

TEETHSAVERS, INTERNATIONAL - NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER 2007

Teethsavers came of age this past Fall. Teethsavers has been greatly encouraged by the recognition which came from Dr. Paul Erik Peterson, DDS, Dr Odont Sci, Msc (Sociology) Director of Global Oral Health, World Health Organization, Geneva, Switzerland in part of a message of August 23, 2006, as follows: Dr. Rudd, "The Zambia Project appears to have demonstrated success in the implementation of oral health 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 trials, and it would be good if you could have his support in this area...

Dr. Ramon Baez, DDS, MPH, will conduct calibration exercises for one week, each of the three years of our longitudinal basic epidemiology oral health survey in Zambia's Eastern Province. Dr. Baez is Director of Calibration, WHO Collaboration, University of Texas Health Science Center, School of Dentistry, San Antonio, Texas. Calibration is to have uniform standard exam and evaluation interpretation with 85% to 90% being acceptable between Teethsavers operators.

Two outstanding groups of volunteers have spent time working with Teethsavers. The first group of young ladies, Sami Alam, Jyoti Jogia, Heena Chandbry, who are senior dental students at Kings College of Dentistry in London, England arrived in mid-August with many boxes of supplied solicited from 5 dental supply companies and their school dispensary. They went with our team teaching and treating at villages. On their last night, 26 of us, from five countries and three continents, whose commonality is having a big heart for children and saving teeth, enjoyed a big going away party for the volunteers. Many songs were sung in local languages but the best was "Let there be love shared among us. Let there be love in our hearts. May now your love fill the nations ... Let there be love."

The second group of volunteers came from Cologne, Germany in early September, bringing a triple windfall of instruments, supplies, generosity from dental supply companies, professors, the school dispensary and a dentist. These three last year students, Jutta Alchinger, Elizabeth Keller and Caroline Herring, were with us all of September. Our full team, with the volunteers, went to one of Chipata's poorest compounds with over 2,000 children. We took the truck to the center of the shanty compound and set up under two large shade trees. There were over 18 of us and we were overwhelmed with children wanting a toothbrush. Many were taught in small groups and those needing treatment most were cared for. The visual images were burned into our brains seeing what real poverty is like in an African city. We absorbed an eyeful of those one-half of the world's 6 billion living on \$2.00 a day or less. That night, the daily summary was 396 children taught oral hygiene and 127 treated under the trees with our moveable wooden, open air dental office.

This happened at J.M. Crone School. We found a pupil who was looking very poor and lost. I felt so strong for him, his parents were dead and his name was Kwezani. He was in grade 3 and 10 years old. He had dirty torn clothes, but I am happy because we gave him a toothbrush that he'd never had and filled cavities for him. We say the poorer the patient, the better the filling must be. That relates to the Teethsavers that we must have a soft tender heart with compassion to see that we have taken extra care of children, especially rural children. By Mulenga Metale, dental assistant.

In the past year our website,

www.Teethsavers.org had 868 hits from 37 countries (except Antarctica). Reported by Frank Rudd, our webmaster, home base and more for his "always seeking help" father.

Two years ago there were 59 community schools in Chipata with 169 government primary schools. Today the number of government schools is the same and there 116 community schools started by parents and guardians with no government aid. Many meet under trees or in bush grass churches. They are chalk-less, blackboard-less and book-less. The teacher, with some education, may only get lunch for pay. Some of these schools are started so children will not have to walk 2 hours or more one way. Some are started so parents can control what is taught without a single book.

Usually the community children walk to the school for their oral health where we are working at a government school. We have had a large used children's books project going on for some time. To donate children's books, take them to the post office and ask for an M-Bag (they cost about a dollar a pound to ship). They usually take 2

months to get to Chipata. Address them to: Teethsavers, P.O. Box 510910 in Chipata, Zambia. A few months ago, I got a great thrill when eight M-Bags of books for the bookless children arrived. I suggest you never send clothes here as Chipata is overrun with cheap clothes being sold everywhere. Last year, 3 of the 4 textile mills in Zambia went under because of the cheap clothing that has been donated here and is being sold all over.

A month ago, I was able to leave the office and go with the team for a week. Coming back with the truck piled high with 27 mattresses and 27 of everything else and 14 regular field people, 8 students on practical, 3 young ladies from Germany, 3 staff and the driver, we made more than a circus coming to town. The African sun was sinking with an orange blaze through bending limbs and distant hills, through a sea of smiling faces, people singing and sharing a week of work well done. Patricia Tembo, our outstanding field coordinator, leaned down to my ear and said, "Doctor, none of these 27 people would be enjoying this if it weren't for you." I give God the credit for bringing this about.

What the people of Africa need to know is that the people in the developed world care about them. The bottom line of why I am here is to be a Hope Giver. That's what the poorest of the poor need here - planeloads of Hope Givers AND an opportunity to take care of themselves. The USA is a Can Do nation and can infect the poorest of God's poor with HOPE.