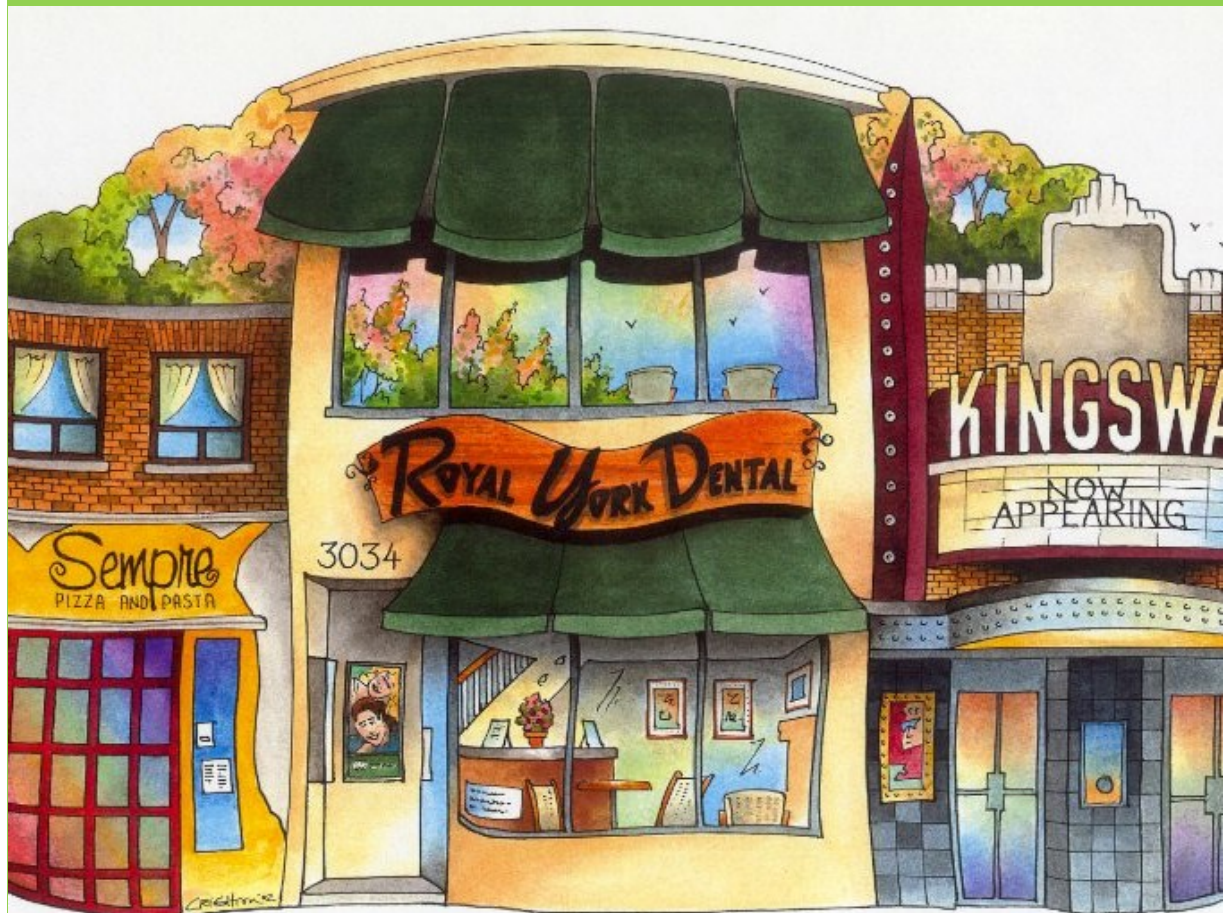




RAGDV

ROTARIAN ACTION GRUP OF DENTAL VOLUNTEERS

May 2014



RAGDV ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

will be at Sydney Convention Center - Marine room

Saturday, 31 May, 2014

14:00-16:00 - RAGDV (Marine)

You are all welcome!

NEW!!! RAGDV pin - distribution during the Annual meeting!

Etobicoke Dentist in México

A Rotary International project - helping smiles in need.



Ara at the wheel...

I'm an Etobicoke Dentist from Toronto, Canada and an active member of the Rotary Club of Etobicoke. The following represents one of our club's many projects...

One of our local Rotary Club members, Ara Run, has a lovely vacation home in Huatulco (pronounced Who-ah-tool-coe), Mexico where he enjoys spending his winter months in sunshine and warmth.

Smart man!

Outside of the developed resort community where he resides, there are many smaller villages that lack some of the basics that we take for granted (such as dental care). Ara has been working with the Rotary Club in Huatulco on various projects to help some of these outside communities.

If you're a dentist interested in volunteering for the Mexico project contact:

Ara Run — runara@prodigy.net.mx

One project Ara had initiated, with the support of our club back in Etobicoke, was to provide much-needed dental care to underserved communities surrounding Huatulco. To accomplish this, Ara helped develop a mobile dental chair—mounted on a trailer – that could be easily transported to remote communities.

Dentists are available in Huatulco, including fellow Rotarian Rayna Rangel. Unfortunately, many of those from these small villages lack the financial resources to ever pay for dental services. It's not a matter of poverty, these traditional village communities aren't as centered on money. They lead simple lives – not having much, and not wanting for much.

Most villagers grow up without ever seeing a dentist. Dental hygiene was not a priority and tooth decay was rampant, especially amongst the children.

