

# ACCESS *update*

Fall 2008

## MDS Member Dentist Takes on "Himalayan Task" to Spread Access

When Rebecca L. Paglia, DMD, realized that she wanted to travel the world as well as help those without access to dental care, she turned to a country most people wouldn't necessarily think of: Nepal. Dr. Paglia traveled to the Asian country in April as a volunteer with the Himalayan Dental Relief Project, a program that sponsors trips to Nepal, northern India, Guatemala, and Vietnam to provide free dental care to impoverished children and their families.

Dr. Paglia, a general dentist in Marlborough and member of the Massachusetts Dental Society, was in Nepal for more than two weeks, providing dental care to students and teachers at the Shree Mangal Dvip Boarding School in the nation's capital of Kathmandu. The school is open to students of all ages, many of whom come from isolated Himalayan mountain villages where there are no roads, running water, or schools, let alone medical and dental care. The waiting list for placement at the school can be up to two years long.



Dr. Rebecca Paglia provides treatment to a young boy who is training to be a Buddhist monk.

"It's amazing how great the need is for health and dental services [in Nepal]," says Dr. Paglia. "There is a lot of pollution in Nepal, and infant mortality is high and life expectancy is low."

A classroom at the school was used as the dental clinic, which included three fully functional mobile dental units. Dr. Paglia saw approximately 25 to 30 patients per day, mostly children. Some of



Children at the Shree Mangal Dvip Boarding School in Kathmandu show off their brushing skills as they wait to be treated by volunteers from the Himalayan Dental Relief Project.

the younger boys were training at the school to be Buddhist monks. The team of volunteer dentists and dental hygienists that Dr. Paglia worked with saw nearly 1,000 patients in one week. The children were instructed in dental hygiene education, and all procedures, such as dental cleanings, extractions, and restorative work, were performed at no cost.

The volunteer trip to Nepal was not Dr. Paglia's first; she also traveled to Vietnam in 2006 with the Himalayan Dental Relief Project and says she would definitely volunteer abroad again in the future. She has recommended volunteering abroad to her colleagues in the dental profession.

Dr. Paglia spent eight days volunteering at the clinic and another eight days trekking in the Himalayas. "It's a really great experience. . . I definitely recommend it. It's amazing to help out overseas, and it's a way to see the world," she says.

For more information on the Himalayan Dental Relief Project, visit [www.himalayandental.com](http://www.himalayandental.com).

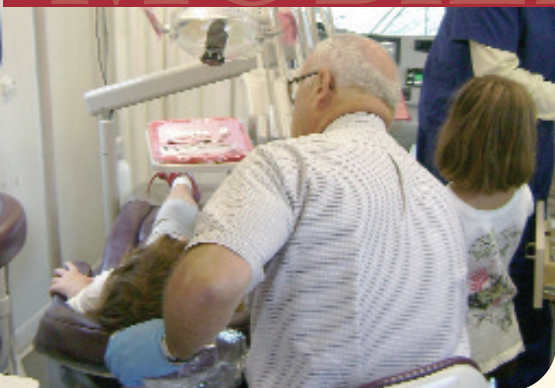
## "Dental Home" Patient Gives Thanks

The Summer 2008 issue of ACCESS UPDATE featured an article about 11-year-old Becky\* from Bellingham. Becky had been treated on the MDS Foundation Mobile Access to Care (MAC) Van in February, where it was discovered that she had more than 10 decayed teeth. One quadrant of decay was addressed on the Van, but she still required additional treatment. So Bellingham general dentist Burton J. Stein, DMD, kindly offered to treat Becky at a reduced cost, providing her with a "dental home." In late June, Dr. Stein received a letter from Becky.

\*The name was changed to protect the patient's privacy.

Dear Dr. Stein,  
Thank you very much for fixing my teeth so when I eat, it doesn't hurt. Another reason I thank you so much is because you made it less money so my teeth are nice and not painful. So again thank you so much!  
Sincerely,  
Becky

# Giving a Little Bit: MAC Van Volunteers Make a Difference



Volunteer Dr. Paul Raymond prepares to treat Michelle, his first patient of the day, while Michelle's younger sister Christy looks on.

