

E- Flyer 4/ e-news #4 .

Dear Kimberley Dental Team and supporters,

Hope you are well.

The Team has had a great start to the year. E-Flyer 3 or e-news #3, January, 2010, was full of anticipation for this coming year. We have added approximately another seven volunteer dentists and dental assistants to the Team and soon we will seek expressions of interest from dental therapist and dental hygienists. Most are from WA but one very special dentist from the Eastern States, Dr John Lockwood, Chair and fellow board member of the newly formed Dental Board of Australia, has volunteered to assist in May 2011. This is tangible evidence that National Registration will also have its advantages.

I have also recently met with several new sponsors, who are keen to assist financially and in kind as the project and the Team develops.

As promised the website was launched on the 1st March and will be continually up dated. We hope you find it informative and engaging. Permission from the very well respected Elder Bearibee, from Frog Hollow to use the children's dental health education images has recently been received. Listing of our Sponsors and supporters is also to be undertaken. Thank you Di Rowling of likon Design for your assistance with artwork and web design.

www.kimberlydentalteam.com.au

In February, immediately after a hectic week at the World Federation of Orthodontists International Congress in Sydney, Jan and I travelled to the Warmun community at the invitation of Gija Total Health (GTH) to screen and where possible treat patients in urgent need. We were joined by Isabel Da Silva, courtesy of UWA to manage data entry into the MMEx, the web based software system being developed to greatly assist provision of remote and rural health care. Ann Mitchell also joined us from Halls Creek. Ann is a member of the Kimberley Dental Team (KDT) steering committee and works at the Halls Creek District Hospital as a nurse and midwife. Megan Buckley, coordinator for GTH, is passionate about the Community and as with the visits from other health care professionals; she maximized our resources and skills to obtain the maximum benefit for the Community in such a short period of time.

It was a pleasing to see that so many children compared to Halls Creek, have a good level of oral health. 56%(62) requiring DHE instruction, but no active care, with "only" 10%(11) requiring urgent dental care. 34%(39) required what may be classed as routine dental care. In May 2009, our Halls Creek May 2009 figures reported in E-Flyer 1, found 44%(56) required DHE instruction, but no active care, but 38% (51) required urgent dental care and 18%(23) required treatment within six months. The amount of care required in the Halls Creek group was also dramatically greater, including 157 extractions for gross caries, 16 extractions for orthodontic and occlusal balance and 68 restorations. Some of this was addressed during our August visit, but with well over 50% of patients seen being additional to the intended treatment group detected three months earlier, a lot are still outstanding.

I believe three very important reasons for this improved situation at Warmun include firstly, the school policy that children brush their teeth every morning at school and the benefits of this were very obvious. Secondly, Natalie De Zilwa, Area Dental Therapist and her nurse Kim, had spent the last weeks of term four 2009 in Warmun after a tough sixteen weeks in Halls Creek. Their impact was visible clinically and their service and assistance, well remembered by the Kids. Thirdly, having a coordinator such as Megan is invaluable in obtaining assistance in the first place and to facilitate visits to Kununurra or in the future to the KDT in Halls Creek, where services are only 200km away compared to Halls Creek which is 400 km from Kununurra.

As well as working within the school we screened and supplied brush packs and specific oral health sheets for the carers who looked after aged or disabled clients. This involved a visit to the Warmun Disability Support House and the Walumba Hostel, Aged Care Unit. One patient in the aged care unit

required 2 extractions so as to relieve his very significant pain and avoid a trip to Kununurra. We heard the other day that this gentleman Joe Thomas, whom we had been told had a beautiful voice, had sung his first corroboree for 18 months

During the week, we screened a total of 145 patients, 112 children and 33 adults. We requested 28 OPG digital radiographs for patients utilizing the newly installed OPG unit in Kununurra Hospital. The treatment plans for the children and adults screened during this week have been reported and in due course, scheduled for care in Kununurra, Halls Creek and the DHS van, which unfortunately has to be based in Kununurra for the rest of the year due to its backlog of work in town.

