On May 4, 2014, members of the Utah State University Student Academy of Audiology embarked on their 10th Mission from the hEART. The organization and logistics were planned in conjunction with the Fundacion Su Nino No Puede Esperar and Clinica Audiomed in El Salvador. Students traveled around the country to provide hearing services to underprivileged communities. They visited schools, clinics, hospitals and schools for the Deaf. During the week they provided hearing tests to approximately 2,000 children and fit over 200 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. Spencer Darley and Dr. Juan Caballero performed ear surgeries in which patients were implanted with the Ponto bone anchored hearing system. Mastoidectomies and tympanoplasties for patients with chronic otitis media were also performed.

“Being an international student from El Salvador and being able to help my own people was a wonderful experience. It helped me realize how important our roles are as Audiologists in the live of our patients. It was very emotional for me to see the reactions of these kids and their mothers after hearing for the first time. An amazing experience!!” -Ana Caballero

“This Humanitarian trip reminded me why I chose the profession of Audiology, to serve and help individuals. It was great to see the appreciation on the faces of children and parents. Our simple act of service made an impact on their lives” -Whitney Olson

“Experiencing a wonderful and vibrant culture was only a bonus to the enriching work we did. I loved meeting the people of El Salvador, and seeing happy kids hearing.” -Steffi Rusk
This mission would not have been possible without the work and help of so many wonderful individuals. The USU Student Academy of Audiology held fundraisers for the mission including the Olive Osmond Hearing Fund 5K, “Run 4 Hearing”, Valentine’s Day treat sales, and custom ear mold sales. Generous donations were received from the USU Communicative Disorders & Deaf Education department, USU Hearing Clinic patients, friends and relatives. The Oticon Foundation awarded a grant to purchase digital hearing aids. Westone donated ear mold material and supplies. Rayovac supplied batteries for the hearing aids. Bionix contributed cerumen removal supplies. Peak ENT provided medical supplies and materials for the ear surgeries as well as hearing aids. The International Rotary Club furnished money to cover meals and transportation. The Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education of El Salvador helped to coordinate the locations and invited patients to attend the audiology events. All the efforts and donations were greatly appreciated and changed the life of many in need!

"It was inspiring to see what a culmination of hard work and preparation can do to provide hundreds of children and families opportunities to get help that they otherwise may have never been able to receive. Without the support of those who contributed to our mission as well as those who sponsored us along our way, we never could have accomplished so much in a week."
-Alex Meibos

"It was a wonderful experience to treat the people in El Salvador. With the help of generous donors, we were able to change many lives for the better."
-Karyn Storey

For additional pictures of our work in El Salvador or to donate to future missions, please visit our blog at www.usuaudiology.blogspot.com
Or email us at audiology.usu@gmail.com