

2016 COMUNIDENT DENTAL CLINIC ANNUAL REPORT

I am so blessed to share a little history and our journey! – **Rebekah Jones, DDS**



OUR HISTORY

The idea and dream of Comunident Dental Clinic started many years ago. I (Rebekah Jones) was 9 years old when I met Dr. Miguel Lopez, a missionary dentist in Colombia. He came to teach the indigenous public health workers about dental care, from cleanings to extractions. This was in 1998 and I was homeschooling at the time. I tagged along to attend the course and I took everything very seriously. After that the little seed to become a dentist was sown and in 2007 I started studying at the university in San Jose to pursue the dream. It took me 8 years to finish and during this time I saw God provide for my daily living expenses and also for all my materials and equipment. Many times my classmates would have everything bought at the beginning of the course, and God would provide for me the day before I needed these things. So, from the beginning my dream was to come back to my hometown, Grano de Oro, in the mountains of the Chirripó Territory where my indigenous friends lived.

OUR JOURNEY

Many people, and even professors, would laugh or try to discourage this idea, telling me it wasn't possible to live off of and run a full-time, non-profit clinic. But a few others believed in this dream and encouraged me, and even today have been a blessing. The Lord also provided my wonderful husband Joel, who highly dislikes gross mouths but was a perfect partner to help make my dream a reality and continues to keep things functioning.

In February 2015 I graduated, feeling happy to be debt free and moving to Grano de Oro to see what would happen next. Many of my classmates were excited to share the news of a job they already had. They would ask me, "What are you going to do Rebekah?" I always answered, "I will work among the Cabécars in the mountains." They thought I was kind of weird for turning down several good job opportunities to pursue this dream. Many times I was scared or discouraged, especially when I considered the costs related to a dental clinic.



REMODELING

Joel and I had been praying a lot for this project and slowly but surely the Lord kept opening up doors. During February 2015 we rented an older wooden house and started remodeling it. Month by month we worked and Joel taught me a lot about carpentry and I helped in any way I could. Then in December our son Benaiah was born.



PORTABLE CLINIC

At the same time we were working on the permanent clinic, we dreamed of having a fully portable clinic to go into the mountains and provide treatment in the reservation. We knew this was pretty ambitious, so we just took it one step at a time. Then a group from Switzerland gave a large donation for the portable clinic equipment. A dentist from the USA helped us purchase everything and delivered it to Costa Rica. We were also able to buy a portable X-Ray machine, an intraoral camera, and a digital X-Ray sensor. This was all so amazing!

COMUNIDENT DENTAL CLINIC OPENS

By January 2016 we had been very blessed, but were still lacking many things. At this time an anonymous donation came in that covered the purchasing of all the equipment, materials and instruments for the permanent ComuniDent Dental Clinic. I couldn't believe it! I was overwhelmed at this time because of all the responsibility and decision making during this process. I called on many of those experienced people who had encouraged me in the past and asked for their advice. We finished remodeling, installed the equipment, and had the dental clinic inspection in March 2016. God is so good! Here we were one year later, ready to start. The clinic opened and I began to treat patients in the middle of March 2016. I have learned so much since then and will continue to do so for many more years. The Lord has provided special dentists here in Costa Rica, the United States, and Switzerland to provide support when I feel alone or have questions.



PURPOSE

For us this isn't just a clinic. We pray it's a place of refuge, of encouragement, and a place where patients and family members feel the love of Jesus. It is the reason we use quality materials, and provide special, loving care for those we treat. Here we can pray and share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with others, meet new people, and build long lasting relationships.

FEES

We have patients pay a small fee to give them a sense of dignity and responsibility to take care of what we have done. For indigenous families we charge \$2 for children under 12 years old, no matter how many procedures we do, and \$4 to anyone over 12 years of age. The local non-indigenous pay a little more and this helps generate income to cover some costs. In the reservation, patients can give chickens, eggs or other produce from their farms as payment.





STATISTICS

During the first year we registered 730 patients in our digital filing records. Of this group 55% of them are women, 38% are under 12 years old, and 66% have come to get treatment 2 to 5 times. This last number is significant because we want to change the mentality of just seeking treatment when in pain.

In January 2017 we began keeping track of the number of patients treated daily and the types of procedures done. During the first 4 months we treated 269 patients and did 659 procedures. These included cleanings, sealants, extractions, fillings, surgeries, and dentures.



PREVENTATIVE DENTAL HEALTH

In addition to taking the mobile clinic into the reservation to give dental treatments, we also did two preventative dental health trips. During these week-long trips we visited communities, homes, and families to distribute toothbrushes and teach people how to take care of their teeth.

YOUR SUPPORT

Many of you have been part of all that happened this first year. You have given time, knowledge, money and love. We have had volunteers help us out in the mountains taking care of Benaiah so I can work. A dental assistant from Switzerland came to train the Cabécar women who assist me in the clinic. Also during our first year Hospital Clinica Biblica, a private hospital in San Jose, Costa Rica donated materials (gloves, masks, etc.) every month. Others have donated toothbrushes and toothpaste which are essential for preventative dental care.

Thank you all for your interest and care for what we do. For financially supporting the clinic and us financially so we can keep working. We are so blessed to have you all with us!