

Mercy Mission 2008



Coauthors: Lilley Gharavi, Jenna Lau, Thien-Kim (Tiki) Le, Diana Lin, Alan Wong, and Dr. Sussi Yamaguchi

Introduction by Diana Lin

Proving to be a great success this year was the UCSD Pre-Dental Society's third year of involvement with the Navy's Pacific Partnership humanitarian mission. A total of 67 people, including 37 of our own UCSD Pre-Dental members, were sent through our organization as volunteers. They were able to experience Navy dentistry and field dentistry first hand. Volunteers paid their own way to meet the ship and participated anywhere from three weeks to three months on the mission.

The UCSD Pre-Dental Society was the

largest non-governmental organization on the USNS Mercy, and was comprised of pre-medical, pre-pharmacy, and dental students as well as dentists and medical doctors. Each volunteer served as an ambassador of good will to the underprivileged of Southeast Asia and became integral parts of the dental, medical, or pharmacy teams. Please read on as some of the students and Dr. Sussi Yamaguchi share their experiences from each country that the USNS Mercy visited in Southeast Asia.

Continued on page 7

Congressman Bob Filner & Congresswoman Susan Davis

Congressman Bob Filner

By Ryan Takeda

On June 2nd, 2008 UCSD Pre-dental students met Congressman Bob Filner who entertained students with descriptions of his personal experiences leading to his political involvement and discussed issues important to him. "Congressman Filner's story about his arrest during the civil rights movement as a 'Freedom Rider' and his mug shot makes his political experience unique," commented one student, Jenna Lau.

Education, the importance of access to medical care, and special attention to



Congressman Bob Filner's mug shot during the civil rights movement.

Continued on page 4

Director's Corner

Greetings from Dr. Silverstein

It is amazing how much has happened since our last edition of the Pre-Dental Digest. Our group was visited by Congresswoman Susan Davis, Congressman Bob Filner and many other national and international leaders of the medical and dental professions.



We have continued doing good things throughout our community and the world. For instance, we placed 67 civilians on the USNS Mercy Hospital Ship in the summer of 2008 including pre-dental, pre-medical, pre-pharmacy, dental, medical and pharmacy students along with professionals in these fields. We were so successful in this mission that I was asked to participate in the Continuing Promise Humanitarian Mission 2009 involving the USNS Comfort which will travel throughout the Caribbean and Central and South America. The USNS Comfort is the sister ship of the USNS Mercy and is stationed on the east coast. Approximately 120 civilians will be placed on this mission through our organization.

While I was at a conference in Washington, D.C., I saw Admiral Roughead, the head of the Navy who developed its new maritime strategy. He and many leaders of the Navy praised the wonderful work our organization and students have done on these joint humanitarian missions. Our work has opened the door for more civilian organizations to participate with the Navy and proved that civilians and students can be valuable assets for these missions.

Continued on page 2

ADA San Antonio - To the Riverwalk!

By Sung Ahn

The UCSD PDS went on its yearly trip to the American Dental Association (ADA)'s 149th meeting held in San Antonio, Texas from October 16-19. The ADA generously waived the registration fee allowing 40 PDS students to attend. A third of these students were first time attendees.

The PDS was active throughout the convention, soliciting donations for the Free Clinic Project, attending seminars held on various dental topics, and visiting various dental school receptions. "It was a great opportunity to really get an idea of what the dental field entails," pre-dental graduate student Joseph Lai said.

A major highlight included listening to and meeting keynote speakers:

Tom Brokaw, the longtime former news anchor for NBC Nightly News analyzed the political and financial state of the nation, urging the presidential candidates to speak with "more candor about where they think we're going and how we're going to get there," and expressed optimism that the US would recover from its current situation. He said, "We are entering, I hope, a new phase of American life in which we get back to fundamental values like common sense and thrift."

Bob Woodruff, an ABC News television journalist was the first American news anchor to be wounded in an Iraq war zone in January 2006 and now suffers from traumatic brain injury. Bob Woodruff and his wife Lee described the severity of his injuries and extensive rehabilitation process, which included over 15 operations and numerous dental surgeries.