Why join Rotary?

Contribute on a higher level, to develop leadership skills, and to enjoy the fellowship of like-minded people It has been such a rewarding and worthwhile experience.

We live in a disconnected world. Rotary helps us CONNECT to serving a significant purpose, to a set of higher values, to fellow members at home and abroad, to our local community and those on the other side of the world. Above all, Rotary helps us connect to the very best within ourselves.

As a dentist in Etobicoke, Rotary has been a terrific experience for me. It's a chance to give back to our community and work with other successful business people. The annual Toronto Ribfest is an terrific event run by our club.

Consider joining your local Rotary Club. I'm sure you'll find the experience rewarding.



Step into our office... not all the comforts of home!



A quick group lesson in oral hygiene – Henriette translating.

Dental Adventures in México

My 19-year old son David and I flew down to Huatulco to join Ara Run, a fellow Rotarian from Toronto. We had no idea what to expect, and my son had no experience in dental assistant.

Welcome to Mexico – what's in the box? At Ara's request, we brought along two large containers of clothing with us – to be distributed amongst the villagers we were to be visiting. Sure enough, airport security took an interest in these large containers. Seems they wanted to make sure we weren't smuggling something into Mexico – which somehow seemed funny at the time.

Rule #1: Find shade! Once airport security decided we were harmless enough, we stepped outside into the light of day. Still dressed in clothing more appropriate for the Canadian winter we had left behind, we quickly realized we would soon melt like snowmen in the afternoon heat. So, we did the smart thing and stuck to whatever shade we could find as we worked our way towards the parking lot.

Our adventure begins! The next morning we were off delivering the dental trailer and our supplies to our destination – Barra de la Cruz – a modest village about 30 km. south of Huatulco. This community had a population of about 700, many whom had rarely, if ever, seen a dentist before.

Test of the elders. The first patients eager to get started on Monday morning were a group of village elders. I had a sense we were being tested and I didn't want to blow the opportunity to make a good first impression. An older gentleman climbed into the dental chair and I eagerly began asking dentally oriented questions while Henriette translated. The older gentleman soon warmed up to the idea that he had a willing audience and began telling long tales about his personal adventures with teeth. Henriette was quick to realize that this wasn't going to work very well. So, I changed tactics – picked up my mouth mirror, had him open up, and took a look for myself. My first of many lessons – **keep it simple.**

Unexpected surprise

Turns out that first elder gentleman needed an extraction. Ok, that looked easy enough. I gave him some local anaesthetic and had him hop out of the trailer so I could see someone else while the anaesthetic took hold. Soon I had two others joining him, waiting for the anaesthetic to kick in.

What was going on? Xylocaine with or without epinephrine – no dice on either. Expiry date still not lapsed. What could it be? I realized the culprit had to be the hot climate. Ara had been storing the anaesthetic in his garage and the heat had gradually inactivated it.

The bad news

We had to tell the group of three to go home and we would try again the next day. Not an impressive start to our first day. I was worried we had lost much credibility with the elders and hoped they would give us another chance.

The hard decision

The rest of the first day we spent diagnosing and taking care of small problems that didn't require local anaesthetic. People often asked to have their teeth cleaned. They certainly needed extensive hygiene therapy, but we didn't have a single curette or scaler amongst our supplies. Ara and Henriette urged me to just polish teeth to keep the villagers happy.

I couldn't do it. These people needed real help, not an illusion of dental service. I made the decision to only offer examinations, basic restorative procedures, and extractions.



Credibility restored



The next day we got back to work with a fresh batch of local anaesthetic. Lo and behold, the people's lips numbed as they should, teeth were removed, cavities were filled and we were up to full speed. We continued working out the kinks – adapting to our surroundings and making the best of what we had. At times we needed to get rather creative...

The brushing lesson. We brought along some boxes of toothbrushes. They came in very handy as it seems many locals didn't own one. At one point, with school having just finished, a horde of children came in to see us. The first few children had rather unclean teeth so I figured it was a good time for a brushing demonstration.

I stood with my young “volunteer” on the front of the trailer and did a brushing demonstration for the crowd as Henriette translated. The children were very excited about their new toothbrushes.

The mystery of dissolving teeth. I saw many villagers with severely eroded teeth, some right down to the gumline. This was particularly evident with the elders – who hadn't been as affected by the impact of sugar and Coke. Something else was doing the damage.

Turns out these people really enjoy eating limes and green papayas (highly acidic when less ripened).

(to be continued)



About RAGDV

The **Rotarian Action Group of Dental Volunteers** operates in accordance with **Rotary International** policy but is not an agency of, or controlled by Rotary International.

Are you a **Rotary dental volunteer**?

Share your experience, and give details as to how others may participate.

RAGDV

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The new RAGDV website:

www.ragdv.com

Dr. Coş Ovidiu: cosovidiu@gmail.com

MERCY SHIPS IS ONE OF ROTARY'S NEWEST STRATEGIC PARTNERS OF THE ROTARY FOUNDATION. ROTARY CLUBS AND DISTRICTS CAN APPLY FOR A PACKAGED GRANT THAT WILL ALLOW MEDICAL AND DENTAL PERSONEL TO PARTNER WITH MERCY SHIPS TO PERFORM LIFE CHANGING SURGERIES IN UNDER DEVELOPED PARTS OF THE WORLD.