“Help me to Hear” an opportunity for learning

Osobampo Corona Abril
SOCEM UNISON
a221218876@unison.mx

Every experience in life shapes our understanding of our environment through our senses, which highlights the importance of relying on them. I reflected on this when Dr. Daniel Bernal offered me the opportunity to participate in the humanitarian health campaign "Help Me to Hear," organized by the Mesa Baseline Rotary Club along with other institutions, including the University of Arizona. This campaign has been held annually since 1992. Our role was to conduct audiology triage tests, as the main objective of the health campaign was to provide hearing screenings, audiological diagnostic testing, Ear-Nose-Throat medical examinations, and hearing aid fittings.

Upon arriving in Guaymas, Sonora, my colleagues Yudith Preciado, Dr. Bernal, Vianey Bourne, and I headed to the school where the campaign was taking place. We immediately faced two significant challenges: the language barrier—I was the only one who spoke English fluently—and the general organization. The volunteers from Mesa, Arizona, and other countries were eager to help, but most primarily spoke English.

We began preparing for a long campaign by organizing the audiology diagnostic instruments and otoscopy equipment. The children were the first to receive our attention, but it was hard to keep them in one place for the triage process. The parents were patient and made a concerted effort to assist us, and gradually, we found our rhythm for efficient work. We were fortunate to receive guidance from two outstanding individuals, Robert Jensen—whom I affectionately referred to as My bestie Bob—and Erica Williams. By the end of the day, we felt almost like experts in performing triage.

The next morning, we began receiving adults for the same tests. This time, the work was easier, and we had the opportunity to learn more about the different machines used for triage. As the first line in the process, we assisted in making molds for hearing aids. I was responsible for communicating with patients and guiding them to the programming area while also acting as a translator for the technicians and doctors. The patients were incredibly kind and grateful, and I felt fortunate to contribute to achieving our goal.

One of the highlights of this wonderful experience, aside from learning and applying audiology, was the positivity of the patients, families, and all the teams we worked with over the two days. I especially appreciated meeting Bob, one of the founders and an audiologist who inspired me to strive for more. He said, “We need to give back a little to society,” embodying a passion for assisting patients and sharing what he loves the most.

By the end of the campaign, we had reached approximately 300 people—a number that continues growing each year—as the Rotary Club remains committed to improving hearing conditions for hundreds of individuals in Sonora.

After nearly 14 hours of work that day, we gathered at a restaurant by the seashore in San Carlos, where we shared a meal as a family, free of language barriers. This experience holds a special place in my heart, and I hope to have the opportunity to assist in the next campaign and be part of that wonderful team. As my bestie, Bob Jensen said, “We need to give back a little to society.”