

# Teethsavers International, Inc.

January-February, 2006

*"You make a living by what you get, but you make a life by what you give."  
Winston Churchill*

## **From Behind The Molar –**

BY Jack Rudd, DDS, FAGD

In Memory of Katherine Ann Rudd who died at age 9 – December 11, 1972

## **HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

### A TRIBUTE TO EDDIE BALCHIN, G.C., Asia – Singapore

Mr. Balchin first came to our rescue when we worked in Meheba Refugee Settlement in 2002. He sent Fuji IX FREE for these refugee children from 13 different countries. Since then he has continued his generous, compassionate giving. At one time we ordered 7 head lamps to replace stolen ones and he shipped a big box which contained more necessary dental supplies and instruments including: 20 boxes of Fuji filling material – 10 of which were new on the market; 10 headlights; 10 vials of Fuji Liquid; spatulas; Matrix strips; Cocoa Butter; and 10 full sets (7 instruments in a set) of ART instruments by British Air! He has donated much more than we have paid for. We are most GRATEFUL for these and other gifts he has sent "for the children."

### A TEETHSAVERS HERO

Jennifer Yoder, a young lady who lives in Plano, Texas, lost her sight in a terrible car wreck in 1992 at the age of 16. She suffered a brain injury which left her with vision loss, left-sided paralysis, and unable to walk. She was hospitalized for an entire year and it was 3 and a half months before she spoke her first words. Her NEVER GIVE UP attitude (like Teethsavers) has turned her into a very giving person. She has a quick wit and an amazing sense of humor. As if a brain injury was not enough, she dealt with ulcerative colitis and in 2002 had her colon removed; in 2004 a malignancy in a lymph node on the left side of her neck required removal of the lymph nodes and submaxillary glands.

Her father, Bill, retired from Merrill Lynch in December of 2003 to spend more time with Jennifer. Three years ago when I was in the Dallas area, I spent the night with the Yoder family. Jennifer amazed me! As a person with excellent sight and a love of reading before her accident, she showed me around her room where, by feeling the books in her bookshelves, she recalled the story in each one.

I told Jennifer about the bookless children in Zambia's bookless, blackboardless, chalkless community schools (poorest of the poor) in which Teethsavers screens, teaches, and treats oral health. It was hard for Jennifer to imagine children without books! Since that time Jennifer and her father have set out to collect books. Bill has put our memos to his former co-workers at Merrill Lynch; Jennifer's sister-in-law collects at her workplace; friends buy books at garage sales; members of the brain injury group in Plano collect books; and, once a month, Jennifer and Bill visit the Half Price Books Warehouse in Carrollton, Texas, and line up in the wee hours of the morning to collect books which Half-Price donates free to non-profit agencies such as ours.

Jennifer and her father ship a box of books via M-Bag on a weekly basis. Just before Christmas, 2005, 3 big boxes of books arrived. Five of the books were about Christmas. Our people have given those out to rotate among our neighborhood children. These are children near our school who are allowed to read on the front porch. We later give these books to community school teachers.

THANK YOU, Jennifer, and your parents, Bill and Janice, from so many people – large and small in the Chipata District of Zambia! You, Jennifer, have turned your own tragedy into a Genesis for sighted, but bookless, children. You are truly one of our HEROES!

(Thanks to Janice Yoder for writing part of this article.)

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Nelson Mandela, one of our most Respected Innovators of Peace in this part of the world, said, “Action without vision is simply passing time – and – vision without action is merely daydreaming.” Nelson Mandela speaks loudest by his Action. After 27 years in prison on Robben Island very near the southern tip of South Africa, mostly in isolation, Mandela said, following his release on February 10, 1990, “The hardest thing in life – is to change yourself.”

His confirmation of Mahatma Gandhi’s non-violent, non-co-operation resistance, led a nation of some 80% with few human rights on the long, laborious journey to begin reaping fruits of the seeds that Mandela had spread. The wave of his hand, the deep down forgiveness glowing from his face spread peace and compassion throughout God’s world.

Zambia achieved independence from England on October 24, 1964, with fewer than 100 university graduates – only ONE of which was a doctor and NO dentist. The next year, in May, in Kansas City, Missouri, I graduated with a class of 118 Doctors of Dental Surgery candidates -- in one of 87 dental schools in the USA.

