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2021 ANNUAL REPORT







# Our Mission

We change lives – and  
save lives – by delivering  
urgently-needed surgeries  
to men and women  
around the world.



## From the Executive Director

Dear Friends:

Like all other organizations, GSE was significantly impacted over the last two years by the Covid pandemic – by travel restrictions, by hospital facilities that we previously used being needed to treat sick Covid patients, and by needed focus around the world devoted to addressing pandemic related health care needs. However, as I reflect on the last year, I am reminded and inspired by the dedicated team of GSE volunteers committed to making a difference throughout the world. Be it through their amazing efforts to help local and national COVID efforts, or their continued commitment to increasing access to surgical care throughout the world, I am thankful for this incredible team of healthcare heroes.



Despite these challenges, GSE had an amazing year and I am excited to share some highlights with you.

We founded Global Surgical Expedition nearly ten years ago because I believe it is unacceptable that 30 to 50 percent of the world's population lacks access to basic surgical care. It is not all right that a significant percentage of deaths in these countries could be prevented by routine surgeries that you and I take for granted – but aren't available to millions of people.

I think you agree, because when GSE committed to changing these statistics one life-changing surgery at a time, you joined with us. Because you believe that simple surgical care is a human right, GSE has saved lives, restored quality of life, and enabled people to return to work and support a family.

With your support, we have now surpassed **400** surgeries in Belize and Rwanda – and in the year ahead we're looking to expand to more countries, including Botswana, Guatemala, and Jamaica. With you as a partner, we have built a dedicated group of medical volunteers, with over **40** physicians, nurses, technicians, and therapists participating in our trips. And at a cost of **less than \$1,000 per surgery**, we have cost-effectively delivered this care.

But our vision is more far-reaching than simply providing surgery. Our goal is to make surgical care sustainable around the world. We do this through a commitment to our 4 pillars for surgical care: providing surgeries and surgical infrastructure, performing global surgery research, advocacy, and global surgery education. Through this broad approach we can make a much bigger impact.

Take a look at all we've accomplished under each of these pillars – and please pay particular attention to the challenges we face in the coming year. I hope that you will feel proud to be part of this growing organization and the hundreds of lives that your support has helped to change. With your continued help, we can – we will – do so much more.

With heartfelt thanks,

*David*

David E. Rapp, MD  
Founder and President



## Board of Directors Spotlight



I've been on the GSE board three years and I feel incredibly invested in the quality of life for women around the world. It is an amazing feeling to be able to offer life-changing surgeries to patients who have no access to this care in their home countries. With our ability to do missions restored post-pandemic and our first trip to Botswana coming up in September, 2022 will be an exciting year.

- Dr. Quinn Lippmann



I have seen GSE grow from a charity sending 1 team of 2 physicians to Belize once a year, to now sending multiple teams consisting of 4-6 physicians, along with nurses and physical therapists, to Belize and several countries in Africa. The care provided by GSE is of vital importance to those patients we help, and the appreciation shown by those patients is reward enough in itself.

- Dr. Tim Bradford



I have been incredibly fortunate in my career to participate in numerous humanitarian medical missions throughout the world. It is the simple and direct application of what I consider to be the core of medicine – improving another human's life. I am excited and humbled to join Global Surgical Expedition, and I eagerly look forward to many more missions in the years to come.

- Dr. Erik Grossgold



No one should suffer or die from the lack of basic surgical care. I chose to be part of GSE's mission because of its enormous potential. Their life-changing, and life-saving mission, is still in its early stages and I would love to see it grow to a bigger scale.

- Dayal Baxani



On my first trip with GSE to Belize, I saw how many people were in need of surgeries. I am very grateful to have been part of GSE during these last years and to be a part of such amazing work to help those in need throughout the world.

- Courtney Rapp



The progress of GSE and surgical missions performed in Central America and Africa is extraordinary. I'm proud of the work of the Directorate and our surgical teams bringing urgent care to those in need where resources are slight. For our donors, thank you for your continued belief and support in our organization!

- Bill Stegeman

# 2021 Highlights

## 1 Surgical Trips

While our surgical missions were largely suspended in early 2021 because of the pandemic, we transitioned to alternate models of assistance.

We created virtual activities that focused foremost on clinical care and education. Our virtual lectures to healthcare providers in Rwanda have been very well-received and enabled health teams to carry out important urological care for patients.

This transition also focused on developing non-surgical strategies to treat or prevent surgical illness. In November, GSE traveled to Belize to begin an exciting two-year program to develop a pelvic floor therapy initiative. Our goal is to treat patients with pelvic floor disorders and to train local providers to deliver this care independently, so that surgery is not necessary in some cases! We are already seeing how this initiative has tremendous potential to improve the lives of a huge number of women.



In-country efforts remain vitally important and I'm happy to report that in November 2021, GSE completed its first surgical trip to Belize since the pandemic began, providing 31 surgeries to cure fistula, kidney stones, incontinence, prolapse, and many other urgent diseases. This trip took place only after a careful assessment of risks and benefits, balancing the unmet surgical need with potential negative impacts on hospital bed capacity, COVID transmission, and use of hospital resources. Despite the current complexity of setting up missions, our teams are excited to be back in the countries we serve and our goal is to resume our widespread surgical trips throughout Central America and Africa in 2022.