**O**n the morning of August 7, 2008, the MDS Foundation Mobile Access to Care (MAC) Van traveled to the YMCA Southcoast in New Bedford to provide free dental care to campers between the ages of 3 and 13. Along with the dozens of other sites the MAC Van visits over the course of a year, this location was selected because it met the requirement of having a high percentage of underserved children in need of oral care.

The MAC Van, which is staffed by both volunteer dentists and occasionally per diem dentists, as well as dental hygienists and dental assistants, has been in service since February 2007. It features two fully functioning dental operatories with all the amenities—including radiograph (X-ray) capabilities, monitors, sterilizing equipment, and tools, equipment, and products—that any dental office stocks. However, even with all this high-tech equipment, the MAC Van would be ineffective in treating the oral health problems plaguing the children of Massachusetts without the assistance and generosity of its volunteers.

But what exactly do volunteers on the MAC Van do? What is required of them? And what is the experience like for them? These are questions we wanted to ask, and so ACCESS UPDATE spent a day on the MAC Van to learn just that—a day that is filled with warmth and camaraderie, along with the more serious matter of helping children who might otherwise go without dental care. (Note that the patients' names have been changed to protect their privacy.)

Michael Henry, MAC Van coordinator and dental assistant, and Roberta (Bert) Gaura, a dental assistant who works on the Van full-time, are onboard for the day. They estimate that 12 to 14 children will be seen today. Patients aren't scheduled with specific time slots because patient needs cannot be anticipated ahead of time. Patients are brought onboard in groups of two or three, and each child's medical history is reviewed prior to treatment. If the Van is scheduled at that location for more than one day and the children need extensive follow-up work, they can come back the next day. Each child is also referred to a "dental home" in the area: a den-

tal office where he or she can receive ongoing treatment. Additionally, each child seen on the Van is sent home with a small toy and a goodie bag, which is filled with toothpaste, a toothbrush, dental floss, and a two-minute timer for learning how long to brush.

A little before 8:30 a.m., dental hygienist Leslie Metro arrives. Leslie, who works at a general practice in North Dartmouth, has not volunteered on the Van before and is scheduled to work a half-day. Bert gives Leslie a tour, shows her where everything is located, and explains how the day will run. "The day flies by on the Van," says Bert.

Shortly after, Paul Raymond, DDS, a general dentist who maintains a private practice in Swansea, arrives. Michael and Bert introduce Dr. Raymond to Leslie, who will be working with him on the Van today. A repeat volunteer on the MAC Van, Dr. Raymond will be volunteering until noon. When asked how many times he has volunteered, he simply smiles and shrugs modestly. "Too many to count," he says. "Volunteering on the Van—it's a true love for me."

At 9:00 a.m., the first group of patients is brought on the MAC Van. Two sisters—8-year-old Michelle and 5-year-old Christy. Dr. Raymond and Leslie will treat Michelle first. Dr. Raymond begins by reviewing Michelle's medical history. As he starts examining her, he discovers that Michelle has a cavity. "Do you ever see an apple with a brown spot?" he asks her. "Well, that is what a cavity on your tooth is like." After thoroughly explaining the treatment process, Dr. Raymond and Leslie begin to fill her cavity and apply dental sealants to her molars to help prevent future "brown spots."

Meanwhile, John Gomes Jr., DMD, arrives for his shift. A first-time volunteer on the MAC Van, he has generously signed up for the full-day shift, which generally runs seven to eight hours. "I was born and raised in New Bedford, and this is where my heart is," says Dr. Gomes. "This is a

great project." Diane Fiano, a dental assistant at Dr. Gomes's practice in Middleborough, accompanies him today; Diane has also never been on the Van. They both look around appreciatively at the Van's two operatories.

Wasting no time getting to work, Dr. Gomes introduces himself to Christy and takes her to the second operatory, where she receives an exam, a cleaning, and one filling. As soon as Michelle and Christy are finished, the next patients climb onboard for treatment: siblings Ricky, age 7, and Anna, age 6. They are joined by their 3-year-old brother Miguel, who will not be treated today. The children's mother, who accompanies them, does not speak English very well, so Michael finds someone from the YMCA who can translate so that the mother can understand the treatment her children receive.

