

Teethsavers International, Inc.

www.teethsavers.org

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*“Do not go where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail”
Emerson*

From Behind The Molar

By Jack Rudd, DDS FAGD

We are what we think.

We are what we eat.

The oral cavity is the first important and vital step in our digestive system, for our food to give us growth, energy, health, longevity and to become our body and mind.

When the food we consume is not broken down small enough for the digestive juices in our mouth to do their job, this portion of our food intake, just passes on through the remainder of the system without being utilized in metabolism and assimilation to our benefit.

The Four Permanent Six-Year Molars do 65% to 70% of our chewing in this process. When one or more of these largest and cornerstone of our bite and face form are prematurely lost, a slow downward process of less of our needed food is being used. How are these **vital** and **essential** Six-Year Molars and any other of the 28 teeth **lost**?

Except in a very few situations, there are only two causes of premature **death** and loss of oral cavity **body parts**. One, usually starting in the first four years after eruption in children, is tooth **decay**. Two, more prevalent in adults is, **periodontitis** (**perio**=surrounding) (**dontal**=tooth) (**itis**=infection) a disease surrounding the tooth. Gums and bone surround the tooth; the bone anchors the tooth as dirt anchors the tree. Both of these destructive processes, without intervention, leading to tooth loss are caused by dental **plaque**. Dental **plaque** is a thin, sticky and colorless deposit of bacteria that constantly forms on everyone's teeth and gums with varying results. When **sugar** is eaten, the bacteria in **plaque** form **acid** that attaches to the tooth enamel and **enzymes** that attach to gums and bone.

WHEN THE PLAQUE IS MECHANICALLY BROKEN UP, IT TAKES ABOUT 24 HOURS FOR THE PLAQUE TO REORGANIZE ENOUGH TO AGAIN PRODUCE ACID AND ENZYMES-TOOTHPASTE DOES NOT CLEAN TEETH.

Most People's Food Becomes Their Body.

Most People Become Their Thoughts.

VOLUNTEER – Dr. Troy Shields, an American dentist now in Norway, is scheduled to arrive October 5 and stay until November 27. Hooray! Hooray!

MY EXPERIENCE WITH TEETHSAVERS-by Albert Sapalo

My experience with Teethsavers has been unique and outstanding. I first joined Teethsavers as a dental assistant at Meheba Refugee Settlement. Prior to this I had known little about oral health and dentistry.

In the 6 months at Meheba, I discovered it was possible to maintain oral health standards to halt tooth diseases along with many other cardinal aspects of oral health.

Initially, I had a lot of misconceptions about this new approach to oral health. I learned that our traditional (Zambian) beliefs inadequately and abstractly explain issues in a way contrary to the facts. I realize that I am one of the lucky ones who learned about good oral health from Teethsavers.

Dr. Jack Rudd, founder and director of Teethsavers, sowed a seed in me. I wanted to study so as to be able to adequately inform and help others. Dr. Jack made arrangements concerning school fees so that I was able to begin the dental therapy course at Lusaka's dental school in 2003. I was overwhelmed when people I did not know, Mr. and Mrs. ALLEN WRIGHT of Abilene, Texas, sent me to dental school. I am so very grateful for their sponsorship! Since the establishment of Rural Refugee camps in Zambia, there have been no other refugee who has formally studied dentistry – I am the first and only one!

Dr. Jack is one of the most inspiring human beings I have ever known. He has spiritual strength, is hardworking, dedicated, passionate, and focused. He is an inspiration to me and is my role model. I want to follow in his footsteps.

During the past 2 years at school, I have learned a lot more dentistry. My experience with Teethsavers in Meheba has made my academic life easier and more meaningful. This summer, at the end of my second year, I asked Dr. Jack to allow me to volunteer during our school vacation. He readily accepted. Eagerly I went to Chipata where I met a group of young ladies and a gentleman whose vibrant way of doing things for others has impressed me greatly. In addition, meeting and working with the three young ladies (two from England and one from the USA), who spent a short time as volunteers, was a huge opportunity for me to learn about other cultures. Despite being in dental school, I discovered I still have more to learn by observing how well Teethsavers does things. A good example is using ART filling techniques. Now I am confident and willing to share such knowledge with my fellow students at school. I enjoyed doing some workshops in the rural schools in which we taught and treated. Teachers expressed gratitude for the information presented and asked stimulating questions.