The pre-dental students had the opportunity to meet, take pictures, and shake hands with each speaker. "Hearing the speakers was very inspirational and being able to shake their hands was a privilege" PDS Student Co-Director Diana Lin said.

During their free time, the pre-dental students enjoyed the sights and sounds of the downtown Riverwalk, with its festive lights and colorful paddleboats surging through the glistening water at night. A few of the students learned about "Remembering the Alamo" during a visit to the historic fort where Davy Crockett and Sam Bowie made their last stands.



Tom Brokaw with Dr. Irvin Silverstein and students of the UCSD Pre-Dental Society.



Bob and Lee Woodruff with Dr. Irvin Silverstein and students of the UCSD Pre-Dental Society.

Director's Corner

Continued from page 1

I was privileged to attend the planning conferences for the USNS

Continuing Promise Humanitarian Missions. People do not realize that it takes over a year to plan a humanitarian mission. It involves host nations requesting our help, embassies coordinating with host nation governments and civilians on shore, and then the Navy coordinating personnel, supplies, and civilians in order for a 4-5 month deployment to take place. At these meetings, I was able to improve and expand the scope of dentistry and civilian participation in these Navy missions. We can look forward to more Navy Humanitarian missions to promote peace and good will throughout the world.

In San Diego, we continue to achieve our most important goal; the treatment and care of people without access to care. We completed over 2 million dollars of free dental treatment for the underserved within the last four years. We also provided an opportunity for students to get hands on experience in the dental profession and for dentists to help with access to care issues. We have approximately 250 members who got into dental school since I came on board and, as of April 8th, I know of at least 28 students who were accepted to dental school this year. Many would not have considered dentistry as a profession. Nationally and locally, we won multiple awards again, but my satisfaction is that we continue changing patients', students' and volunteers' lives for the better. I look forward to our continuing success in helping people in need and influencing others of the need to help the less fortunate.

Irvin B. Silverstein, D.D.S., M.S.Ed.

Director/Advisor

dsilverstein22@cox.net

Thousand Smiles - Giving Back

By Joseph Lai



Left to Right, Top to Bottom: Charles Tai, John Chan, Sung Ahn, Andrei Meniaienko, Joseph Lai, and other volunteers

On August 1, 2008, six students from the UCSD Pre-Dental Society traveled to Ensenada, Mexico, where they assisted and observed various dental procedures provided by volunteer doctors with the Thousand Smiles Foundation.

Arriving early Friday morning, all of the volunteers quickly went straight to work, whether it was translating, assisting with logistical operations, teaching about oral health, or dental assisting. In addition to the medical staff, there was a variety of dental specialists present including general dentists, orthodontists, and oral surgeons.

Most of the patients at the clinic had severe dental problems or severe malocclusion, frequently the result of cleft lip and palette. Not only did we have the opportunity to see some very unique cases, but we also had the opportunity to travel to the nearby hospital and enter the operating rooms to see patients with cleft lip and palette being repaired.

The entire trip gave all of us a glimpse of the roles of each type of dental specialist and instilled in us a sense of what it is to really provide to those who are in desperate need. Despite the language barrier, the dedication displayed by all of the volunteers was incredible. In the end, we met a lot of new people, came away with many new experiences, and ultimately left with a greater urgency and desire to give back to those who are in need.

Dental School - My First Semester

By Maryam Meschi

My name is Maryam Meschi and I am a first year dental student at the Arizona School of Dentistry and Oral Health (ASDOH). The first day of school started with our white coat ceremony on July 21, 2008, where we took an oath as dental students to be honest and responsible dental professionals.

Our class consists of 68 students from all over the United States. During this past semester we took a number of basic science classes and familiarized ourselves with our work stations and instruments at our simulation clinic.

Dental school can be hard and stressful at times but being able to work together as a class has really helped everyone through difficult times. Being a past member of the Pre-Dental Society and Student Run Free Dental Project has helped me a lot in dental school because I can apply my experiences to what we are learning in school.

