

ROTARIAN ACTION GROUP OF DENTAL VOLUNTEERS



JULY 2009
RAGDV ISSUE # 12

ISSUE #12

July 2009



*Dr. Dave Fihn, President.
RAGDV 2009-2011 with student
Dental Hygienists volunteering in*

I have been asked to write an editorial for our Rotarian Action Group of Dental Volunteers. This is about like teaching a pig to fly as I am not a writer. However; I will try to share a few thoughts about volunteering with each of you. As a volunteer I came to vividly realize how very fortunate we are.

Because we have a skill that is badly needed, we are able to earn a most comfortable living and have fun doing it. Moreover, spending some time as volunteers in emerging/developing countries puts us in direct contact with so many folks that do not have this good fortune.

Most of the communities I have worked in do not have adequate health care (not even close), in fact, even they do not have the most basic nutrition or providers. This makes each of us so very valuable to those that need us. What a privilege!

There are times at first that patients are very frightened, but after treatment are so thankful. I am reminded of an elderly man, I thought he was 60 years old. He was 40. He only had 14 teeth left in all four quadrants and wanted them all removed. His health made this a serious question. After considerable discussion about treatment, he said "YES, WITH THE HELP OF GOD!!" With this confidence what could I do? I know each of you have good stories to share. Please send your stories to me.

Yes we are fortunate and life is really easy for us. Join us!

Dave Fihn, D.D.S. fhnd@arvig.net

1- (218)-847-7723

Would you like to join our Rotarian Action Group? The application is on page 8. Please include a check for US\$30.00 Dollars to:

**RAGDV
48 Drever Close
Red Deer, Alberta
Canada T4R 2N6**

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THE ULTIMATE VOLUNTEER

Our Dental Mission team was four and we traveled by dugout canoe on the Kruta River. We worked in two different villages from sunup to sundown.

The line of patients never finished. Our working conditions were terrible. All of us were tired all the time but at the same time it was very satisfying, as what we were doing was certainly needed.

When we returned to Puerto Limpura, a town of only perhaps 1500 and a dirt runway for our military C-47, I spent some time with the resident physician who while meeting with me while doing his required duty to his country.

He was frankly not very interested in our work. Then I asked him while making polite conversation "Do you have any Polio in Honduras"? "NO" he said, "we had a program called Polio Plus and now no more Polio -- It's wonderful"



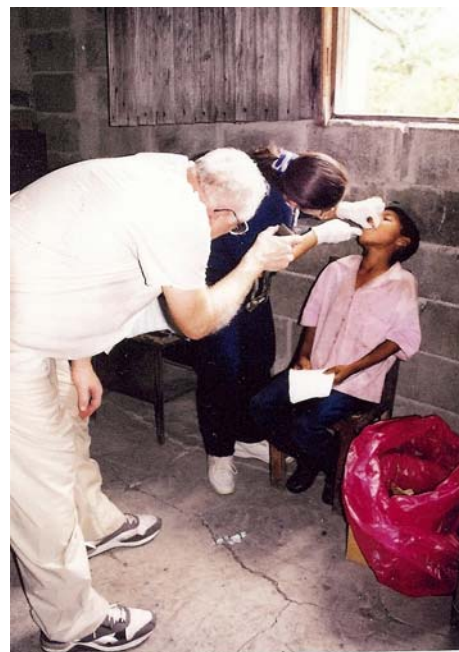
... we have a program called Polio Plus and now no more Polio -- It's wonderful!



I said, "I know Polio Plus because I am a Rotarian". This stranger of a few minutes ago, put his arm around me and with tears said, "Gracias mi Hermano" (Thank you my Brother).

This was one small, but profound moment for the Doctor and I. Yes, I now have a brother in Honduras because Rotary cares.

