

Greetings to everyone who reads the Teethsavers International newsletter! My name is Bev Day, and I'm a member of Westminster Presbyterian Church in Lubbock, TX. Gene (my husband) and I, as well as three other members of our church, have just returned from a trip to Zambia to visit Jack and his fellow Teethsavers. What an incredible experience to be able to spend a week working side-by-side in the field with the Teethsavers team! (They allowed us to be supervised dental assistants while we were there. Now there's a scary thought!)

Being a retired school teacher, I was especially interested in observing the teaching techniques being used by Teethsavers. I can tell you without reservation, I was quite impressed with everything I saw happening in regard to the educational process used to teach the children, as well as adults, about oral hygiene and tooth care. It was as if the team had been formally trained in teaching methods (which I knew they had not been). Talk about God equipping His people with the skills and gifts they need to accomplish the earthly mission He has assigned them!

Retention of knowledge follows a certain hierarchy. If my memory serves me correctly, a person remembers approximately 10 to 20% of what he hears, 20 to 40% of what he hears as well as sees (via visual aids such as charts and posters), 50 to 75% of what is demonstrated to him, and 100% when he actually teaches what he has learned to someone else.

The Teethsaver operators and assistants followed a well-planned format at each rural school we accompanied them to. They would begin by talking/lecturing to the individual classes of the children they would be working with, as well as to the parents of the children. They used posters and charts to enhance their talks. They demonstrated to both the parents and the children how to brush the teeth properly. They then had the parents practice on the younger children to make sure they had learned the proper process. During the time all of this was going on, the operator in charge would be monitoring the process.

What really amazed me most, though, was that they had the actual school children pair up to demonstrate that they had learned the process correctly by brushing each other's teeth with a dry toothbrush. One hundred percent retention!!!!) The Teethsavers team calls this "Friend-to-friend" I call it great teaching.

Whether you are a financial supporter of Teethsavers International, one of its treasured prayer warriors, or perhaps both you can be assured that your dollars invested and/or your time spent in prayer with our Father are both reaping great, great rewards. God is doing powerful things through Dr. Jack Rudd and his Teethsavers in Zambia, Africa. This team of young men and women that God has assembled through Jack are true professionals at heart, and are gifted with all of the fruits of the Spirit. I am honored to know them all, and I walk away from this trip a changed person gifted with so many blessings I am unable to name them all.

Since our return, every time someone asks me about our trip to Zambia to experience Teethsavers, I've wanted to reply (on Jack's behalf) as Mother Teresa always replied to people who wanted to know more about her work and ministry in India: COME AND SEE!

It has now been a month since we left Zambia and the Teethsavers team. My mind has been racing with thoughts of our experiences every day since we left. Most of the time those thoughts come with a few tears of joy and thanksgiving. That seems to happen a lot when I think of my friend Dr. Jack Rudd (Roomie), whom I met when he had the dubious honor of being my roommate on a mission trip to Belize, CA. Yes, that is the same trip that he says got him started on this journey.

My thoughts include continued amazement at the group of people that God and Jack have chosen and trained for this endeavor. As we worked with them (and YES it is work) they exhibited a great deal of teamwork, compassion, skill, professionalism, integrity, and proficiency in everything they did. No one had to direct them. They each pitched in and did their jobs and others as well with no questions asked. I had seen the numbers, but when I was there, they suddenly took on new meaning. When I was one of the team teaching each child the proper way to brush individually, it became even more amazing when we taught 200-300 each day. Likewise, at the end of the day, when we went over our days activities, it became even more incredible to see that we treated 100-200 children per day. I shouldn't stretch the truth, the busiest day was only 197, but many of them had multiple fillings. Engrained in my memory are the four children we encountered who had such bad abscesses, they most certainly would have died if it weren't for Teethsavers intervention. Also flooding into my mind is the sound of the team singing praise songs as we traveled in the back of the truck down the roughest road in all of Africa. Visions of all the children's faces filling every window of the schoolroom where we treated children all day long will be in my mind forever.

In a country where 70% of the population lives on \$1 per day or less, (per National Geographic this month), a few dollars can have an impact. A few hundred dollars can produce amazing results and a few thousand will work miracles, as we witnessed.

Back to the joy and thanksgiving part. My joy is for getting to know the Teethsavers team and see the work they are doing in the lives of so many people. My thanksgiving is to God for placing Roomie in my life and in the lives of the Zambian people.

Gene Day
Elder Westminster Presbyterian Church
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Teethsavers: A Life-Changing Adventure
By Matt Holtzman

Mission trips are always life changing endeavors. At least, that seems to be the end result of the ones that I take. And the trip to Chipata, Zambia that I had the privilege to be on was nothing less than amazing.

It's funny how your mind will evolve from the time you leave on a mission trip to the time that you finally return. I can remember before leaving for Chipata thinking, Man, it sure is going to be great to go and see how God might use us to make a difference in the lives of the people we come in contact with. Now, here I am almost two months after the trip and I realize that a change was indeed done BUT IN ME!

As a music minister of Westminster Presbyterian Church, I'll be the first to admit that I don't know squat about dentistry or fixing teeth! But I do recognize what it looks like when the body of Christ comes together and does something beautiful! Seeing the Teethsavers not only work in harmony together, but walk and talk together, eat, breathe and live together. It was amazing to see the sense of community and closeness that has been established in every one of their lives. The Teethsavers did a marvelous job at welcoming in the Texas team from Westminster, and even taught us the skills involved with being good dental assistants! A once in a lifetime opportunity for sure!

It is my hope that we might one day return to Chipata and see again the wonderful work of the Teethsavers. As you read this newsletter, your curiosity might grow to the point to where you might want to go! I would encourage you to begin praying about how you might be able to have the opportunity to go and experience the Teethsavers first hand! For me, the trip will go down as one of the most influential two weeks of my life. I hope that you might be able to say something similar in the future!

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