

Kimberley Dental Team E- Flyer 5. June 2010

Dear Kimberley Dental Team and supporters,

May 2010 saw the return of KDT to Halls Creek for three weeks of dental care. As planned, this coincided with the return visit of Madjital Moorna choir during the first week of May. We were able to incorporate choir activities, concerts and lots of singing and fun along with our dental schedule. Our son Peter joined us for the three weeks and was a great help with DHE with the kids, developing radiographs, his beautiful music and general support. Choir member Tracy Sandercock joined us on a day trip to Billiluna and Balgo communities where we screened the school children and inspected the dental facilities at the Balgo clinic.

Drs Ray Owen and Daniel Cocker, dental assistant, Kristal Walker (second trip), flew into Kununurra and travelled by road to Halls Creek to join us for week two. On Tuesday we took advantage of the additional team members and made a trip to Ringers Soak a small community, some 150km to the south east of Halls Creek(40 minutes flight time), where we screened the school children and several adults. Plans were made with the school and clinic to get some of the urgent cases over to Halls Creek for treatment later in the week. On Thursday Daniel, Kristal and John returned to Balgo to commence treating the urgent cases. In our non-stop five hours of clinic, we saw 22 patients and undertook 16 extractions and 1 filling. Ray, Jan and Peter stayed in Halls Creek and treated the troupe load of people from Ringers Soak, arranged from our visit two days earlier. The Team was invited to a BBQ at Burks Park, hosted by well respected community leaders, Helen and Roy Wilson and Councillor Sciona Brown. Many executives for the Department for Housing were present and the Girls from Oz, sang two beautiful songs under the Kimberley stars.

The third week was accompanied by an unseasonable and constant drizzle that lasted for 6 days and washed out the plans of the National Dental Foundation members Denis Gregory, Gary Wood and their team of five, who had planned to join us later in the week after their couple of days at Gibb River Community. The Gibb River dirt airstrip, like most Kimberley strips, become very slippery with just a little rain. This was not a problem for the helicopter of course, but the low and overcast cloud base and the high King Leopold ranges in the region prevented the helicopter from being of assistance. In addition, they had sent all of their gear including clothing etc ahead by road transport and so were effectively, sitting in Broome staring at their bare navels. After considerable thought they elected to fly straight back to Perth and try another day.

Ray and Kristal returned to Perth at the beginning of this week and we continued to treat the many grateful patients in urgent need including those travelling serious distances from Ringers Soak, Billiluna, Frog Hollow, Warmun and Yiyili communities. With the help of 'Craig the Crocodile' we also managed to fit in 199 screenings (triage examinations) and DHE at Red Hill School, Department for Child Protection Hostel and the Kindy and Pre Primary classes at the Halls Creek school, Balgo, Billiluna and Ringers Soak over the three weeks.

In all, the Team was able to see and provided screenings, dental care and advice to a total of 428 people. This ranged from old stockman Jack at the Frail Aged centre who believed he was 101 to little Kim from Frog Hollow who was only five. I had to extract her two lower right first molars but her four close friends stroked her arms and legs reassuring her all the way. Jan was able to assist many mums, with babes in arms and toddlers with DHE and general oral care advice.

Dental care provided included 151 extractions, 79 fillings, 34 duraphat applications in caries prone areas, 12 extensive and gross scale and cleans, 40 radiographs, several referrals to private dentists in Kununurra and the Government Clinic, two acrylic partial dentures and one upper removable orthodontic appliance for young Reginald. Orthodontics has come to Halls Creek!! Thank you to David Owen and David Walters in Midland for making these appliances at no charge to the Team.

With the new OPG unit in Kununurra, we requested 23 OPG's. Of the 28 requested from our February Warmun trip, the Team have now received 7 which have greatly assisted future

planning for these patients. We did not have access to MMEx for our chartings but did have access for medical histories at Balgo.

During the three weeks many local people received treatment and families brought their children in to have screening, DHE and treatment where needed. Several car loads of adults and children who were identified as needing urgent treatment during our Warmun and Frog Hollow visit in February also travelled the 200kms to the Halls Creek clinic for care.