I have been able to get involved with different clubs offered at our school such as the dental ambassador program, the pediatric study club, and the dental fraternity, Delta Sigma Delta. So far it has been a wonderful experience and I cannot wait to continue my education at ASDOH.

Before I know it, I will be at the end of this wonderful journey to become a dental professional. ASDOH is a wonderful institution that focuses on making us highly skilled clinicians and health leaders within our community. It was always my top choice for dental school and I am so thankful that I was able to get accepted there.



Future Sealant and Varnish Clinic

By Mykel Anderson

Mahatma Gandhi once said, "Be the change you want to see in the world." The UCSD Pre-Dental Society and Student-Run Free Dental Clinics has dedicated itself to being the change they want to see in the world. Innovative in addressing the access to healthcare for the San Diego community, the UCSD PDS is world renowned for being the only undergraduate organization to establish and operate three-free clinics for the homeless and economically challenged. Compassionate and unconstrained, the undergraduates from the UCSD PDS have also extended their care and services to Mexico, and to the various countries in the Southern Pacific on humanitarian missions with the US Navy such as the Philippines, Timor Leste, Papua New Guinea, Micronesia, and Guam.

The undergraduates of the UCSD PDS value the necessity and significance of providing preventive healthcare measures also.

To put this belief into action, the UCSD PDS hopes to pilot a Sealant and Varnish Clinic in spring 2009 and provide preventive treatment for approximately 200 children in San Diego. The only restraint to this ambition is our limited resources. If you would like to make a private donation as a sponsor for our cause, please send your contributions to:

UCSD Foundation

Student-Run Free Dental Clinic Project

9500 Gilman Dr.

La Jolla, CA 92093-0696

Disposable patient mirrors, varnish materials, and sealant materials would be much appreciated. Together may we stride toward a world at which comprehensive healthcare is not only a privilege, but a right.

4th Year Dental Student Externship at UCSD Free Dental Clinics

By Charmaine Ng



Charmaine Ng is a fourth year dental student at ASDOH, graduating in June. She hopes to work at a community health center when she graduates, continuing to provide care for the underserved. In this picture she is working at Baker clinic.

I have been incredibly fortunate to have had the opportunity to set up a clinical externship at the UCSD Student-Run Free Dental Clinics. Having been a former active member and clinic manager of the UCSD PDS and FDC for three years in undergrad, it was a wonderful experience to go back and be a part of the program again— this time as an Arizona School of Dentistry & Oral Health (ASDOH) fourth year dental student.

During my clinical rotation at UCSD in May 2008, I was able to practice dentistry at all three clinical sites under the mentorship of Dr. Sussi Yamaguchi. With her guidance, I was able to expand my skills as a student dentist. I worked with the pre-dental students, explaining dental procedures, materials, and my personal experiences at dental school. It is very rewarding to be able to mentor these students, having once been in the same position myself. In addition, I was able to give back to the community by providing free dental care.

Dr. Irvin Silverstein provided me with the opportunity to observe and shadow many general dentists and specialists in the San Diego area during the day. I also attended the Thursday night special speaker series. I shadowed and observed general dentistry with Dr. Sussi Yamaguchi, Dr. Keeny, and Dr. Morelo; orthodontics with Dr. Melanie Parker; periodontics with Dr. Factor and Dr. Ladando; pediatric dentistry with Dr. Pokola; and oral and maxillofacial surgery with Dr. Smith and Dr. Hammond. I even had the chance to observe orthognathic surgery in the O.R. for a day under Dr. Joel Berger.

Through these experiences I have learned better patient management skills, when a case should be referred, and new dental techniques and technology. By observing many different kinds of dental procedures, I have seen how the field of dentistry is able to help so many people in various situations.

I am grateful for the experiences that Dr. Silverstein and the UCSD Student-Run Free Dental Clinics have provided me. My externship experience was unique and very special to me because not only have I learned so much from my mentors and doctors in the community, but also because I had the rewarding experience of giving back.

Congressman Bob Filner and Congresswoman Susan Davis

Continued from page 1

veteran affairs are his topics of interest. Congressman Filner's experience on the San Diego school board along with his involvement with the San Diego City Council were what started his interest and career in politics.

