

Dental Mission July 2014

Roger Plante, JOP's Dental Chairman, prepared this report on the July 2014 dental mission trip to the St. Pius X dental clinic in Kingston Jamaica.

A group of dental volunteers headed down to Jamaica on July 23, 2014. After a quick stop at the market to procure personal items, the team headed right to the clinic to prepare for the following day's work, and they were very busy unpacking supplies, setting up their work areas and in this case readying the new work station that was just installed (our fourth complete work station). Each time a team arrives it is necessary to completely sanitize the work areas; in this case the clinic had been inactive since our March mission. The group was housed at the Immaculate Conception hostel which was extremely safe and comfortable.

This dental team consisted of: Dr. Eric from Macon, Georgia , Teri from Tampa, FL, Kruti from N.J., (who will soon be Dr. Kruti as she will be graduating from the dental program at Columbia University in NYC next month), Dental Hygienists Glenna from Tennessee and Sanibel Island, Roger Plante, group coordinator, Dr. Maria from Naples, who is a St. John the Evangelist parishioner, and Dr. Maria's dental assistant Juana also from Naples. In addition, Jeanne Stamant who was at St. Pius to conduct her annual financial audit also joined in to lend a helping hand.

Thanks to the support of a generous donor, hygienists and assistants were again blessed to receive assistance towards their travel and housing expenses.

Each time I write one of these reports It boggles my mind to see how each volunteer group arrives, being from various religious denominations, from different parts of the country, from various ethnic backgrounds, yet they are all so filled with the enthusiasm to give and to help the lesser fortunate of God's children; and this mission, and this team truly were no exception. Each day Father Raphael came to bless the mission group —sometimes just putting his hand on each of their shoulders as they worked which created a warm feeling of God's presence.

Statistics for this mission are as follows: **Cleanings 86, Extractions 64, Fillings 31, Number of patients treated 157, Number of treatments administered 281, Consultations 15, Students educated & screened 90, Number of patients placed in queue for September mission 54.**

A huge "THANK YOU" goes out to Doctors Maria, and Eric, to Kruti, Glenna, Teri and Juanita for their untiring devotion to the cause.....when 6:00 p.m. rolled around it was so apparent they

were hoping this might be the last patient, only to find out there were four more cleanings, two more extractions and three more fillings.....and when I suggested putting them on tomorrow's schedule, they all refused and insisted on taking care of all of them that day.

Following is an excerpt from an e-mail I received from one of the missionaries late Sunday after the team had headed home:

Once I got off the plane, I was overcome with emotion by what we had done. It was hard to hold back tears just thinking about how much we gave of ourselves and the difference it made to the people of Jamaica. I have never worked so hard in my life, maybe because the teeth were so difficult to get out. It was truly an emotional experience for me! I am still riding this rush that has come from helping those people and I feel like it has changed my perspective on life.

Jamaica Outreach Program has more dental missions planned in the near future: September 10th through 4th, October 15-19, 2014, and November 19-23, 2014. Staffing for the November 2014 and March 2015 missions is complete, however we still need two dentists, and one assistant for the October mission (fully staffed with hygienists)....we have many doctors nearly ready to commit for that and working on it each day. We are seeking a full complement for the January mission.

For 2015, it is hoped that missions will take place in each of the odd numbered months of the year, and it is my hope that each team that comes agrees to continue their great endeavor on an annual basis....and so far it is working out that way.

Again, Jamaica Outreach Program thanks all who have been involved with this and our other ministries.