

BRIDGE NEWS

Building bridges worldwide with compassion, joy, smiles, and heart, one person at a time

The October 2011 issue

Tips on Giving Back

Nick Czernkovich hosted a Toronto charity event and met one of our board members, Philip Sung. From there he has been involved with different committees within HMO and is the chair of our upcoming gala in 2012.

What are some simple ways to volunteer?

"My favourite quote is by Roosevelt, 'Do what you can, with what you have, where you are.' ... I think that is key."

What do you suggest to those who say they have nothing to offer?

"Don't underestimate the value of the little things... You never know the impact of what you do will be down the road."

Niya Bajaj coordinated a fundraiser where she met someone who was involved with HMO. Since then, Niya has utilized skills she already had to help out at HMO. She is a certified event planner with a background in communications and fundraising.

What is the most important reason to volunteer, locally and internationally?

"It's a lot about making a really tangible difference in people's lives."

How can someone start to volunteer? What if I think I don't have any skills to offer?

"Just talk to people and tell them what you're interested in.... Start small and take on manageable things."

By Simone Lai

Smiles are Contagious!

More than words could ever express, a smile tells you everything about HMO's work. Our patients always leave our clinics smiling. They can be smiles of relief, or of new found confidence, but mostly they are smiles of gratitude.

Good dental health is vital to overall health. When our teeth, gums, and mouths are healthy, our bodies function optimally too, especially our internal organs. The psychological impact of having good, healthy teeth gives confidence, and when we are confident, we smile. When we smile, others smile, and a bridge is built that connects us.

"The Bridge" is HMO's first newsletter. It is called The Bridge to celebrate how people build meaningful relationships when they help one another. Since HMO was founded three years ago, thousands of people have been building bridges as volunteers, donors and patients.

With each new clinic, we discover a whole new world of people who need our care and those who want to complete the circle of caring by volunteering to help them. It is that profound connection that inspires everyone at HMO, and why we are so thankful to you for energizing it in your own unique and caring way as a member of the HMO family.



Words to live by:

"Smile and the world smiles with you."

There are countless more smiles coming, and one person at a time, HMO will make them happen!

With heartfelt thanks and gratitude for your support.

Valerie Campbell
Chair, Board of Directors

Making as many people smile as possible – Recent HMO Developments

Digital X-ray

Earlier this year, HMO invited people to help purchase a portable digital x-ray machine. The equipment is vital because it allows our dentists to see a patient's teeth and gums beneath the surface, and they can plan the best treatment for him or her.

We are pleased to report that you have given more than enough to purchase the digital x-ray machine, so now HMO can purchase another urgently needed piece of equipment. We will report back soon to let you know. In the meantime, please accept our sincere thanks for caring! Each new item of equipment you enable HMO to purchase gives our dentists the ability to provide ever more sophisticated services to patients.

Golf Tournament

HMO hosted its second annual golf tournament at Sleepy Hollow in June. More than 100 golfers participated, a terrific show of support on the links. Monies raised will help HMO purchase equipment for our clinics.

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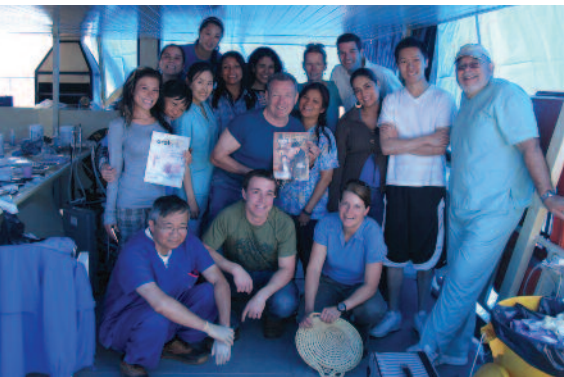
Paraguay Mission 2011

Providing Smiles in the Amazon Marshland!

Getting Ready for the Adventure of a Lifetime

July marked HMO's third visit to Paraguay to care for the Chamacoco Indians, the indigenous peoples living in the Amazon marshland. Paraguay has been a source of inspiration for many HMO volunteer dentists, hygienists, doctors, and other volunteers who undertake the 10-day long mission.

Dr. Lun Hangfu, an HMO board director, recounted the preparation: "The people in the Amazon have severe dental needs. We pack heavy bags full of equipment, supplies and drugs that reduce pain and support healing. I am usually up all night the night before we fly out, double checking that we have everything!"



A New World in the Marshland

Volunteers from across Canada and the US, meet at Pearson International Airport in Toronto and at stops along the way to South America. "That is an exciting part of the journey," says one of the volunteers. "Everyone is anxious to get there, meet the people and do their work. The energy is high and we all share our plans for how we want to help once we arrive."

The team's first stop-over was Sao Paulo, Brazil. From there, volunteers flew to Campo Grande, meeting seven Brazilian volunteers: three medical students, an administrator, and nursing, architect and accounting students.



The team boarded a bus for a seven hour journey to Corumba, a border town between Brazil, Paraguay and Bolivia on the Paraguay River. The final leg was a 20 hour boat ride along the Paraguay River to the Chamacoco tribal villages at Port Diana.

Springing Into Action

As soon as the volunteers arrived at the shoreline, their work began in earnest. The Chamacoco patients had been waiting for the HMO team, anticipating their visit for months! Dr. Falz, a medical doctor, started to treat people, with the help of medical students. She focused on treating cold and flu symptoms, and helping local nurses to improve their own abilities to diagnose and improve the quality of care. The dental team

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"Making many people smile" continued from page 1

First Ever Mission to China in the Works

In May, board directors, Dr. Hangfu, George Chu, and volunteer, Dr. Laura Zhang, made an historic visit to China to meet with dignitaries about organizing a possible mission either in Anhui or Xichuan Province. Plans are now underway with political officials and educators in China to advance the plans. Millions of people are without dental care in China. As the country continues to grow and people move from rural to urban settings, the pressure on the emerging health system is incredible. HMO will keep you posted of these exciting and historic developments as we firm up plans for our first ever mission to China.