Dave Fihn DDS
President, RAGDV



RAGDV**ANESTHESIOLOGISTS ARE NEEDED**

Many of you have heard and seen Rotarian Magazine articles on cleft pallet surgery being done to help children in deprived corners of the world. It is a life changing gift for these kids and also a great reward for the volunteers involved, contributing their time and talents.

The following request comes from Anita Stangl (see article next page) who coordinates these medical missions and I hope you can forward it to anyone who may qualify and have interest in participating in this life changing experience

From: Anita Stangl [mailto:anita@allianceforsmiles.org]

Subject: Re:Anesthetist

We need three anesthesiologists for our September mission to Xianyang. That is right next to Xian so it is a good location. The dates are September 5 to the 19th, 2009. We will pay the airfare and housing but there is expectation of a \$350 trip participation contribution.

The volunteers need to have current licenses and experience with pediatric anesthesia. They need to be available for the entire mission and we do not take nurse anesthetists. If you have any candidates they can call the office and speak with Paul and/or download the application at www.allianceforsmiles.org.

We need help as quickly as possible as we need to send team lists in. Just an FYI, we did have anesthesiologists lined up but several had to cancel because of personal issues.

Thanks for your help.

Anita

anita@allianceforsmiles.org



**ANESTHESIOLOGISTS
ARE NEEDED FOR:
5 TO 19 SEPTEMBER,
2009**

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ALLIANCE FOR SMILES

I was privileged to be part of a team of medical and non-medical volunteers providing cleft lip and palate surgeries in Harbin China with Alliance for Smiles.

The first patient in line to be screened was Ya Suer, a petite two month old girl who smiled up at us with a distorted mouth and nose due to her cleft lip and palate. Her story was a sad one.

Ya Suer had been abandoned at the temple in Tian Jin City.

Gou An took her into her home promising to raise as her own. What else was she to do, the baby was dying. A certain death sentence brought these two people together now obviously bonded together with a deep love.

It has been very difficult to feed Ya Suer. Her cleft palate caused her to have a communication between her mouth and her nose where the roof of her mouth should have been so whenever she suckled on a bottle, most of what she attempted to swallow would come out her nose.

The little one had not been gaining weight as she should have so was under our required weight- too small and too young. The translators sobbed when she broke the



Dr. Kim Schilling



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Continued ...

WITHOUT THIS CHANCE - THIS SURGICAL INTERVENTION - PARENTS LIVE WITH A FEAR FOR OPPORTUNITIES THAT WILL NEVER BE HAD.

WE DREADED HAVING TO DENY A CHILD, NEVER MEANING TO HURT THOSE THAT WE MUST TURN DOWN.

news to this new mother, her daughter had to be turned down for surgery this year. Hopefully we shall return next year to continue our mission.

Choices that we made would tear at our heart strings. We had the power to change these lives, to give hope for a life of acceptance. Many families pooled their resources traveling as much as 13 hours or more by bus or train, clutching their offspring to their breasts hoping against hope for a chance at a normal existence.

Without this chance parents live with a fear for opportunities



that will never be had. We dreaded having to deny a child, never meaning to hurt those that we must turn down.

When all was said and done, our team of over thirty plastic surgeons, anesthesiologists, nurses, pediatricians, I as the dentist, a dental hygienist and several non-medical personnel ended up screening over 200 patients and were able to operate on 108 performing 128 surgical procedures as well as numerous dental and dental hygiene procedures.

Those facts do little to paint the special moments that occurred on our journey to change a few lives, ours included.

Some of our patients had had an attempt at surgery in the past. Our skilled surgeons were able to revise those smiles as well. Our minds and hearts are fresh with the images of

Continued ...

CHOICES THAT WE MADE WOULD TEAR AT OUR HEART STRINGS. WE HAD THE POWER TO CHANGE THESE LIVES, TO GIVE HOPE FOR A LIFE OF ACCEPTANCE.

the children, the families, our wonderful Chinese counterparts, the teamwork, the tears.... So many tears.

Tears of expectation, of frustration, of sadness, or gratitude...If you would like to know more, contact me (Kim Schilling) at tthferry@yahoo.com.



