

October 2002 Trip Report: The Philippines, Vietnam and Thailand

In October, Dr. Zirkle, President, and Jeanne Dillner, Executive Director, traveled to the Philippines to establish a new SIGN project; Vietnam to revisit existing projects and start the Bentre project; and Chaing Mai, Thailand to meet the SIGN surgeons. Each country's hosts extended great hospitality and were eager to receive the SIGN system.

New equipment designed by SIGN was distributed at each project visited. The equipment, especially the new T-handle, which allows very accurate interlocking of the distal screw, works very well for the project surgeons.

*The SIGN acronym letters were truly reflected throughout the trip. At each stop, many surgeries were performed with the **Surgical** teams in the host hospitals. The **Implants** were well received and worked well. Many surgeons shared their experiences using the SIGN equipment and presented new ideas towards yet another **Generation** of SIGN equipment, technique, and projects. The **Networking** among SIGN surgeons within their own countries, as well as internationally, has grown considerably over the past year.*



SIGN's first Philippine project is located in Davao City.



Davao Medical Center, Philippines — Dr. Hilario Diaz, Dr. Rowena Evangelista, Dr. Ron Gracilla, Tony Gracilla, Dr. Espiridion Reyes, Jeanne Dillner, Mrs. Zony Reyes, Dr. Zirkle, Dr. Dante "Lightening" Quirapas, Dr. Lloyd Tuvilla

Philippines — We were met in Manila by Dr. Ron Gracilla, program chairman of Philippines Orthopaedics Overseas, and initiator of the SIGN project in the Philippines. He was a very good host and accompanied us through Manila and south to Davao City, a flying distance of about two hours.

Davao City is in the state of Mindanao, an area of conflict in the Philippines. The unrest in Mindanao made us realize the need for SIGN is so often in areas of conflict. These areas have poor economic development and high unemployment, resulting in dissatisfaction among the people. Many feel they have no stake in the future.

In Davao City we met many wonderful people, including two great humanitarians; Dr. and Mrs. Reyes. Dr. Reyes is an orthopaedic surgeon. Mrs. Reyes manages the doctor's private clinic and has started several Rotary International projects in Davao City.



Dr. Quirapas

The SIGN project was initiated in the Davao Medical Center where we lectured to surgeons about SIGN technique. We then proceeded to the operating room where we worked on a number of cases. The last case was a proximal femur fracture completed in less than one hour. The patient was one of six people on a motorcycle that collided with a bus. Our patient was the only survivor. His fracture had a great deal of soft tissue damage. This case was done by the chief resident Dr. Dante Quirapas, nicknamed "Lightening."

Dr. Quirapas will be leaving Davao Medical Center in six months for an extremely poor area of the Philippines where he will start another SIGN project.

Vietnam — We visited three of our busiest projects in Vietnam — Cho Ray, Binh Duong and CTO. Doctors have been doing between 150 - 300 SIGN cases per year at each of these locations. At Cho Ray, doctors from outer province hospitals using SIGN system greeted us and gave us CDs containing images of their fractures and x-rays of SIGN surgeries. At CTO we met Drs. Mun and Mun from Tay Ninh. They had driven six hours to meet with us to share their SIGN results.

Doctors from Bentre had been at Cho Ray performing surgeries for approximately a week prior to our arrival, with the hope of



Dr. Hilario Diaz , project manager in Davao City, explains the SIGN instruments to other doctors.



Vietnamese woman showing full knee flexion after surgery.