

MARCH/APRIL 2014: Dental Team Visit to Our Sister Parish of St Michael the Archangel, Coq Chante, Haiti

On March 22, ten dental team members travelled to the rural mountains of Haiti to provide dental care to the parishioners of St Michael and its eight outlying chapels.

During the visit, the two American dentists (Dr Richard Sheehan, Orchard Park and Dr Gordon Sear, Olean) and the oral surgeon (Dr William Maher, Hamburg) worked with two young, skilled Haitian dentists, caring for more than 500 patients.

Many teeth were filled (making heartwarming and memorable 'before-and-after' moments) and many more were extracted, relieving the pain and suffering of many members of the community, including a seven year old boy whose mother reported the child could not sleep at night because of his tooth pain. Had the team not seen this child and the many other patients, there would have been no means of relief for the residents of this rural and resource poor community.

Robert Cursons (Lab Technician, East Aurora) was in high demand on his third trip to Coq Chante as the artist-in-residence, creating partial dentures (again, making heartwarming and memorable 'before-and-after' moments) and repairing cracked and chipped dentures – and a few that were in fragments.

Assisting the dentists were Frank Lewandowski (St George's) and Jim Waris (Nativity), John Maher (Hamburg), Krista VanWagner (St Bernadette's), Cynde McCloskey and Pat Polowy (Buffalo)

As in years past, fluoride varnishes were provided to the parish nurse for the treatment of the 250+ children in the school and many more in the community. In an area without fluoridated water, we expect the combination of fluoride applications and oral hygiene education to reduce the prevalence of decay and suffering in time.

On this, the fifth exclusively dental trip, the team was again able to provide the high standard of care that would be found in an American office and to provide complete dental care, with the exception of cleanings (which we are committed to adding on future trips).

As always, we are recruiting for the team year round and would love to hear from dental professionals who might be interested in joining us. All team members donate their time and services and also the finances necessary to cover the cost of the trip and the supplies for the dental clinic.

The cost of this year's trip was less than \$20,000 but the value of the work done was, *conservatively*, almost \$300,000! And the relief of the pain and suffering as well as the restoration of beautiful smiles was, as always, priceless.

Finally, the team is profoundly grateful to the following individuals and organizations for their generous and perennial contributions and support:

St George's Roman Catholic Church , West Falls

Nativity of Our Lord RC Church, Orchard Park

Brooke Beeson (GC America)

The Board of the Eighth District Dental Society

Dr Richard Sheehan, Buffalo

Dan Duke (Patterson Dental Supplies)

Dr Donald Tucker, Williamsville

Anthony Brown Pharmacy, Orchard Park

Dr Patricia Haberman , Eggertsville

Virginia & John Oehler

Ivoclar Vivadent Dental Company

Dr Kevin D'Angelo, Lackawanna

Drs Joseph Gambacorta and Carlos Munoz (UB Dental School)