

Today's Presentation

Program: Medicine in Antarctica

Speaker: Teresa Trierweiler

Introduced by: Jim Willson

Attendance: 119

Guests: John Morrical, Jr., Alicia Rasley, Ray Whiteer

Scribe: Russell Judd

Editor: Jim Willson

Theresa Trierweiler presented pictures of her son's trip and work at Antarctica. Her son, Richard Trierweiler MD, had read the novel "Endurance" about Ernest Shackleton's expedition to Antarctica in 1914 and was inspired by Shackleton's leadership and his ability to bring all his crew back alive. Also her son just wanted to see Antarctica and experience the adventure.

Richard signed up as a doctor for six months at the US research station at McMurdo on Ross Island, Antarctica. During the summer the station serves about 1000 researchers. He and his wife traveled to New Zealand and then on to Antarctica. They went in October 2015 and returned in March, 2016. They were supplied with protective clothing, room, board, and, surprisingly, condoms. Pregnancies and the need for evacuations because of them are to be avoided. Besides the US base station on Ross Island, other countries have research stations on Antarctica. At McMurdo, there is a small lab, x-ray unit, small pharmacy, fire station and water and food supply units.

While there, Richard took care of various cases including trauma, appendicitis, fractures and several cases of Shingles, probably due to people living in close quarters. Larger, more complex cases were evacuated. By and large, the food was OK, but everyone missed fresh food. There was a lot of free or idle time. Many spent time in the gym, did some hiking and were creative in having fun races together. There were a lot of seals and penguins in the area, but the people at the station were told to avoid contact with them.

It's difficult to know much about the kind of research going on there. Much probably has to do with global warming.

After Theresa's pictures and presentation, you begin to have a better appreciation of how rugged life is there. Also you begin to see how big and beautiful the continent is.



Teresa Trierweiler