After a complete oral exam, Dr. Gomes determines that Ricky's mouth is healthy and all that is required is the application of dental sealants. Meanwhile, Dr. Raymond examines Anna's teeth and makes a discovery: "She has a really big cavity." This is translated for Anna's mother. "I'm surprised it doesn't hurt her," he says. The extent of decay is severe. Dr. Raymond extracts Anna's decayed baby tooth—it can't be saved.



Three-year-old Miguel bones up on his toothbrushing technique while his siblings receive free dental treatment on the MAC Van in New Bedford.

## The Basics for MAC Van Volunteers

- Volunteers can work a half-day (3.5 hours) or a full-day shift (up to 7 or 8 hours, depending on patient load).
- The MAC Van generally operates from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., but that time will vary depending on the needs of the location. Some weekend volunteer opportunities may be available throughout the year.
- Volunteers should come dressed in scrubs and ready to go.
- Volunteers do not need to bring anything with them. All of the tools and equipment they need are onboard.
- Volunteers review each child's medical history prior to treatment.
- Volunteers chart the procedures for each patient after treatment.
- MAC Van staff send a follow-up letter home to each patient so the parent/guardian is aware of the procedures that were performed.
- MAC Van staff and/or the volunteers refer each child to a "dental home" in his or her community to receive ongoing care.

Two brothers step up into the Van. The youngest, 5-year-old Sam, cries as he sits on his mother's lap in the chair. Dr. Raymond patiently shows Sam the instruments he will be using and tries to comfort the boy, but Sam's fear increases and he struggles to get out of the chair. After a short time calming down in the waiting area, Sam finally opens his mouth, and Dr. Raymond and Leslie see the source of the child's anxiety: Sam has four stainless steel crowns on his baby teeth. It is learned that these crowns were placed on Sam's teeth in Puerto Rico when he was younger, most likely without the use of Novocain. Given this previous and most likely very painful experience, Sam is fearful that the same procedure will be done today, so he won't let anyone touch his mouth. Taking the child's extreme anxiety into account, Dr. Raymond determines that Sam won't be treated today. However, like every child seen on the Van, Sam will go home with a goodie bag filled with oral care products and a toy. "Our goal is for the kids to have a positive dental experience," notes Michael. Hopefully now, the next time Sam sits in the dental chair, he will be less fearful and more accepting of treatment.

After Dr. Gomes finishes treating Sam's older brother, Nicholas, he makes a note of the materials available on the MAC Van. "I brought some Ketac [a filling material] with me, but I open a drawer, and sure enough . . . it's there. Everything is here. It's incredible."

At 12:15 p.m., with their shift ending, Dr. Raymond and Leslie depart for the day, commenting that they both would volunteer again. Dr. Gomes and Diane soon take a break for a quick lunch. (Full-day shift volunteers have the option to break for lunch.) Meanwhile, David Steinhof, DMD, arrives for his shift. Dr. Steinhof lives and works in Fall River, and he is a repeat volunteer. Dr. Steinhof is familiar with the Van, so he quickly settles in with Jeannine Carreiro, who will assist him. Jeannine is a dental assistant and instructor in dental assisting at Diman Regional Vocational Technical High School in Fall River.

Dr. Steinhof examines his first patient of the day, 7-year-old Oscar, who has three cavities. When asked if he has everything he needs to provide treatment for Oscar, Dr. Steinhof nods.



Dr. John Gomes Jr., right, and dental assistant Diane Fiano are all smiles as they finish treating a young patient on the MAC Van.



Dr. David Steinhof, right, and dental assistant Jeannine Carreiro provide treatment for several cavities on 7-year-old Oscar.

"They've got everything on this 'bus'!" After Oscar's cavities are filled and his treatment is complete, Dr. Steinhof sits with the boy for a few minutes to make sure he is feeling okay.

By 2:30 p.m., the day begins to wind down. Drs. Gomes and Steinhof finish up with their last patients while Jeannine, Diane, Michael, and Bert begin to clean up, log patient data, and sterilize the equipment used that day so the Van will be ready to go the next morning.