We often thought of these long trips home with most having had extractions. Local anaesthetic starting to wear off, bloody gauzes getting tired and needing to be replaced and the kids getting grizzly due to the events of the long day. We are always very pleased to hear when we follow up with phone calls the next day that all arrived home happy with the relief they were experiencing. You know the healing phase is sore, but you also know it will get better, unlike true dental pain.

The elderly ladies from Warmun, several famous painters, replied by SMS via Gija Total Health coordinator, Megan Buckley who had arranged their appointments and driven in one of the two cars loads said,

"Thanks for today. Everyone very happy on way home. Jane and the old girls called Ray 'Mullabarn' high praise. Means revered old man."

Jane also said that she has been wantin that wisdom tooth out since 2004 and two dentists had had a look and were not game to do it. She was very pleased once she settled down.

Have a good rest

Is there a greater thankyou?

On the last Friday, Peter and I started to fly the long trip home in the helicopter as I had to be in Melbourne for the Dental Board of Australia meeting the following Friday. The rest returned via Kununurra. On the return trip to Kununurra Ann, Daniel and Jan called into the Walumba Hostel, Aged Care Unit in Warmun where they treated two residents who needed extractions and reinforced DHE for the patient we saw in February who I am delighted to report is now brushing regularly for probably the first time in his life; his oral health is hugely improved and he feels much better and was very proud to show us.

A sincere thank you to Donna Hindmarsh, Director of Nursing and her team at the Halls Creek Hospital and the medical teams in the outlying Communities. The three hospital doctors and staff welcomed us into their hospital and were incredibly helpful in every way possible.

Special thanks to Ann Mitchell who is a member of the Kimberley Dental Team (KDT) steering committee and who works at the Halls Creek District Hospital as a nurse and midwife. Ann has provided tremendous local presence and clinical support for the team since she moved to Halls Creek last December. Thank you to Dental Health Services for allowing us to use their facilities.

There were many highlights of the trip; meeting the Governor General when she was in Halls Creek, meeting the team from the Generation One bus who were in town, wine and cheese at Caroline Pool at Sunset, day trip to Saw Tooth Gorge, (almost a sacred site for the Team), sharing meals and lots of laughs with the locals at the Sports Bar at the Kimberley Hotel. However none can compare with seeing the happy, smiling faces of the two children who, after suffering years of pain, had GA's and treatment in Perth organised by KDT and are now pain free and able to enjoy their lives. Both are back at school and all smiles, albeit, not with many teeth at present.

Thank you Team and supporters for the excellent trip and the valuable out come. We look forward to the next trip in August, now just 7 weeks away. In all for this trip we have eleven members Team members, up from eight for the May trip. We have some four dentists (counting myself), three nurses / DA's and one dual qualified dental therapist and dental Hygienist. As we now have three ultrasonic scalers, it is time to commence seriously addressing the periodontal status and calculus build-ups. So many of our young adult patients are type 11 diabetics and so this aspect of care is now becoming a priority. In addition, joining

for the first time, we have two final year students through our close liaison with CRROH and the University of Western Australia.

The following is an email from Councillor Sciona Brown on behalf of the Community that we received on behalf of the Team. .

Importance: High

Dear John and Jan... I write to you not as the manager of the BLP, but in my capacity as Chair of the Halls Creek Interagency Meeting Group.

On behalf of members (Police, Department of Child Protection and the Children's Hostel, Halls Creek District High School, Shire of Halls Creek, BLP, Kimberley Language Resource Centre, Yura Yungi Aboriginal Medical Service, Health (hospital), Centrelink, the COAG Local Operations Centre and the Department of Housing) we wish to thank you both, and your team, for your tireless work in our community and the important contribution you make to improving the dental health of our children.

Your work cannot be under estimated in terms of the positive impact it has on our community. We acknowledge it and wish, via this email, to communicate our sincere appreciation to all involved in the Kimberley Dental Health Team initiative.

Kind regards,
Sciona

Sciona Browne
Chair
Halls Creek Interagency Meeting Group

We hope you enjoyed the E-Flyer 5. and ask that you regularly visit the Kimberley Dental Team website for updated information to assist you to decide to volunteer in the future.

John and Jan Owen

14th June, 2010