

The Latest Mission from the hEART: Costa Rica 2015 | CEHS

USU Student Academy of Audiology

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In May, members of the Utah State University Student Academy of Audiology provided 450 hearing tests and fit 60 people with hearing aids during their 11th "Mission from the hEART."

The organization and logistics were planned in conjunction with Dr. Natalie Goldgewicht of Clínica Auditiva in Costa Rica and Fundación Lloverá Comida. Students traveled around Costa Rica to provide hearing services to underprivileged communities.

"I'm so grateful for the opportunity I had to work with amazing people in Costa Rica," said Brittany Bown. "There's nothing quite like seeing someone's face light up when we fit them with their first hearing aid and they realize a whole new world, full of sounds they didn't even know existed, just opened up for them. First humanitarian mission but definitely not the last."



"I loved being able to go to Costa Rica to provide a service for people who have such limited access to hearing healthcare," said Joshua Pluim. "In addition to seeing life through the eyes of another culture, I gained confidence in myself as a clinician. The mission was an incredible learning experience for me, made doubly rewarding by seeing the reactions of all the people we were able to help."

Academy members visited several elderly care centers, Bendición Hogar Santa Maria (Children's Home), Centro Dormitorio San Jose (Homeless Shelter), and the Helen Keller Community Center.

In addition to providing hearing tests and hearing aids, they also provided cerumen management and made medical referrals. Each patient will be tracked for follow up services. In collaboration with Peak ENT, Dr. Joe Dansie fit five bone-anchored hearing softband systems to pre-identified children.



This mission was possible because of the work and help of many thoughtful and caring individuals. The USU Student Academy of Audiology held fundraisers for the mission including custom ear mold sales, Yankee

Candle Co. fundraising, and a silent auction and movie night. Generous donations were received from the USU Communicative Disorders and Deaf Education department, USU Hearing Clinic patients, friends, and relatives.

The Starkey Hearing Foundation, Westone, Rayovac, Bionix, Peak ENT Associates, Oticon Medical, Cochlear Americas and Memorable Costa Rica all provided support. Clínica Auditiva and Fundación Lloverá Comida coordinated the locations and invited patients to attend the audiology events.

With personal donations the students were also able to provide blankets, food, and hygiene items to the Centro Dormitorio homeless shelter. All the efforts and donations were greatly appreciated and changed many lives.

For more information—or to find out how to donate to next year's mission—visit usuaudiology.com.