

TEETHSAVERS INTERNATIONAL APRIL 2008 NEWSLETTER

Teethsavers base of operation moved from Chipata, Zambia to Katete, Zambia in November of 2007. In January of 2008, a truck was donated to Teethsavers which has greatly facilitated transportation to the outlying villages. By the grace of a loving God, Teethsavers was able to complete 2007 with all bills paid and some seed money to begin 2008.

TRIP TO MANCHEULA BASIC SCHOOL

Comes Monday morning at 8 o'clock at the beginning of each week, every Teethsavers team member becomes busy loading our new gift truck with our wooden benches, stools, tables, mattresses, kitchen ware, dental supplies and our bags are packed for one week. The truck starts off soon after being loaded.

Following is what happened on our trip to the school called Mancheula. Mancheula School opened soon after Zambia got its independence in 1964. (This was when Zambia was given the power to rule herself.) The school is 88 km (55 miles) away from Katete Boma, our home, or 2 hours and 30 minutes driving time.

It has two buildings with two classes each and one office. The other building has no roof but pupils from grades one to seven still use the building despite no roof. The total enrollment is 190 pupils from grades one through seven. The reason the enrollment is low there is that most of the parents encourage their children to go for marriage instead.

We taught 78 parents on the following topics: Infants, Six Year Molar Focus, Tooth Decay and Periodontal Disease. During the time of questions there, one parent started by saying that before he'd had a problem of hard calculus. He said he was treated at a hospital and told to continue brushing. Since technology is improving daily, he wanted to know why there wasn't a vaccine to prevent the calculus like there is for measles. He was answered that there wasn't a vaccine but to continue brushing daily as a preventive measure. In the villages, they clean their teeth with small sticks (due to a lack of money for buying toothbrushes).

Without knowing who she was, Mrs. Elinah Banda thanked the organization for a job well done to her constituency as well as to the nation of Zambia. The team was surprised after being told that she is a counsellor of that constituency. This made us very happy that she was amongst the village people, and that what we told them made our work successful.

After the treatments, during our free time, a number of pupils sang a song appreciating what we'd done for them (as a school) since before they were born they have not come across such an opportunity in their lives.

As usual when you're away from home, during the time to sleep there were some threats to life. At this school there are a lot of caterpillar like worms which if they come in contact with your skin cause serious skin irritation. A number of team members were attacked by these caterpillars, but as we believe in giving hope and meaning to the next generation, we did not give up. Our motto still is, "If it's easy, it is not called success".

GETTING TO MORE BASIC SCHOOL

For the road which is 14 km (6.75 miles), it took us two hours to get there, because of the pot holes and slippery soil. The truck got stuck in the mud because it was raining. We did everything we could to get the truck out of the mud but our efforts proved futile until we talked to a certain family that was coming from the field with two cows being put to the yoke. We tied the cows at the front of the truck and the owner of the cows started controlling the cows by going forward while our truck driver was also going forward until the truck was pulled out of the mud. Thank God for this family.

We've been receiving comments from parents everywhere we've been that Teethsavers efforts in fighting oral health illiteracy is an eye opener because now they know what to do after coming across problems like tooth and gum disease. One woman said she will not ever allow her children to suffer tooth and gum disease as long as she's alive since she's now aware of what causes them.

In Chipata, there are 159 schools and not all that good of roads. In Katete, there are 86 schools, very far apart, with very bad roads which requires sacrifice to get there like Teethsavers is doing. Since we've been in Katete,

we've done these treatment procedures: periodontitis - 2,297, sealants - 2, 383, restorations - 1,917, number taught and screened 11, 473, number treated - 4,512 and parents taught, 3,843.

This report was written by LAITA KAONE.

Six to 8 volunteers will be coming to Katete starting in June 2008. Two are coming from Denmark, one is coming for a whole year, a dental hygienist is coming from Boston, a retired nurse is coming from Lubbock, and Dr. Frencken is coming to Katete in July.

98% of donations to Teethsavers go to direct support operations and 2% goes to fund raising and mail and administrative costs.

To make a tax deductible contribution to Teethsavers visit our website at www.teethsavers.org or mail your contribution to:
Teethsavers International, Inc., c/o Westminster Presbyterian Church, 3321 - 33rd St, Lubbock, TX 79416, USA.
(Please write Teethsavers in the memo area of your check.)