

Teethsavers International Newsletter for February

Teach a Few to Teach Many A Word from Our President...

I am so excited and humbled to be the President of Teethsavers. 2010 promises to be an important year for Teethsavers in the lives of children around the world. Not only will Teethsavers be caring for children in Zambia, Malawi, Nicaragua and Sierra Leone, but people trained by Teethsavers will also be caring for children in the Gambia, in Belize, and in Morocco.

Requests are coming in for training and/or treatment in other areas such as Guatemala and Angola, but we can only move as God directs and as our funding permits. God enabled so much to be accomplished last year for the children around the world and we are thankful for and blessed by all who gave.

Our Field Director, Dr. Jack Rudd, is amazing with his energy, his caring nature and his ability to multi-task all over the world. It is truly a gift from God. Our Board of Directors has been solidly tuned to God's will and believes that He has been the sustaining arm that has kept everything going. Ultimately, all the praise and glory goes to God for all He has accomplished and all that will be accomplished in the upcoming year. We invite you to join with Him in this great work.

Blessings,
Beth Lee, President

What's going on in the world of Teethsavers?

Tales From The Road— Rather than just giving updates we wanted you to be blessed by Nicaragua...

THE BOTANICAL GARDEN OF THE JINOTEGA AREA

We left Jinotega about 8:15 AM for a ride of one hour and fifteen minutes, split between uneven pavement and rural roads. The paved road was a beauty to the left and to the right. Then we turned on to the winding, climbing, up, around and up, and around and down, dirt road, bringing us to higher elevations. That was the beginning of the Botanical Garden of the Jinotega area that seemed to go on forever. Looking left, right, straight ahead or crook-a-neck-straight back, I saw beauty - way beyond beauty - and I have seen much - much of God's beauty on all seven of His majestic continents.

Praise God for such nature that brings each Humancreature to a pause, a prayer and a praise. Finally after our vehicle could no longer make the climb, it was everybody out, carrying packs and walking for about 20 minutes. "Walk" is the wrong word for the steep climbing "road" that not only a 4 X 4 could not make to the top, but today an 8 X 8 vehicle. I led the way with eight or nine in our party: the younger mission folks from Searcy, Arkansas, Cathy Latta, from Colorado and Teethsavers' only volunteer, working side by side with me. The possible "road" when dry was many shapes of slippery rocks, mud, puddles of water and the churning and trudging feet of the newcomers from the distant North American Continent. I made the top first and saw two small blue colored school houses side by side. Slowly the others followed me up the treacherous climb, huffing and puffing twice as much as this old tooth adventurer man.

The gate was closed and soon a teacher welcomed us and let us in the school grounds. Today 61 students were present in the first six grades and in three classes. There were two certified teachers and one teaching assistant age 16 for the less than 10 preschool children. The teacher opening the gate for us is one of the best Oral Health Educators in my nine years of teaching, and Allen, our interpreter, is the most enthusiastic advocate for saving teeth I have worked with. I talked to Allen about being a student in our future Central America Six-Year Molar Focus School wherever it is located. It should start in a few months at low cost to Teethsavers' donors.

Now the sad part in this most elegant surrounding was teaching, screening and collecting data. Ages 6, 7, 8 and 9, our focus, included 25 pupils and 53 six-year molars needing a sealant or restoration. There were 92 decayed primary molars in this age group. 92% needed treatment on six-year molars. The 28% in Africa and the 15%

needing treatment on six-year molars is a RECORD that tells me - if this keeps up how can Teethsavers or anyone but God deal with these numbers? The children age 10 or above were slightly better with 43 six-year molars needing treatment. With the young children ages 6, 7 and a few 8 needing a supervisor to properly clean their molars, all but one had an older responsible sibling in school to be a supervisor. Oral hygiene starting at three months of age was accepted and our oral health educator school teacher was positive of results. A year ago she went through great pain and infection before having her lower left six-year molar extracted. People with previous tooth pain always make better teachers. The 16-year-old girl with the preschool had had a bad toothache for eight days. We were going to take her with us and find a dentist to pull it. She was all ready to go and I was going to pay all costs. Her father would not let her go even with explanation. A New Tradition (saving teeth) for a New Generation has another steep mountain to climb in the Botanical Garden of the Jinotega area of Nicaragua.

Driving back, Allen, the interpreter, said that he and our teacher/oral health educator at the school back up the steep mountain decided that they had never had so much fun and such good feelings serving God.

Jack Rudd

Zambia...

It was 5:45 AM in Mongue, Zambia.

For the past three days I had taught the two dental therapists (3-year diploma) at the district hospital, both Teethsavers - Six-Year Molar Focus Prevention and Atraumatic Restorative Treatment (ART) painless fillings (powder 28% fluoride) without electricity or anesthetic injection; the filling material chemically bonds to the tooth.

The ancient reception room with a single small desk and three wooden chairs in the small five-room (very small rooms) guest house was in complete darkness. I knew that the night watchman, waiting to see me off for the early bus, was in a chair across from me, facing the front door. Ever so gradually a wee bit of light began to filter through the window to the left of the door.

Looking to my right at the blur of the silhouette of the watchman, who seemed to be about my size, I became fixated watching the blur becoming less and less as a bit more light passed through the single pane window and the blur started becoming a human being just like me. The next instant the dramatic and ever to be respected thought shot through me and was branded in my brain for ever and for ever that skin—be it black or be it white—is the same to God.

I could have been the watchman - the watchman could have been me. What a thought, I thought; what a striking discovery, I thought; what a revelation, I thought, and next came racing through my confused mind an image of the chewing surface of a six-year molar with the "W" formation of groves so necessary.

W's of life:

When were you born? Where were you born?

Who were your parents? Why were you so lucky?

Why were you so unlucky? What can you do about it?

Malawi...

The Teethsavers team in Malawi is preparing for a busy 2010. The ongoing relationship with The Ministry of Hope continues to grow and expand. The team is beginning preparations to spend the month of April with Dr. Ken Root and his team of volunteers with the Mobile Medical Clinic to offer holistic care for the orphans of Malawi.

The newly elected Malawian Board of Directors of Teethsavers continues work to establish the Malawi Six Year Molar Focus School. Please pray for them and the team of Fredson Sam-bani, Laita Kaone, Doranah Muloongo, Isaac Mumba, Mutale, and Edward Phiri as they continue their work in God's Kingdom.

Our teams are still working in both Malawi and Zambia. We are very close to realizing our goal of gaining NGO status which will allow the Zambians to join the Malawians in Lilongwe, Malawi. Our monthly operating expenses are \$5,000 a month and we are in need of partners to help specifically with this ministry in Africa.

Thank you and
God Bless,
Gene Day

The needs are greater than ever as we look to the exciting future of Teethsavers and Oral Health for children. If you would like to make a donation to Teethsavers, please mail to Teethsavers International, c/o Westminster Presbyterian Church, 3321 33rd St., Lubbock, Tx. 79410. You may call for information at 806-799-3621. Teethsavers is a 501c3, non-profit organization and all donations are tax deductible.

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