

mission partners

Husband and wife team travels to Cambodia for dental clinics

WRITTEN BY MARY VALLO



TEAM EFFORT Happy smiles greet husband-and-wife dental team Dr. Jaimie Diamont-Golub and Dr. Jon Golub on their mission to Cambodia. The family, including three young adult sons, plans another mission this summer.

Doctors Jaimie Diamont-Golub and Jon Golub are a team. First, they're married. Second, they both specialize in dental needs: Jaimie is a pediatric dentist, and Dr. Jon is an orthodontist, with practices in Westwood and Fort Lee. Finally, they both participate in dental missions to disadvantaged nations. They traveled together to Cambodia earlier this year under the auspices of KIDS

International Dental Services, a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing dental care to children in developing countries.

"The children we see on these trips have no access to dental care, and their dental problems range from moderate to severe," Jaimie says. "Not only are we able to make a difference in their lives by taking care of their immediate dental needs, but we also put in place a program where their caregivers (in Cambodia, this was an orphanage) will provide preventative treatment."

The team of dentists, including six other dentists from the United States, and support staff treated patients in both the capital city of Phnom Penh and in the countryside.

"Any movement toward modern medicine that Cambodia had experienced in the 20th century was reversed by the Khmer Rouge rule and civil unrest that followed," Jon says. "In the countryside, virtually every patient we saw had never been to a dentist."

Worse still, the doctors explain, was learning of the hardships beyond dental care that children in Cambodia face.

"Due to extreme poverty," Jaimie says, "some parents refuse to educate their children and rather send them out to scavenge the dumps for recyclables that can be sold. We met children in the orphanages who had been abandoned and heard stories about others who had been sold into slavery."

Fortunately, the orphanages are able to provide housing, food and education. KIDS International has been serving dental needs for the past eight years.

Jaimie is a veteran of these missions, having traveled to Jamaica several times and Guatemala as well. This was Jon's second dental mission. But not his last.

"We have committed to returning to Guatemala (with our three young adult sons) this summer," he says. And they plan to visit Jamaica again in January of next year. ❖

Reaching out

Medical and dental care isn't affordable to the average person in Cambodia, nor is quality care available in outlying areas, the doctors say. The orphanages in Phnom Penh depend on monetary donations and donated services, such as the dental mission, to provide care to the children. For information on how you can help, visit kidservices.org