigh Sowerby, Murad Husein, Mitch Persaud, Andrew Morrissey** and David Sommerfreund. These lectures were very well attended.

Next Mission

Our next mission is tentatively scheduled for the first week of November 2016. At this time, we will be working very closely with the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Indigenous People and the Diaspora Unit of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to determine which areas of the country will benefit from our specific specialists that will be volunteering their time next year.

In summary, we wish to thank the many donors who supported this mission. We especially acknowledge the contribution of Miss Hannah Miller, the teenager from Kingsville, Canada, who sewed one hundred (100) dresses for the Guyanese children. These dresses were distributed to the little girls in Karawab and St. Monica. We also wish to thank the many volunteers, both in Canada and Guyana, who helped to make this mission a resounding success. And last, but certainly not least, we wish to thank the Government of Guyana for their warm welcome and for supporting the Mission.

Respectfully submitted,



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President
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CanGO's 2015 Team at Project DAWN