When asked if he would return to volunteer again, Dr. Gomes smiles as he replies, "Of course!" Jeannine and Diane say that they, too, would come back to help out.

In all, 16 children were treated this day on the MAC Van, a higher number than had been anticipated. More than \$4,500 in free treatments and procedures was provided, including 20 sealants, 12 X-rays, and 11 restorations. In addition, the volunteers donated \$4,470 worth of free treatment time on the Van. With the generous gifts of their time, knowledge, and kindness, the volunteers were able to give these 16 children the much-needed oral care that they may well have gone without.

For more information on the MAC Van, visit [www.mdsfoundation.org/macvan](http://www.mdsfoundation.org/macvan).

## How to Volunteer

If you are a dentist, dental hygienist, or dental assistant and you would like to volunteer to make a difference in the lives of children in your community, please contact Amy Richmond, MAC Van volunteer coordinator, by phone at (800) 342-8747, ext. 257, or email [arichmond@massdental.org](mailto:arichmond@massdental.org). You can volunteer when the MAC Van comes to your district or volunteer at another district if the time is more convenient for you. The important thing is that you climb onboard, join more than 180 of your colleagues who have already volunteered, and make a difference in a child's life—which might just make a difference in yours along the way.

## Obtaining Parental Consent: A Barrier to Access

The Mobile Access to Care (MAC) Van has treated more than 2,500 children since the program's inception in February 2007, resulting in \$550,000 worth of free care. The success in treating these underserved children is highly attributed to the continued support and dedication of our volunteer dentists, dental hygienists, and dental assistants. However, while the number of children treated is impressive, the statistics do not reveal how many children are still left without dental care.

There are many underserved children at any given service location who do not come onboard to receive care. In some cases, children with obvious or extreme need are not treated. The question remains—why?

The reason many children go without treatment is the simple fact that their parents or guardians have not signed the required consent form. The consent form authorizes the MAC Van team to provide treatment while the child is on the Van, and without a signed form, the child cannot be treated. Unfortunately, a lack of returned consent forms can result in Van service date scheduling modifications, and in some cases, canceling a planned visit altogether. The consent form challenge is not unique to our program, and it plays a contributing role in the access-to-care problem plaguing Massachusetts.

The MAC Van team is working on developing processes to increase consent form response so that additional underserved children can receive the necessary services. We will be implementing "best practice" guidelines for future sites to help produce enhanced return rates. We realize that what works for some organizations may not work for all, so we will be developing multiple strategies to address the issue and to ensure that volunteer time is maximized.

"We are hoping to break the consent form barrier and get the children of Massachusetts the treatment they need, even if it is one child at a time," says Ellen Factor, MAC Van program manager.

There are many underserved children throughout our state who are in need of our services. We thank you for your continued support and patience, and we look forward to seeing you on the Van in the future. If you have any suggestions or would like to volunteer on the MAC Van, please contact Ellen Factor at (800) 342-8747, ext. 228, or email her at [efactor@massdental.org](mailto:efactor@massdental.org).



## Spotlight on Volunteers

*The following MDS member dentists and staff generously donated their services and time to help make a difference in children's lives on the MAC Van during July, August, and September 2008.*

### Dentists

Dr. Mario Aboujaoude	Dr. David Katz
Dr. David Ahearn	Dr. Robert Leland
Dr. Michael Boschetti	Dr. Donald Lemay
Dr. Anthony Cardone	Dr. Richard LoGuercio
Dr. Barry Cohen	Dr. Raymond Martin
Dr. Carolyn Coppe	Dr. John Murphy
Dr. David Cormier	Dr. Sumbul Naqvi
Dr. Betsy Disharoon	Dr. George Orfaly
Dr. Eli Factor	Dr. Christopher Page
Dr. Hilary Fritsch	Dr. Paul Raymond
Dr. Milton Glicksman	Dr. Franklin Roth
Dr. John Gomes Jr.	Dr. Shradha Sharma
Dr. John Herzog	Dr. Vandana Soni
Dr. David Jacobs	Dr. David Steinhof
Dr. Howard Jacobs	Dr. Rafael Villacorta