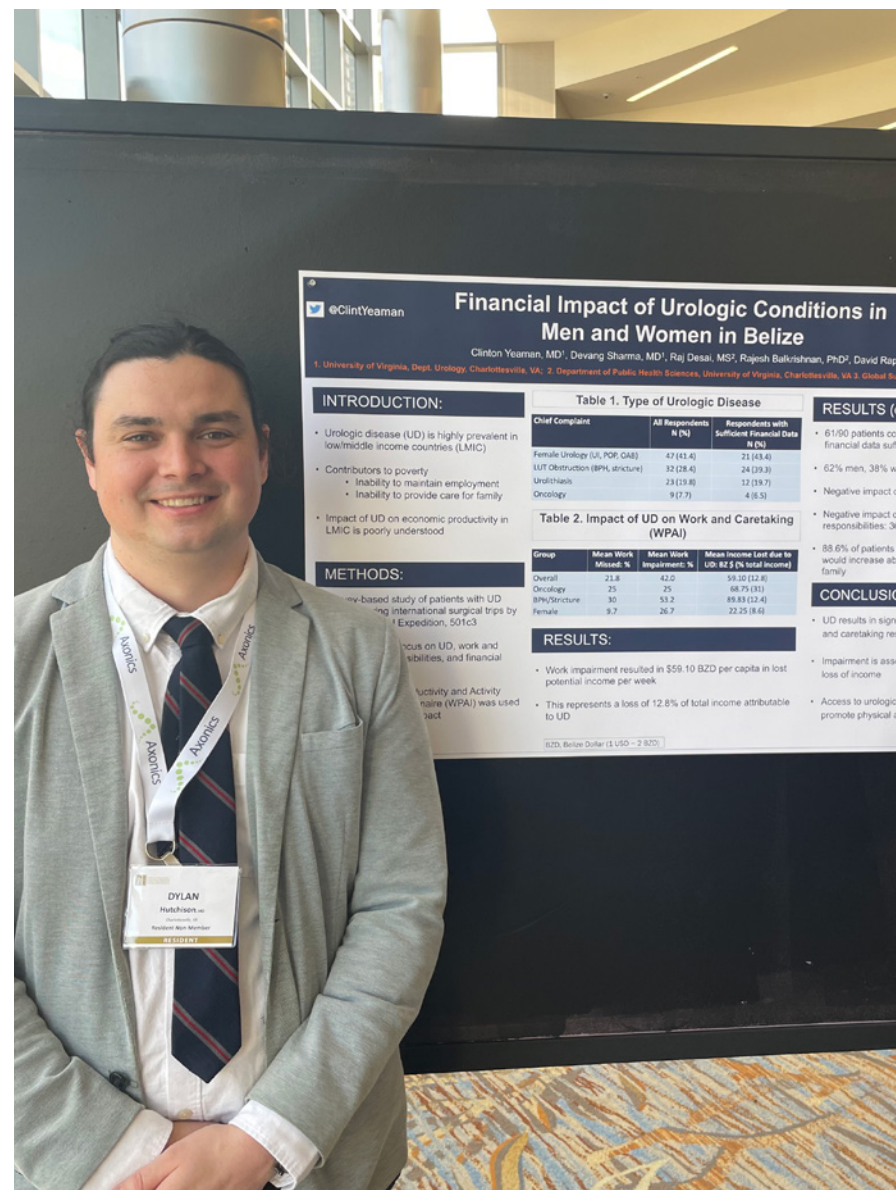
# 2021 Highlights

## 2 Research

GSE believes strongly in the need to perform global research. We do it to understand better ways to reach patients and provide surgery that makes a difference in their lives.

Our most recent project sought to understand the economic impact of urologic disease in Belize. We found that on average, patients reported a loss of 12% of their income due to related disability or physicians' appointments caused by their disease. For a woman, it might be urine leakage caused by fistula. For a man, untreated kidney stones might cause him to work fewer hours at his job as a farmer.

**Can you imagine losing 12% of your annual income because you have no access to simple surgery that would cure your illness?** Or the impact that this would have on you and your family? Providing one surgery to cure the disease can return 12% of lost income permanently to these patients, vastly improving quality of life and combatting poverty at the same time!



Dr. Dylan Hutchison presenting GSE research at national urology meeting

## 3 Education

A founding vision of GSE was to foster the next generation of global surgical leaders. We believe strongly in the need to stimulate and train medical students and residents in global surgery.

Part of this means providing international training experiences for residents (GSE's surgical teams have taken 11 residents with them to date) and GSE offers scholarships to make this possible. But we must do more to address the global lack of surgical care – and we are, by helping to train global surgery leaders by providing more formal educational opportunities and curricula.

**In conjunction with the University of Virginia Global Health Leadership Track, GSE was proud to support the development of a formal certificate program in global surgery/urology. This year, the program celebrated its first resident graduate, Dr. Clint Yeaman.** In this way, GSE is helping to create dedicated global surgery leaders who make global surgery a career rather than simply participating in sporadic missions.