Congressman Filner represents California's 51st district; an area notorious for its ethnic diversity. Congressman Filner's attention to the lower income demographic parallels the UCSD Student-Run Free Dental Clinic's mission of providing comprehensive care to the underserved.

The students who attended despite upcoming final exams had the unique opportunity to speak with Congressman Filner at the reception following his presentation. One student, John Chan noted, "It was very kind of the Congressman to come out the night before the California Primary election and speak to our group".

Congresswoman Susan Davis

By Diana Lin



Congresswoman Susan Davis presents pre-dental student, Jenna Lau, with a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition.

On October 1, 2008, Congresswoman Susan Davis came to honor those that were on the USNS Mercy with Certificates of Special Congressional Recognition. Davis commended each of the students individually for volunteering their time by personally presenting them their certificates.

Congresswoman Davis represents the 53rd district of California. She told her story about how she came to have a career in politics. Davis serves on the House Armed Services Committee where she is the Chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Military Personnel. The issues she focuses on are defense, education, election reform, the environment, health care, and veterans affairs. Veteran affairs is an issue that she holds close to her heart because of the large veteran population in San Diego and also because her father served as a medic in World War II. She expressed the opinion that America was ready for a change and that change would be a good thing.



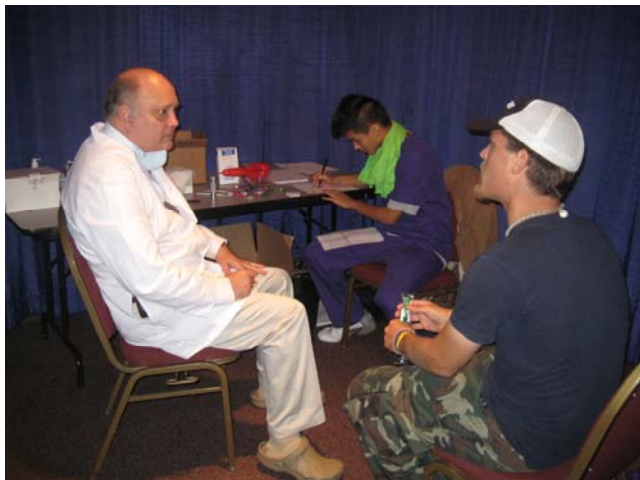
Congresswoman Susan Davis with Dr. Irvin Silverstein, volunteer dentists, and Naval officers.

Project Homeless Connect

By Andrew Tung Nguyen

It was an honor to work with the oral health providers from San Diego Dental Society. The first thing I noticed was that there were literally a thousand people in line waiting outside the doors to enter the Golden Hall in downtown San Diego. I was taken a back by how many people came.

There were three dental rooms where each dentist provided dental screenings to determine the date of their last dental visit, severity of dental caries, gingivitis, plaque, etc. Our role as student volunteers was to greet patients, take down their names, birthdates, last dental visit, and to record all procedures that the dentist felt were required for each person.



Kevin To assists a San Diego Dental Society dentist with screenings.

Each dentist screened approximately 50 patients each for a total of almost 150. Although no procedures were performed on site, they were referred to three clinics. These clinics will be receiving a grant in January from the state and local government, and private donations. Last year they received almost \$30,000, which is enough to care for 20-30 patients. Unfortunately, a lot of the patients we saw today were in need of immediate attention and it was a very humbling and sad experience to see the many people of different ages who have dental problems as well as other health and mental problems.

The clinic patients were referred to provide free dental care on a couple of conditions: they had to have no dental insurance and had to commit to being drug free for three months. There are likely other requirements for these patients to get care. It is sad because not everyone who received a screening will be able to receive dental care. This experience was truly an eye opener to the reality of the lack of access to dental care.