ALLIANCE FOR SMILES:

To repair children's broken smiles, establish cleft treatment centers, and foster ancillary humanitarian projects in underserved areas of China through international collaboration among medical and non-medical volunteers and corporate and individual sponsors.

Read more of the ALLIANCE FOR SMILES story on next page

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<http://allianceforsmiles.org/>

**ALLIANCE
FOR
SMILES**



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Alliance For Smiles, Inc.
is a non-profit organization born of a dream...



....to provide **reconstructive surgery** for underserved children who are born with a **cleft lip or palate**.

....to make a permanent difference in their lives by establishing centers to **provide follow-up and ongoing treatment**, such as dental care and speech therapy.



....to train and **empower local medical professionals** to serve cleft lip and palate patients.

....to unite **medical professionals, Rotarians and other volunteers**, and build bridges of international friendship.

ROTARIAN ACTION GROUPS (RAGS)

In order to comply with Rotarian Action Group rules it is important that within a two year period, the Rotarian Action Group must have undertaken an international service project and achieved a membership of 100 individuals representing at least 10 countries and three zones.

Until these criteria are met,

groups will be considered provisional. Provisional groups shall have all the rights and responsibilities of Rotarian Action Groups.

Provisional groups that do not achieve these threshold levels within two years of official recognition will be terminated, unless granted a waiver or extension by the board.

MEMBERSHIP DUES AND DISTRICT AND COUNTRY

PLEASE FILL IN THE FORM BELOW AND SEND IN YOUR MEMBERSHIP DUES.

EVEN IF YOU HAVE PAID THIS YEAR, PLEASE FILL OUT THE FORM BELOW (NOW) SO WE HAVE YOUR DISTRICT AND COUNTRY RECORDED.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Briefly describe your desired feedback.

Name _____

Address _____

District — Country _____

Phone _____

Email Address _____

Comments:

MEMBERSHIP

Help us to comply with the Rotarian Action Group Rules by filling in the form on the right and sending us your membership and required information.... Your district and country.



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Please send a check for US\$30.00 Dollars to:

**RAGDV
48 Drever Close
Red Deer, Alberta
Canada T4R 2N6**

QUESTIONS?

Dr. Monty Audenart

**Email:
monty@audenart.ca**



**We are on the WEB:
<http://www.RAGDV.org/>**

RAG VOLUNTEERS

RAGDV

A ROTARY DENTAL MISSION (RAGDV) TO DELICIAS IN CHIHUAHUA, MEXICO. 20 TO 27 OCTOBER, 2007

Working together and building friendships were as important as the many dental procedures accomplished by this talented team from the USA.

The production numbers were astounding during their work week in Delicias, Chihuahua Mexico as they accomplished close to 500 procedures while treating almost 300 patients (mostly children) at the Escuela #24 Abraham Gonzalez. During that work week the Rotary Club of Delicias and their dedicated members joined forces with Doctors Scott Johnson, Mark Smith, Sarah Werner, Eddie Blender, Bill Bissell a dental hygienist Shirley Berk, mechanic Jerry Sibley and sterilization expert Robert Mintz.



Continued on next page

Continued **EACH CHILD IS FIRST SEEN BY THE DENTAL HYGIENIST SHIRLEY BERK AND RECEIVES PREVENTATIVE CARE INSTRUCTIONS, A DENTAL CLEANING, A TOOTHBRUSH AND TOOTHPASTE. MOST CHILDREN TREATED HAD NEVER PREVIOUSLY VISITED A DENTIST.**

The Dental Instruments are sterilized by Mintz and each patient has individual set-ups.



The Rotary Dental team from Colorado and Illinois, USA carries with it— enough portable equipment to completely set up three fully functioning dental operator centers and one hygiene room. Each child is first seen by the dental hygienist Shirley Berk and receives preventative care instructions, a dental cleaning, a toothbrush and toothpaste. Most children treated had never previously visited a dentist.