Dr. Clint Yeaman (University of Virginia Global Health Leadership Track Resident) during research and advocacy trip to Belize, September 2021



# 2021 Highlights

## 4 Advocacy

It is estimated that five billion people living in low and middle income countries (LMIC) lack access to safe and affordable surgical care and that 143 million additional surgeries are needed to save lives and prevent disability due to surgical disease. Advocacy is the cornerstone of generating the worldwide support needed to address this shortfall, which is why advocacy is one of the four pillars of GSE.



Dr. Rapp meeting with health care leaders in Belize to discuss plans for delivering surgical care

We participate in larger advocacy efforts as part of the G4 Alliance, a global group of more than 60 organizations across 160 countries, united in our efforts to advocate for access to SOTA care (surgical, obstetric, trauma, and anesthesia). GSE also advocates with our individual international partners. When we visited with numerous healthcare leaders across Belize to discuss COVID-related needs for our November mission, we reinforced awareness regarding urologic need and necessary program support.

In addition, our goal is to advocate through storytelling. From the beginning, GSE has believed in the power of stories and has focused much effort on public education. We create videos, articles, blogs, and other public awareness campaigns to educate the larger community to the need for surgical access. We have numerous videos on our site, including several documentaries that share the story of patients we have served.

## Other Notable Accomplishments



GSE traveled to Belize in September to meet with healthcare leaders and advocate for urologic and gynecologic care infrastructure in Belize.



GSE provided 2 resident scholarships supporting an international global surgery experience.



Dr. Rapp was the recipient of the 2 grants from the University of Virginia Center for Global Inquiry & Innovation to support global surgery research.



GSE presented our research on economic impact of urologic disease at two international urologic and gynecologic meetings.

## Program Stats

# 1094

CUMULATIVE  
PATIENTS SEEN

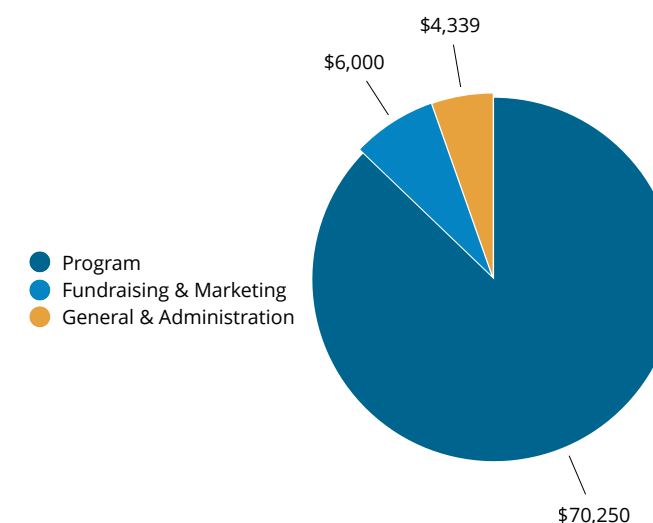
# 414

SURGERIES  
PERFORMED

# 126%

INCREASE IN  
DONATIONS SINCE 2020

## 2022 Budget



Over 85% of funds donated go directly to the equipment and resources needed to send mission teams to underserved countries.



# Bringing Pelvic Floor Health to *Belize*

Did you know that comprehensive pelvic floor therapy can treat urinary incontinence and actually prevent the need for surgery in a large number of women? Unfortunately, women in many countries have no access to specialized physical therapists that can provide this critical care.

In September, GSE began a two-year initiative to change that! Under the direction of Jeanice Mitchell and Michelle Little, GSE developed a therapy program and resources and have started to deliver this care throughout Belize. Over the two-year initiative, GSE plans to then train local providers to deliver this care themselves!



## Our First *Gala*

Since Global Surgical Expedition was founded, we've urged people to "turn what you're good at doing into doing good for others." People ran, biked, and climbed to raise money for the organization. And on the evening of November 5, some 100 people danced the night away to raise money at our first first gala fundraiser. Enjoy photos from our big night.





# The Road Ahead



We anticipate sending **4 surgical teams** to **Belize** throughout 2022.



We are excited to announce a **new partner!** In 2022, we will send a team to begin surgical outreach efforts in **Botswana**.



We are planning **two** pelvic floor physical therapy trips to **Belize** to continue providing preventative care and train local providers.



We are exploring several opportunities for new partners across **Central America** and **Asia**.



We are proud to be invited to present our research at **several national and international scientific conferences** throughout 2022.

What we can accomplish in the months ahead depends on your support. Having you as our partner will determine how many lives GSE can change -- and how many we can save. Please make the most generous gift you possibly can to give others access to the surgeries you and I take for granted. Make your tax-deductible gift today! Ways to give:



## Online Donations:

<https://globalsurgicalexpedition.org/donate/>

## Check:

Global Surgical Expedition  
5829 Ascot Glen Drive  
Glen Allen, VA 23059

## Email Us:

[info@globalsurgicalexpedition.org](mailto:info@globalsurgicalexpedition.org)





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