

Putting Their Best FOOT Forward in Guatemala

The dream of Dino and Lisa Scanio, the FOOT (Florida O & P Outreach Team) Foundation houses the vision to provide orthotic and prosthetic services to persons in underserved areas of the globe. Founded in 2007, the FOOT Foundation united a like-minded core group of professionals. Tampa Bay area prosthetists Danny Griner, Addam Griner, Eddie Rogowski, and Bryan Sinnott joined FOOT Foundation Clinical Director and Orthotist, Dino Scanio. Soon occupational therapist/translator Toni Thompson and videographer Dave Amis rounded out the service delivery group. After months of planning, the inaugural FOOT Foundation mission took flight May 2-10, 2008 in Guatemala City, Guatemala at the local pediatric hospital, Hospital Infantil de Infectología y Rehabilitación (HIIR).

Instead of merely fabricating and delivering devices, the mission of FOOT addresses long-range carry-over by educating local practitioners in an interactive clinical setting to learn-by-doing. These goals are a natural fit with the mission and delivery system of the Physicians for Peace (PFP) Walking Free Program. Scanio took his FOOT Foundation to join forces with PFP veterans, prosthetist Ben Blecha, physical therapist Shannon Kidd, and physiatrist Dr. Joseph Webster, to develop a week-long Transfemoral Prosthetics Phase II program. Blecha and Kidd organized data on all scheduled patients with history, measurements with attention to growth, and color photos to determine specific needed components and materials. In the months preceding the May 2008 visit, Scanio organized fundraisers and several Tampa group meetings to determine needed components for patients who had been previously evaluated by multi-disciplinary teams on previous PFP Walking Free visits. Then Scanio took his wish list to several vendors, who responded with generous support.

For most FOOT members, this adventure would be the first trip outside the US, while two of the group have lived, worked, or traveled to more than 30 countries. Mobilizing supplies to Central America proved challenging, but once in Guatemala, the team focused on providing team-based services with opportunities for teaching. To further provide carry-over, two cases were filmed from start to finish. These will provide the basis for bilingual video teaching modules and written manuals on above-knee prosthetic fabrication and the Lock-it Socket technique.

In addition to prosthetists, local team member counterparts include pediatricians, physiatrists, physical and occupational therapists, psychologists, and social workers from various local facilities. Addam Griner, a veteran in fabrication of the hip disarticulation Lock-it Socket, and his uncle Danny Griner took charge of the process of the relatively new device, while Eddie Rogowski and Bryan Sinnott concentrated efforts on the above knee devices.

Initially the FOOT prosthetists molded the devices under the watchful eyes of local practitioners, and by week's end the local counterparts were molding and modifying the devices with feedback from the FOOT volunteers. Soon local prosthetists Arturo, Berta, Julio, Omar, and Willy were busy fabricating and teaching FOOT volunteers the local adaptations for terrain and cultural customs.

Word-of-mouth spread fast -- people came from as far as 10 hours away. Everyone who showed up received a screening evaluation by medical staff, social work, therapies, and psychology staff. The HIIR staff will then generate a list of eligible candidates for the next PFP training visit. Amid fatigue, contentment, and satisfaction fueled by smiles of children and adults walking for the first time, all confirmed the mission a success.

SIDE BAR:

FOOT (Florida O & P Outreach Team) Foundation

Founded: 2007

Founder and Clinical Director: Dino Scanio

Event and Fundraising Chairperson: Lisa Scanio

Mission: The FOOT Foundation – Florida O & P Outreach Team was formed to provide orthotic and prosthetic services to children and adults of impoverished countries. The foundation is also committed to giving back to the local community and will pick one charity that resides in the State of Florida and offer assistance. The FOOT Foundation will not represent any private or public business or any institution. Florida O & P Outreach Team: Improving lives one person at a time.

Funding: non-profit, volunteer service, donations.

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SIDE BAR:

Physicians for Peace

Founded: early 1980's, legally founded 1989

Mission: Building Peace and International Friendships through Medicine

"If you heal someone, you help one person. If you teach someone to heal, you help many."

Funding: non-profit, volunteer service, donations, grants.

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SIDE BAR:

Dino Scanio began fundraising with the Tampa Friend of a Friend ALS Foundation, serving as President for four years. He completed his training in orthotics at Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Hospital, and has worked for 2 ½ years at Shriners Hospitals for Children-Tampa (SHC).

His dream, and that of his wife Lisa, was to establish a foundation to raise funds for Tampa area health care organizations and to organize a team to provide O & P services to underserved venues of the globe. And the FOOT Foundation was born.

Photos and captions:

358-Eddie instructs Arturo on molding techniques.

368-Things are heating up with Julio and Bryan.

421-The whole group.

465-Addam and Julio work on the Lock-It Socket mold.

466- Eddie instructs Arturo on molding techniques.

468-PTs Patty and Shannon work on gait training with input from Bryan, Julio, and Danny.

475-Bryan goes over details with prosthetists Arturo, Julio, and Berta.

476-Berta and Eddie collaborate on fabrication of an AK prosthesis.

503-The FOOT guys: Eddie, Bryan, Addam, Dino, and Danny.