First Ever Gala! Toronto's only FLOSS BALL!

HMO is organizing its first gala in 2012. Mark your calendars for spring and make sure you floss too, as this gala – aptly called The Floss Ball – will be a unique event celebrating Chinese culture in honour of our first mission to China. CBC meteorologist, Nick Czernekovich, is chairing the event, and is now building an organizing team. If you are interested in getting involved, please call 416.949.5986.

By Simone Lai

Frank Stefan Kwiecien

Celebrating the Life of a Respected HMO Volunteer

The entire HMO family pays tribute to Frank Kwiecien, one of HMO's original members. Frank was an incredible human being who lived life to the fullest and set countless examples of caring for others and service beyond self. Frank passed away peacefully in his sleep on September 12, 2011.

Frank was born and raised in Toronto. He graduated from the University of Toronto in 1980 with a Bachelor of Science degree in pharmacy. From there, Frank embarked on a long and illustrious career in the profession of Canadian pharmacy, becoming Vice President of Pharmacy for Loblaw Companies Limited, as well as serving on the Board of Directors for numerous organizations and charities.

Frank enabled HMO to provide free medical supplies to patients all over the world, and in so doing, brought tremendous comfort to thousands of people.

His greatest joy was spending time at the cottage with his family and dogs. Frank was diagnosed with a brain tumour (glioblastoma) in late 2010 and spent most of 2011 fighting the disease.

He will be dearly missed by all and we express our gratitude for all that Frank did to care and reach out to those in need.

"Paraguay Mission" continued from page 2

set up the clinic, unpacking supplies and packaging medications.

Every day, patients lined up – women and children first, followed by men. Patients sat on lawn chairs that served as dental chairs, and dentists used generators to operate their drills, suction and other equipment. Volunteers worked more than 10 hours a day in service, treating hundreds



of people, then slept on the boat that brought them to the Chamacocos. The team also went to another village, Karcha Balut, which has a population of only 150, mainly children, and continued their blistering pace to Port Esperanza.

Returning Home – Changed

Every volunteer returns home a changed person. They all agree, commenting, "In

the west, we are so far removed from the level of health care needs, poverty, contaminated water, and lack of sanitation in under-developed parts of the world. You can only understand need like this by seeing it yourself. You feel incredibly blessed to live in North America, and to be in a position to help, but it's difficult because you also want to fix it all! We have never seen gratitude like that of the Chamcoco Indians. The experience of caring makes us feel so good, so connected – we can barely find the words to describe it!"

HMO's mission is both to provide care to those who need it but cannot afford it, at the same time as bringing people together in compassionate relationships that change their lives forever. You might just want to embark on an HMO experience of a lifetime and not only change your own life but that of another person!



Giving makes you Smile!

Research shows that giving is one of the surest ways to happiness. Being a part of something bigger than yourself also leads to better health!

Here is my gift!

Name _____

Address _____

_____ City _____

Province _____ Postal code _____

Phone _____

Email _____

My gift of: \$50 \$75 \$100 \$250

Other _____

Credit Card: VISA MasterCard Amex

Number _____

Security code _____ Exp _____

Name on card _____

Please call me to discuss my giving.

Phone _____

Best time to call _____

Thank you!



Interview with a Volunteer



Antonietta Lobalsamo has been a dental assistant and receptionist for Dr. Hangfu for about 25 years. It was through him that she first heard about Health Mission Outreach.

Her work involves sterilizing instruments, setting up equipment, and getting together everything the

dentists need to do their job – a demanding but invaluable process. She works with a few partner dental assistants and together, they are the ‘go-to’ team for the medical professionals involved. Their day starts at 6:30 a.m. They bring a lot of the necessary equipment and spend hours setting it up.

The day is over after preparations for extractions, fillings, cleanings, and whatever else the day might bring. Antonietta and her fellow volunteers head home when everything has been packed up and cleaned. This process can take a minimum of two hours after the temporary clinic has been closed for the day.

It seems like in today’s environment, everyone has a busy lifestyle, so how did Antonietta get started as a volunteer? She thought to herself “One day, I want to do this,” and when Dr. Hangfu presented the opportunity, jumped at the chance to get involved.

Once she started, she was hooked.

Antonietta says, “The experience is great. You get to meet a bunch of different people and it’s a fantastic way of reaching out. Many of us don’t even realize the number of Canadians who can’t afford proper care. The rising costs of routine dental work are too much for many families, and without adequate insurance, these Canadians have nowhere to go.”

For her next trip to a local clinic, Antonietta will be bringing her eldest daughter and her niece, so they can experience how it feels to be a part of something so great. She insists that, although it’s very hard work, it’s extremely rewarding – so much so that she claimed there’s no end in sight for her volunteering. She is going to continue her work and encourages everyone else to do the same.

By Emily Harris, Volunteer HMO Journalist

HMO’s Equipment List

Have you ever wondered about the equipment HMO needs to operate its clinics? Or what equipment will enable HMO to grow and treat more people? We have a list of all of the equipment that we hope to purchase over the next three years. If you are interested, please email us at hangfu@yahoo.ca or call Lun at 416.949.5986. We will be happy to send you the list and provide any details to help you understand the purpose and benefits of the equipment. You or your company or church or organization might even want to raise the funds to buy a piece of equipment! Give us a call, and we’ll be happy to help you make that happen.

Newsletter edited by Simone Lai