Robert Mintz, (a recipient of Rotary’s Service above Self Award) arranged the mission program. Robert said, “In my seventeen years with this dental team and this our first mission to Mexico I can say that we have never worked with us such dedicated Rotarians. The members of the Delicias Rotary Club worked with us every day— arranging for our patients and keeping accurate records and good order.”



Amazingly that in this day and age the dental team traveling with all of this portable equipment for their humanitarian mission and those large boxes emblazed with

Continued on next page



Dr. Sarah Werner

Continued ...

THIS MISSION WORKED WELL BECAUSE OF THE DEDICATED HELP AND INTERACTION OF THE ROTARIANS FROM DELICIAS.



Dr. Scott Johnson

our Rotary Emblem still receives “special treatment” and is whisked through customs.

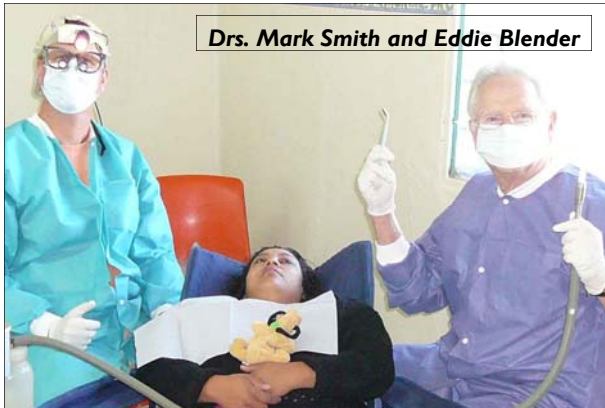
Dr. Scott Johnson the team’s lead dentist (also a recipient of Rotary’s Service above Self Award) stated: “Our team is composed of Rotarians from five different Rotary clubs and a major benefit for all of us is networking with the local Rotarians and planning additional humanitarian projects. It is great to get to work with the local Rotarians and personally get to know them and then planning other projects with them is easy.”

Mintz, a member of the Long Grove RC in Illinois and who also works at Rotary’s International head-

quarters in Evanston as manager of the Rotary International Travel Service (RITS), collects hundred of toys from RI Staff to give to the children. His club also joined with the Delicias RC to plan and complete a humanitarian project providing many computers for the local library in Delicias.

Jerry Sibley, who owns a plumbing business in Vail, Colorado is the team’s mechanic. He is a past peace corps volunteer in Central and South America and he brings valuable ability in setting up the dental operatories and also works as a dental assistant during the week.

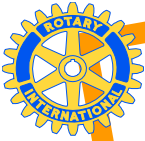
To each member of this dental team, this fifteenth mission was memorable because of the dedicated help and interaction of the Rotarians from Delicias.



Drs. Mark Smith and Eddie Blender



Rotarian Robert Mintz



**The Rotarian Action
Group of Dental
Volunteers**

All Rotarians interested in worldwide dental care are invited to become members of this official Rotarian Action Group.

RAGDV

We are on the WEB:
<http://www.RAGDV.org/>

JOIN NOW

Our website at <http://www.ragdv.org/> will allow you to Join our Rotarian Action Group, post your dental experiences, seek and offer dental equipment, find opportunities to serve, seek volunteers to your projects, and make contacts for fellowship.

Do you wish to join us and prefer doing so directly? Please send a check for US \$30.00 Dollars to:

Rotarian Action Group of
Dental Volunteers
48 Drever Close
Red Deer, Alberta
Canada T4R 2N6

Our Vision: A Peaceful World Through Humanitarian Service.

OUR MISSION:

- bring together, in fellowship and service, those Rotarians who have an active interest in dentistry and the promotion of dental care worldwide.
- To provide both a platform and a forum to discuss ideas and develop appropriate cooperative programs to further our shared goals.
- To promote international understanding and peace through our common purpose and efforts.