

Ladakh Dental Mission

UWCSEA has been supporting Lamdon School for over 15 years as one of the Global Concerns projects.

In June 2008 UWC staff and students visited Lamdon School and, together with other international schools, introduced an oral hygiene programme.



We delivered thousands of toothbrushes and toothpaste to the school and after receiving training from the Singapore Dental Association taught students at the school how to clean their teeth. This year a team of 15 dentists from Singapore Dental Association visited at the same time as our grade 9 trip and managed to treat 800 of the 1100 students at Lamdon school. Dr Myra Elliott and her team run regular overseas dental and medical missions. Being introduced to Dr. Elliott was certainly a case of meeting the right person at the right time.

Dr. Elliott's team transformed the school hall into a temporary clinic carrying out scaling, fillings, extractions and even root canals with the help of a portable x-ray camera.



Despite the altitude they worked for six days with enthusiasm, humour and professionalism taking time to explain procedures to UWC and Lamdon students so that they were able to help. Our students transported around 300kg of supplies for the dental team and some of them spent two days assisting the dentists by helping with record keeping, sterilization and assisting during treatment.



The dental initiative was introduced to us by Bill Kite who has been a key coordinator in our efforts to assist Lamdon School over the years. Decay and toothache are widespread amongst students at the school and Bill is eager to get to the root of the problem. Last year's dental hygiene programme together with a ban on sweet tea at the school have gone some way to arresting the decay. Our long term aim is to train a former Lamdon student as a dentist and build a clinic at the school to serve the students and the local community. Much of the necessary hardware is now in place with a mobile dental unit that was purchased at the Singapore Dental Exhibition in March 2008 year.

The school nurse, Yanchen, has been receiving training from Dr. Jason Doten and is able to perform scaling and extractions. This vital work should help maintain teeth until the next visiting dentists arrive. Dr. Nathan from Nanyang Polytechnic visited with the Singapore team and helped to identify a suitable candidate for application to Nanyang's three year Dental Therapist Course. If this application is successful UWC plans to provide a 3 year scholarship for the chosen candidate to start at Nanyang in March 2009.



Dr. Elliott and her team were a wonderful example to our students, using their own holidays and funding their own airfares in order to help others. We should also be pleased that one member of the team, Charles Tan, is a graduate of UWCSEA.



There has already been talk of a dental and medical team visiting Ladakh next year. We hope this will coincide with next year's Ladakh expedition and our students will once again be able to get involved.