Tu Nguyen assists another San Diego Dental Society dentist with screenings

Collegewear Fundraising

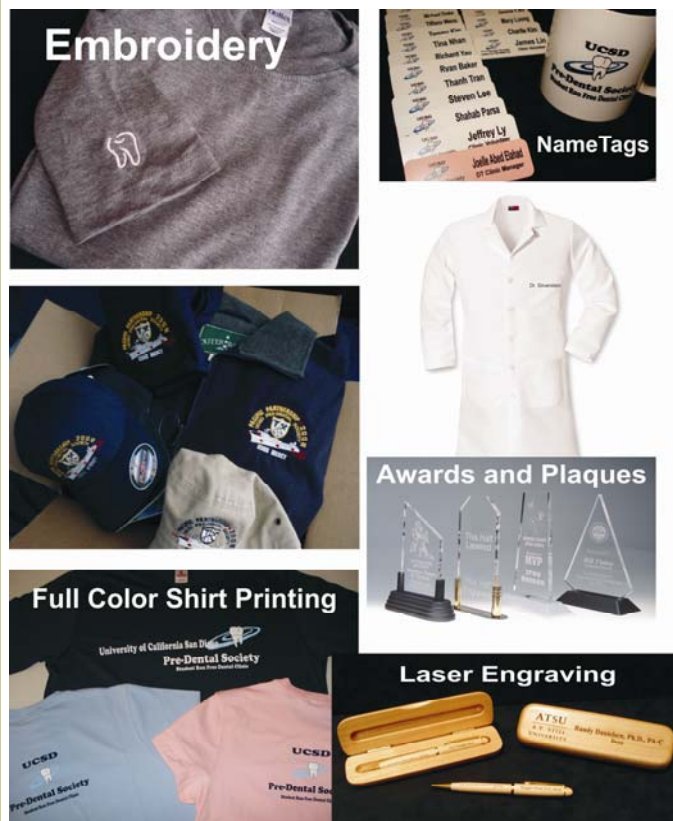
by Natalie Nguyen

In an effort to keep the free dental clinics operating and serving the underprivileged communities in San Diego County, the UCSD Pre-Dental Society has recently teamed up with COLLEGEWEAR, a company founded by one of our very own members, Jaysond Miclat. COLLEGEWEAR specializes in customizing items such as pens, awards, plaques, apparel, and much more. With Jaysond's idea of creating club shirts, scrubs, and nametags that our members can buy to wear while they volunteer in clinic, the UCSD Pre-Dental Society has easily raised over \$1500.

Not only has Jaysond contributed to the underprivileged by volunteering in clinics and acting as a liaison for the County of San Diego's Dental Health Initiative-Share the Care, but he has also found a way to give back to the very organization that gave him the opportunity for an enriching experience in the field of dentistry. Jaysond is currently helping fundraise for a Sealant Clinic that the Pre-Dental Society hopes to hold in the future and is also working with the medical side of UCSD's Free Clinic Project.

COLLEGEWEAR products are available for interested dental schools and dentists with proceeds going to the UCSD Student-Run Free Dental Clinics.

In the future, Jaysond "hopes to expand this out to other schools that have the same needs so that together we could help the underserved communities as well as provide other students with as many opportunities as [he] has had with UCSD's Pre-Dental Society".



Product samples above. If you are interested in ordering personalized items please contact Jaysond Miclat at jaysond@collegewear.us or (619) 339-7533.

For more information visit www.college-wear.com.



Andrew Seon Choi and Mina Gharavi teaching 1st grade children about nutrition at a Dental Health Ambassadors event.



Esther Rhee and Keyan Poustinchian answering questions about oral health at a Dental Health Ambassadors event.



Abraham Tang applying fluoride varnish to a child at the Share the Care Sealant and Varnish Clinic event.



Left to Right: Charles Tai, Sheetal Ray, Alex Nguyen, Mina Gharavi, Cuong Nguyen, Kristen Watanabe, and Dr. Glen Hom after a night's work at Downtown Clinic.



Left to Right: Diana Lin, Josh Pegel, Esther Rhee, Jenna Lau, and Sara Coutts serving food to the ship's crew on the USS Mercy - Summer of 2008.



Dr. Silverstein, UCSD pre-dental students, and other volunteers sent through our organization that are currently on the USS Comfort mission going to South America.

