

President, Dr. Karen Walters shares this story about the latest mission trip to Jerusalem



Each day as dentists we give our best to our patients. We strive to restore their smiles, relieve their pain or reassure them that everything is fine. Many of us also give a day or more of our time volunteering to provide free dental care to the underserved not only locally but throughout the world. Our giving nature leads me to believe that most dentists live by a quote of William Penn's: ***"Any good therefore that I can do or any kindness or abilities that I can show to any fellow creature, let me do it now."***

Finally, after two years of dealing with Covid restrictions I was able to get back to one of the things I enjoy most about dentistry and that is volunteering. I recently spent two weeks at the Dental Volunteers for **Israel Clinic in Jerusalem**, Israel. This non-profit clinic was established in 1980 by holocaust survivor Trudi Birger. It is the only dental clinic that provides completely free dental care to patients between the ages of 4 – 26. DVI's patients include not only children of the poor families from every sector of Israeli society,

but many youth-at risk and new immigrants including the recent influx of Ukrainian refugees. The patients are referred to the clinic from over 30 community organizations and non-profits in addition to local Welfare Services regardless of religion, race or ethnic origin. In an average year the clinic treats close to 3,000 patients.

The dental care is provided by international dentists who come at their own expense to work for one to three weeks, pedodontics residents from Hadassa School of Dental Medicine and local dentists.

A few years ago, I met a young Arab dentist who was also volunteering in the clinic. I found out that he originally came to the clinic as a 7-year-old child in severe dental pain. He never dreamed he would receive such kindness and compassion by the volunteer dentists of DVI. The care that he and his 12 siblings were provided lead him to want to become a dentist one day and give back to his community and provide the same care he was given by the volunteers at DVI.

Not only are we as volunteer dentists able to relieve someone's pain and give them their smile back, we can inspire them to reach greater heights than they may have ever dreamed of such as becoming a part of the great profession of dentistry.

I have volunteered in this clinic since 2003 and each time I return home knowing that I have helped someone in need and look

forward to going back. It is hard to describe the feeling I get from volunteering but I'll try. You have heard of soul food.....right? Well, volunteering is a different kind of soul food. It is the kind of food that nourishes and fills not only your soul but your heart. It just makes you feel good.

Dr. Karen Walters



Dr. Walters with Elchanan Almanek and Michal



Dr. Petel, Clinic Director, examining Feige



Dr. Walters with Michal



Dr. Walters with Abdallah Abu Kalif