Teethsavers International has opened the door to Better Oral Health for 80 percent of the children who live in the rural Chipata District of Zambia’s eastern Province. A little toe is in the door. Our graduate operators, leading a team of fourteen, have steel toes of Commitment, Love, and huge Heart for our little patients who have smiles, not tears and fears, about dental care. At times we almost need crowd control for those parents, guardians, and school teachers who come eager to learn about oral health for their charges. Finally, after 5 years and 8 months, we have a clear Vision – and – we need Assistance to stay in Action in Africa. We could not operate in Africa without the support of suppliers such as Eddie Balchin of Singapore and Dan Hatch of Patterson Dental Supply, USA. Or without the many of YOU who donate dollars to Teethsavers mission. While our expenditures have remained relatively stable, the Kwacha (Zambian dollar) exchange rate has increased up to 40% in the last few months. So, what took \$4000 a month now costs us \$5000. The Kwacha has increased because most government debts of Zambia have been cancelled by IMF, World Bank, and nations like the USA. However, the Zambian government continues its dependency on outside donors for about 50% of its basic budgetary expenditures.

#### FUTURE TEETHSAVERS LEADERS

Albert Sapolo, our refugee dental assistant at Meheba in 2002, is our graduate operator now living in our school house.

Rodgers Saputu, one of our early workers, now a student in Lusaka’s dental training school, is scheduled to graduate in June, 2006, and will replace me as Director of the Six-Year Molar Focus School. I will move into Innovation and Expansion.

Three young ladies, graduates of our second intake class, are now an important part of our management team: Patricia Tembo, Overall Coordinator; Mwate Chisanga, Quality Assurance; and Falesi Mwanda, Advance Arrangements and Transportation. Without Doreen, our cook and general ‘Mother Hen’, we would be lost!

We are doing what we set out to do – teaching and training a NEW dental category to assume leadership in their own developing countries! Teethsavers IS working to serve the children in these nations, especially the underserved rural areas, to better oral health – THANKS to all of YOU.

## TREATING IN RURAL AREAS, by Patricia Tembo, Overall Coordinator

Teethsavers has found another way of teaching and treating all children in their villages without leaving any out - even those not in schools. Teethsavers is ahead of all NGOs because we follow the CLIENT.

Most people in rural areas believe that it is God's will for people to lose teeth. Whether you clean them or not, you are to lose some of them. We are trying to sensitize people to the importance of preventing the loss of any six-year molar or other teeth.

It is sad to see children who have Tuberculosis and Malaria. We recently encountered 3 children, not in school, who have these diseases. One, an 8 year old girl whose parents are dead, lives with her elderly grandmother. The child is on medication (ARVs), but the grandmother has little energy to look for food for both the child and herself.

A boy, age 9, is on TB treatment. This child was in school last year but now says he cannot manage the walk to school. We followed him home and taught him and filled cavities in 2 of his six-year molars where he lives. The third child also has TB but no one seems to take care of him. He is neglected by his parents and friends because of the rash covering his body. He had 4 cavities in his six-year molars. Teethsavers tries to treat the whole person with love and compassion.

### HAIL TO THE PARAMOUNT CHIEF

The Paramount chief of the Ngoni Tribe of the Eastern Province, Chief Mpezeni, showed great interest in Teethsavers after we had taught and treated some of his subjects. He has had an excellent editorial written about his being the most progressive of all Zambian chiefs.

Schools are closed in December, but two of our workers who had been in touch with Chief Mpezeni, went to visit him. He is almost impossible to see because of his many court duties and the like. However, he stopped everything and spent enough time with our representatives to arrange for Teethsavers to spend the month of December teaching and treating in villages from central locations in his area. Thus, we did not have to transport all our needed equipment and supplies and walk to remote areas, Thanks to Chief Mpezeni.

On January 2, 2006, our entire team, by invitation, went to Chief Mpezeni's Palace which is the nicest home, both outside and inside, I have seen in Chipata. We were brought into the nice living room where the Chief, dressed in short pants and barefoot, was sitting. We all sat on the carpeted floor until he invited me to sit in a comfortable chair. Conversation was in Ngoni which was translated to me by one of our dental assistants. We brought gifts of our laminated non-dental sayings, such as: "While thousands are thrashing at the leaves of corruption - one is hacking at its roots" and "The level of Social Trust Correlates with the Wealth of a Nation."

I plan to return to Texas mid-February. Until then, Love and Appreciation to you from all our team.

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We greatly appreciate children's books, new or used. Most schools here have few to no books.

Our address is- Dr. Jack Rudd  
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Please send you're contributions to:  
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