We facilitated the care for one young 9 year old boy who required a GA and 14 extractions at Fremantle Hospital. Thank you to Dr Paul Sillifant, Oral and maxillo facial surgeon, and his registrar, Franc Henze. This child had been on an invisible 12 month wait list. It is not appropriate to show his photos, but his face is that of a tired teenager who has suffered, not a child. What educational outcomes can be expected when anyone is in this state of health? I previously reported that Associate Prof Ray Williamson assisted us with a similarly difficult case but in a four year old just before Christmas.

We firmly believe that the success to health care in the Kimberley and in indigenous populations especially, is excellent networking, coordination and communication between community liaison workers and health professionals and both the government and private sectors. Such coordination through Gija Total health maximized our efforts and continues to bring very significant successful outcomes for the Warmun Community.

Final arrangements for the Kimberley Dental Teams, May visit to Halls Creek and outlying communities in May 2009, is now complete. Planning is also well underway for the month of August 2010

Specific to May, we have access to the Dental Clinic at Halls Creek Hospital from Monday the 3rd to Friday 21nd May. As the clinic has two surgeries, we have decided to concentrate the dental care to three weeks.

- Week 1. Jan and I, with the assistance of hospital nurse, Ann Mitchell, we will start with a few that are already booked in, including a prosthetic case for one of the staff from Warmun. We will also fly south for a day to Balgo, and the two smaller communities of around 200 people each - Mulan and Billiluna. This is a very important week to screen, DHE with the kids, visit Red Hill catholic school, the day care and the aged care facility. Commence informing everyone (spread the word on the ground), liaise with medical staff on cases they have been simply treating with panadol and antibiotics for months, prep cases ready for the coming two weeks of very productive treatment. Hopefully, Jan and I will also fly to Gibb River Community to view the donated setup and meet Nola and Sister Mary Jane. Drs Dennis Gregory and Gary Wood and the National Dental Foundation Team(NDF) (5 in total), will visit Gibb River on Monday and Tuesday the 17th and 18th May and possibly part of the Wednesday.
- Week 2. We have the return of dental nurse Kristal Walker (who assisted last August with Brian Koch). Although Kristal is now working for another dentist she readily put her hand up again for this year. Energetic, Dr Daniel Cocker will do weeks 2 & 3 and greatly assist out in the communities. As he is now working for DHS after a couple of years in private practice, he will be on secondment from Perth. My father Ray Owen, who is known to many as the tooth whisperer, will also assist this week. His years of experience, especially on the forceps, will be of great value. During this week we will return to Balgo to provide further treatment, plus visit Warmun and Frog Hollow and possibly Bow River and Crocodile Hole that were missed in the February trip. We will fly to the NT border to screen and treat people at Ringers Soak and return to Yiyili community to reinforce DHE and treat people in need. It is absolutely essential to encourage communication with and listen to the elders, coordinators and liaison personnel and be flexible, otherwise valuable medical and dental time can be wasted by simply turning up and find a sorry period is being observed or the community has travelled to another destination for a funeral or meeting.

- Week 3. Daniel will stay on for week 3 and we will be joined possibly late Wednesday by the NDF Team. Thursday and Friday, will be set up for the main surgical push of the three weeks, having referred such difficult cases that could not be addressed in the bush and that need Dennis's expertise.

As we did last year, the Kimberley Dental Team will cover travel and accommodation costs which are averaging out at about \$1250 per person per week. We are extremely appreciative of the NDF members making the additional effort to volunteer and assist in Halls Creek. They bring considerable experience in difficult situations.

With 32 urgent Halls Creek children, detected at our May 09 trip still outstanding, plus 10 urgent child and 18 adults from Warmun, plus all the other areas to be visited and the several per day that regularly attend the HCD Hospital for dental pain relief, Jan and I are looking forward to coordinating a busy trip and bringing about significant outcomes.

John and Jan Owen

5th April, 2010