### Dental Hygienists

Linda Barkas	Holly Petruzzo
Roberta Cullen	Elaine Trottier
Jackie Forman	Patricia Wosny
Leslie Metro	

### Dental Assistants

Debora Blais	Jessica Padilla
Rosa Cabral	Cari-lyn Panacy
Jeannine Carreiro	Diane Popp
Jennifer Chorlian	Mirela Pronjari
Deborah Clement	Mary Rizzotto
Diane Fiano	Pam Schneider
Dottie Kelleher	Lisa Sorrentino
Telio Leal	Deb Strazzere
Diane McKenzie	Maria Torres
Elizabeth Mead	Janice Williams
Roberta Morris	

### Faculty Dentist/Supervisor

Dr. Peggy Timothe

### Dental Students

Amanda Cheng	Rebecca Kibler
Michelle Chung	Ryan McComb
Anne Fabricius	Stephanie Rashewsky
Jackie Hom	Courtney Ray
Emily Hwang	Nachum Samet
Dyani Jones	Natacha Touchette

When the Special Olympics came to Harvard Stadium the weekend of June 14, 2008, the athletes participated in swimming, gymnastics, tennis, sailing, and numerous other summer sporting events. But in addition to the recognition and respect the athletes received for competing, they also received one more perk—free dental screenings from dental student volunteers in conjunction with the Special Olympics Special Smiles® program.

Special Smiles aims to expose individuals with disabilities to dental care as a positive experience, as well as to introduce good oral health habits. Eunice Kennedy Shriver and Steven P. Perlman, DDS, Boston University Goldman School of Dental Medicine (BUGSDM) alumnus and a pediatric dentist in Lynn, founded Special Smiles in 1993 as part of the Healthy Athletes® program, which offers a variety of health-related clinics for athletes participating in Special Olympic games. Special Smiles does not only serve U.S. athletes; the clinics now exist at more than 90 Special Olympics programs worldwide.

The Special Smiles tent at Harvard Stadium offered free dental screenings to approximately 300 athletes. Each screening included a dental evaluation for any urgent issues; oral health education; a goodie bag filled with a toothbrush, floss, and toothpaste; and free mouthguard fabrication for most athletes participating in contact or high-impact sports. More than 120 volunteers were organized to participate, approximately three-quarters of whom are current BUGSDM dental students. The remaining volunteers came from the Harvard School of Dental Medicine, the Tufts University School of Dental Medicine, and dental hygiene schools across the state. Five licensed volunteer dentists were also present to oversee the dental evaluations.

"Treating patients with special needs has always been very important to me," says fourth-year BUGSDM dental student Kerry Anzenberger, who acted as a dental screener for the athletes.



Volunteer Julianne Doyle, who will graduate with a DMD in 2010 from BUGSDM, smiles with an athlete at the Special Smiles tent at Harvard Stadium.

"It is fun to talk with the athletes about their events—they are so proud of themselves and happy to be there, and their happiness is contagious."

Paul S. Farsai, DMD, an associate professor of general dentistry at BUGSDM, helped coordinate the volunteers. "One of the things we have done in the past few years has been to make this an American Student Dental Association event as well, so the ASDA reps from the schools can help out with volunteerism in order to get more exposure to individuals with physical and intellectual disabilities," he says.

The data collected from the athlete screenings is entered into a national database, which helps to identify dental needs for those with disabilities in the United States and worldwide. The data is also used to encourage additional special needs dental education among dental schools.

"It is really an impressive event to be a part of, and it has just an all-around feel-good atmosphere," adds Anzenberger.

For more information on the Special Olympics and Special Smiles, please visit their Web site at [www.specialolympics.org](http://www.specialolympics.org).

## Massachusetts Dental Society

Two Willow Street, Suite 200, Southborough, MA 01745-1027  
(508) 480-9797 • (800) 342-8747 • Fax (508) 480-0002

[www.massdental.org](http://www.massdental.org)

Address service requested

PRSR STD  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
WORCESTER MA  
PERMIT NO. 2