

San Juan la Laguna, Guatemala
Dental Mission
Dr. Doug Nielsen & team

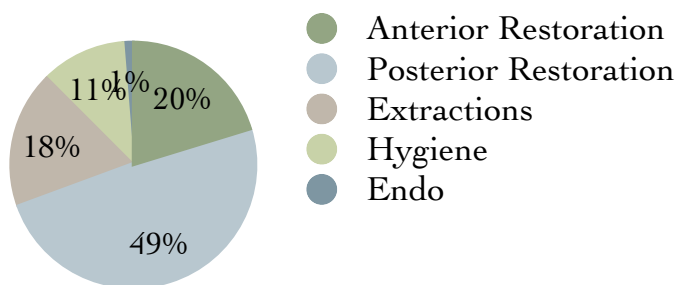
September 2009



The Dental Mission Project's (TDMP) first mission to San Juan la Laguna, Guatemala was a great success. Dr. Doug Nielsen of the Steveston Rotary Club was the team leader coordinating with the Guatemala City Rotary Club to ensure that all was safe and efficient. The team consisted of (from left to right) Nicole Kwieton, Dr. Liz Johnson-Lee, Susan & Dr. Doug Nielsen, Michelle Kwieton, Kathy VanVliet, Marg Sieber, Joanne Dawson, Sue Thornley and Dr. Willy Contreras of Guatemala.

They brought their maximum allowed (900 lbs) of checked baggage consisting of bins of dental equipment & supplies packed with stuffed toys, toothbrushes, paste & floss, 2 portable chairs, 2 dental units, 2 compressors and a Statim sterilizer. The clinic was set up August 22nd and work began the next day at 8 am -- with over 100 people treated the first day. Over the next week over 500 more were treated -- basic restorations to more complicated endodontic treatment and extractions.

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Team members visited elementary school students, providing dental hygiene instruction and soccer balls to the delighted students. They also assisted a village medical team by donating one of their compressors to replace a broken one that had the tiny medical facility at a standstill.

Midweek, the team took a day off work and toured the community, visiting the local cultural and artistic sights. This included a visit to the midwives' herb gardens where the Steveston Rotary's donation of a grinding mill assisted in the production of health products to sell to fund their midwifery expenses.

The team and their equipment were transported back to the city by the Guatemala City Rotary Club and they were treated to wonderful Guatemalan hospitality by Dr. Willy & Marie Innes Contreras and club President Eduardo & Isabel Jaar.

Dr. Doug & Susan are currently researching potential new mission projects for 2010 & 2011 and are having discussions with contacts in Zihuatenejo, Mexico and First Nation communities in rural BC.