

# Medical Mission to provide services to orphans and vulnerable children.

See; [www.gothic63.com](http://www.gothic63.com)

September, 2008, after months of planning and grant applications to the Rotary Foundation, a team of 73 Rotarians and non-Rotarians from 10 countries set off for **Nairobi, Kenya**, led by Sally Platt, RN, <http://sallyskenyablog.blogspot.com> and Connie Sparks, District Governor Elect 7390.

**“I have never been blessed by God, Allah and told I am a miracle worker so many times before. Our whole team have received so many thankous and good wishes for our life, it should last us all for many lifetimes to come.”**



**Charmaine White** joined the international team which included health care professionals and non-medical volunteers from Australia, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, India, Japan, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, United Kingdom and the United States. They include physicians, dentists, dental assistants, paramedics, registered nurses, optometrists and opticians. About two thirds of the volunteers are members of Rotary clubs.

The medical mission focused on the health needs of children living in the Nairobi slums of Mukuru, Mathare and Korogocho, where the poverty rate is high and access to preventive health care extremely limited.

Charmaine reported; “My Kenyan adventure was a leap of faith that Rotary would look out for me. **It was for me to take the risk and go half way around the world on my own, to a place, Africa that I had never been and meet people that I had never met.**”



Mukuru is a slum neighbourhood of Nairobi. It houses, in shanties, over 500,000 people. Our site was a school and we had a medical, optical and dental team and a busy pharmacy. In ten days we saw about 6,000 and some lives were saved. The people were so patient they just lined up and waited all day literally in the heat.

We worked on tables and the age of my undernourished patients ranged from three months, a first time mum concerned about a lump in her babies mouth to a 20 year old mum who had three children and a very infected molar that I extracted.

I extracting over 100 teeth not counting mouldy root fragments.

I was lucky enough to work with a Canadian dentist Wayne who was also doing his first volunteering stint and Japanese dentist Koji 73 years old and doing his tenth mission.



**My saddest patients were the orphans who some did not even know their names so the registration volunteers gave them names and then explained in Swahili what they meant like “beautiful” and “gift” “strong” “brave” and “smiley”.**

We had outstanding young locals who volunteered their time and translated for us, without them we would have not been as effective or efficient, they were a vital necessity.

During our time there were several mercy dashes to hospitals for cases like diabetic twin babies and dehydrated babies and several third degree burns, some TB ulcers and lots of ringworm, umbilical hernias and weird hardly ever seen infections that is not mentioning all the families that were referred to VCT (the HIV /Aids volunteer counselling and testing facility). HIV testing is voluntary so this is a big issue getting people to get tested as usually it is the women’s world that falls apart as the husband leaves and finds another wife.

**We talk about orphans but I heard of one group of children who were fending for themselves, 12 year old boy with 10 year old sister and 4 year old sister. He works to support his sisters and 10 year old goes to school when she can and the 4 year old stays around the shack until sister gets home.**

To my understanding of Mukuru that is a very dangerous situation for them to be in but they have each other so are not classed as orphans. No doubt lots of children are in a similar situation, at risk, and literally surviving as best they can on a day to day basis.

Yes what we all did was a drop in the ocean but we went with open hearts and skills and did what we could. The majority of the children were so brave and so good especially as they had no idea what to expect and most that I saw needed extractions on their first visit to see a white person. One poor child was so scared that he could not even let me put a mouth mirror in his mouth, but he was one of a few.

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