

December Teethsavers Newsletter 2007

TEETHSAVERS TRAIL TO THE TOP OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO) IN GENEVA, SWITZERLAND.

In 2000 I met with Dr. Jo Frencken, DDS, PhD, at his dental school in Nijmegen, the Netherlands, where he is Director of Research. Dr. Frencken developed the ART filling material and ART technique we use and was International Dentist of the Year in 1999.

Earlier this year, Dr. Frencken referred Dr. Karin van Nes, also from the Netherlands, a children's dentist, to compete her Master Degree in Medical (Oral) Anthropology and Sociology to us. Karin, was with us for three months and knew my difficulties of properly evaluating the 53,442 children we had taught and the 17,528 of these we had treated.

She contacted Dr. Frencken, who invited me to Morogoro, Tanzania, where he and his family previously lived. The two days with Dr. Frencken, a kind and patient teacher is bringing Teethsavers to a higher level of service to children. Dr. Frencken suggested Dr. Ramon Baez, DDS, MPH to come to Chipata to oversee our calibration of examination, evaluation, data collection and its recording.

Basically calibration is to ensure comparability of the findings of our dental operators.

Dr. Baez is Director WHO Collaborating Center for Calibration as Translation of Oral Health Sciences into Clinical and Public Health Practices, University of Texas Health Science School of Dentistry, San Antonio, Texas will be here once each of the 3 year field study. Most dental schools collaborate with WHO in a specialty area such as Nijmegen Dental School Collaborates WHO Atraumatic Restorative Treatment (ART).

Dr. Baez suggested I contact Dr. Poul Erik Petersen, Director, Oral Health Program, WHO Geneva, Switzerland. Below is part of his reply of 23 August, to my e-mail.

Dr. Rudd,

Thank You for your information about the Zambia project which appears to have demonstrated success in the implementation of oral health care activities at the village level. It will be most important if such activities and their impact on oral health can be documented and serve as a model for other communities/countries.

Dr. Baez has substantial experience in calibration trails and it would be good if you could have his support in this activity.

Best Regards,
Dr. Poul Erik Petersen
DDS, Dr. Odont Sci. MSc (Sociology)
Director Oral Health Program
World Health Organization (WHO)
Geneva, Switzerland

Our reply to Dr. Petersen is Teethsavers Mandate:
The poorer the patient, the less accessibility, the less affordability the Greater the Demand for Excellence in Oral Health

Care

The first Sunday morning I went to church with Patricia Tembo, Teethsavers Overall Field Coordinator, I was completely surprised. Her church meets at Katapola School, where there are other Sunday services, at the same time. Patricia lives with her aunt up the hill from us, has no electricity and water is by pulling a bucket up from the well.

I did know that Patricia sang in the choir and taught Bible school. What I did not know, Patricia, once a shy & staying in the background, as our student in 2004, was the Lead singer in the choir of eight and a sole in the three traditional African songs.

Patricia's Bible class, ages six to fourteen, met preceding the worship service, to practice again, quickly moved to the spotlight at our service and sang music written by Patricia, from songs she knew from the past. These young people, all smiles with humble pride, were outstanding songsters and each stepped forward with a speaking part, compiled and composed by, YES You Guessed it - Patricia Tembo, dressed in a striking red pants suite with hair up high and back in African bush style

Now I know why she can't have our weekly meeting until late Sunday afternoon. Saturday is practice & 1/2 practice - practice. Just as in Texas and I suppose all over God's Great Sphere I ask the busiest person to take on a big task and like Patricia they do it with careful expertise.

Over a month ago, I completely surprised Patricia Tembo, by telling her that she was going to Texas, as my guest, and we will arrive January 1, 2007. She showed no she displayed - the most wonderful and memorable evidence of silent Joy that will forever remain as one of my most prized mental images. Her head was somewhat downward, not one utter of a word, her eyes slowly filled with tears, finally filling to a Hugh continuous tear, bulging out beyond her beautiful black eyes, then overflowing and slowly trickling down her face - all the while - her lips were quivering with increasing vibrations. No words and she never touched the tears going down her neck. Her silence and her no movement presented me one of the greatest rewards in my 69 years you know, the kind of feeling that gives absolutely no choice - but to keep returning; no matter how tough, no matter how difficult, no matter how impossible.

*Patricia has never seen an airplane up close or many other modern entity.

Teethsavers International, Inc. encourages donations.
Please make check to:
Westminster Presbyterian Church, Memo: Teethsavers
3321 33rd Street
Lubbock, Texas 79410

We will put your dollars to saving teeth - our intention