

The Dental Mission Project - Zihuatanejo, Mexico

Dr. Doug Nielsen

Our volunteer dental team was very fortunate to have spent 2 weeks in Zihuatanejo, Mexico where we worked with dentists Dr. Oliverio Soberanis & Dr. Azucena Acosta Mena, providing free dental care to the impoverished children of the area.

Over the past 6 years our dental team has made many trips to Nicaragua & Guatemala, working on children in orphanages and finally setting up a permanent dental clinic in the village of San Juan la Laguna, Guatemala. We have started an organization that loans portable dental equipment & supplies to any dental team wanting to provide free dentistry in underprivileged areas. Our website is www.TheDentalMissionProject.com



Last year we decided that we would like to make our next trip to Mexico. We came to know of Zihuatanejo dentists Drs. Oliverio & Azucena. We discussed with them via email the possibility of setting up a temporary dental clinic and, in February flew to Mexico to meet them in person and see for ourselves the dental needs of the community.

Our team this year consisted of: Dr. Doug & Susan Nielsen, Dr. Liz Johnson-Lee, Joanne Dawson, Margaret Sieber, Jackie & Mackenzie Fawcett.

On September 3rd we left for Zihuatanejo with all the necessary portable dental equipment and supplies to set up our mobile clinic. However, 5 of our 14 pieces of equipment & supplies remained in Los Angeles airport. Thanks to the generosity and resourcefulness of Drs. Oliverio & Azucena for their ongoing support and the loan of some vital equipment & supplies, we were able to successfully provide the much needed dental treatment to 166 local children and family members. "Aguaquin", a local water company, provided us with an excellent working facility in their factory warehouse, keeping us and our patients out of the heavy rainfall -- the worst flooding there in over 50 years.

After our week of hard work we took some time to enjoy the local sights and culture. We were



delighted to be invited to celebrate Mexico's 200 years of Independence at a pageant by the students of "Casa Para Niños del Pacifico" school. We released baby sea turtles into the surf, fed iguanas & crocodiles and, between torrential downpours, relaxed in the sunshine.

Our dental mission trip was a great success and we look forward to returning to Zihuatanejo to visit our new amigos.