

2013 HEARTT Surgical Mission to Liberia

“In the wake of my first trip to Liberia, reflection has elucidated the trip’s ethereal beauty. While I’m unsure I will have appropriate words to explain its’ weighty impact, it has become immensely clear that it is not a feeling that will dissipate. In my many attempts to put into words the experiences of those two weeks, it becomes increasingly clear that I don’t know how. I’ve told everyone who will listen about the trip and always feel like I’m leaving out the most important part; the feelings, which are portrayed in hyperbole but don’t do them justice. I had immense expectation; and even with all the anticipation I was ill prepared for the profound beauty of the experience. It was an honor, a pleasure, and serves to continue in motivating my drive to become the best surgeon and person I can be.”

April 2012 HEARTT Surgical Mission to Liberia

The secret to success is consistency of purpose. Thus far, Dr. Knight has been the consistency, securing the relationship between JFK surgery and HEARTT. Santiago’s return trip was met with eager but reserved anticipation; that our group was more than tourists but a fixture in their medical future. With that security in our team, an inspiration in the local staff surrounding our group is palpable. It is that growing excitement I hope to continue by returning to Liberia this March.

The return is not completely selfless. Spending one on one time with Dr. Knight and Santiago helped vastly increase my surgical confidence. Exposure to new and unique surgical disease keeps my excitement in the field at a fever pitch. With some luck, the article I’ve written up about HN, will give our group a publication. The continuity of care is unparalleled and the diagnostic uncertainty makes one of Osler’s quotes clear. “To study medicine without reading textbooks is like going to sea without charts, but to study medicine without dealing with patients is not going to sea at all.”

I intend to apply and go every year possible though I understand that this opportunity needs to be shared. My junior colleagues will be an excellent representation of our program there and if there is a deserving person who wants to go, I will be the first to agree what a valuable experience it is.

Dr. John Dussel
2016 Graduate