HARD TIMES

By Rodgers Saputu, Technologist

I met Dr. Jack Rudd in 2001 in Meheba Refugee Settlement, believed to be the largest such camp in Africa. Most people living there were from different countries like the Congo, Burundi, Rwanda, Somalia, Uganda, and Angola. It was a difficult place, because it had people from different cultures and traditions. After a seminar and training in oral health, I was one of four people chosen by Dr. Rudd to be in the first group when Teethsavers program started. People didn't know about oral health so the start was difficult. After 7 months our group finished training and I served as a dental assistant beginning in July of 2002.

Dr. Jack picked four of the dental assistants to go to Lusaka to start a school called the Zambian Six-Year Molar Focus School. Due to some difficulties in the beginning of the school, I went back to Solwezi and started a small business. One time I talked to a medical man in Angola and showed my certificate issued by Dr. Jack. Soon I received a letter from Dr. Jack in Zambia. I left Angola for Chipata where the school was beginning and was among the first intake of students in 2003.

This class completed our course in 2003 and I went back to Solwezi with little money. I found that I had nowhere to go; nothing to do and had to sell many of my possessions in order to survive. During this very painful time I remembered that Dr. Jack always said "Never give up; it was not going to be success if it was easy." After a while I started seeing miracles from God who answered my cry for help. God gave me back all that I had lost.

Through endurance and belief in God, Teethsavers has come to be the voice of the forgotten children of Africa. I thank God for this program which is connecting the voiceless children of Africa to the rest of the world. I have found a wonderful and unique way of life. I have seen malaria campaigns, AIDS campaigns, and the like, but the painful disease of toothache had not been addressed until Teethsavers. If people in other parts of the world will join hands to support Teethsavers unique program, future generations should be free from poor oral health resulting in toothache and other health problems.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A TEETHSAVER-by Sharon Lungu, age 18, Dental Assistant

Our team traveled to Kapata Basic School in Chief Chinuda's area on a Monday morning. We went in a truck which was loaded with benches, chairs, tables, treatment supplies, food, mattresses, and other items – plus our team members. This overloaded truck over rough roads with lots of bumps and much dust made a long and uncomfortable ride. The three volunteers survived the journey by donning face masks to protect themselves from the dust. The driver drove fast so we all had to hold on very tight to keep from falling off. We were already tired when we arrived. I felt dizzy and nauseated. But, we do not complain because we believe that "If it is easy it is not called success."

The school was an old block building with no roof, windows, floor, or door. There are 59 bookless schools in the Chipata district. Many pupils are taught outdoors under trees because they don't have classrooms. Rain determines the class schedule. Children sit on bricks or tree branches. At the Kapata Basic School there are only two teachers to serve 107 children in grades 1 to 5. The teachers survive on erratic donations of food from parents. Pupils from five community schools came making a total of 604 children to be screened, taught, and treated. Many parents joined their child/children in long walks through forests where dangerous snakes often lurk. We found cavities in 95.5% of the children in grade one.

Of the many NOG's (non-government organizations) in Zambia, Teethsavers was the first to come to this remote area in 5 years. Earlier, one group focused on HIV/AIDS and farming. The head teacher praised Dr. Rudd and our team as being the greatest achievement in dentistry!

We arrived back at our school late – after dark. Some team members got sick because it was cold. However, in spite of difficulties, we have more community schools to visit where we give hope and meaning to the next generation along with better oral health.

A NOTE – We join the multitude of people from around the world in expressing condolences to those who lost family, friends, homes, all their possessions, jobs, and businesses to Katrina. We admire the generous responses to fund raising efforts to help these victims of the storm. There are said to be more than a million relief or charity organizations, many run by professional fund raisers, in the USA. We know you are pulled in many directions to give financial help to these causes. Therefore, we are **MOST APPRECIATIVE** of your contributions on which Teethsavers relies to stay afloat. **THANK YOU!**

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