UCSD Pre-Dental Society Picture Page

Vietnam and Timor Leste - Mercy Mission



John Chan assisting a Vietnamese dentist from the East Meets West Foundation in Nha Trang, Vietnam.

Continued from page 1

by Lilley Gharavi

After visiting the Philippines the USNS Mercy visited Vietnam. While the Mercy was anchored off the coast, its personnel were able to provide medical and dental care and engineering repairs at onshore sites throughout Nha Trang. Onshore, our students had the pleasure of working with the East Meets West Foundation (EMWF), which is the only organization in Vietnam that provides free dental care to the locals. At the EMWF sites, students had the opportunity to assist Vietnamese, U.S. Military, and non-governmental dentists in providing dental treatment as well as a chance to teach patients about proper toothbrush techniques, apply fluoride varnish, and help with sterilization. For many patients, their experience with the Mercy personnel and the East Meets West Foundation was their first time receiving dental care.



Lilley Gharavi assisting a dentist from the East Meets West Foundation

work and had the opportunity to observe Operation Smile, another non-governmental organization, provide cleft lip and palate surgeries on Vietnamese patients aboard the Mercy Ship.

Besides assisting with dental procedures both aboard the Mercy Ship and at onshore sites, some of the UCSD PDS students served as translators and worked around the clock. They were truly an asset in the medical and dental departments as well as a vital component of the success of the mission in Vietnam.

It was an honor and privilege for the UCSD PDS to be part of this humanitarian mission. This was a once in a lifetime experience we will carry with us throughout our professional career.



Dr. Sussi Yamaguchi and Alex Nguyen with children of Viqueque village in Timor Leste..

by Dr. Sussi Yamaguchi

Timor Leste (East Timor)- "Iha nebe ular?" meaning "where does it hurt?" in Tetum was a phrase used daily in Timor Leste. Especially in dental. This was the site of the third mission for the crew on board the USNS Mercy. For many of us, Timor was the site with the most firsts- wearing permethrin sprayed military coveralls, riding a helicopter, and painting and shoveling gravel to help renovate a community center.

Unlike in Vietnam, where our assistance was localized in one area, outreach in Timor extended all across the country. The helicopter crew were kept busy transporting people to and from different locations.

I was part of a six day overnight flyaway trip to Viqueque, a remote village over the mountains and southeast of Dili. The 24 crew members consisted of MDs, dentists, pharmacists, optometrists and assistants. With the protection of the Australian International Stabilization Forces, we set up shop in a school.

To our surprise, the line for dental was sparse. We soon discovered why most people had heavily reddish-brown stained teeth, they chewed betel nut. But unlike in Vietnam, many people did not have cavities. One thing is for sure- if you visit Timor you are guaranteed to see kids playing soccer, people with dark, stained teeth, and roosters cock-a-doodle-dooing all throughout the wee hours of the mornings.



Dr. Sussi Yamaguchi with Alex Nguyen and patient.

Continued on page 8

Papua New Guinea and Micronesia - Mercy Mission



Patients line up in Papua New Guinea.



Micronesia - The Chuuk dental team Left to Right: Jenna Lau, Dr. Richard Kolanda (U.S. Public Health), Kelly Lucas (U.S.P.H.), Dr. Hutto (U.S. Navy), Alex Nguyen, Dr. Brent Winnett (Canadian Navy), and Josh Pegel after a long day of work.

Continued from page 7

by Thien-Kim (Tiki) Le

The USNS Mercy hospital ship berthed at Port Moresby harbor in Papua New Guinea to provide care for the local population. On this leg of the mission, 17 students from the UCSD PDS served as dental assistants on board the ship and worked with military personnel from various US armed forces and other participating partner nations to provide dental care in Port Moresby. Two dentists, Drs. Gary Seiden and William Jungman, also came aboard to lend their hands to the mission.

From the first glance of Port Moresby, where citizens wandered in underdeveloped and unregulated streets, visitors could easily be misled to perceive a sense of lost hope for the future in this city with the sight of lawlessness and citizens carrying machetes. With the highest prevalence of HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections, and tuberculosis in the Asia-Pacific region along with its high crime rate, Port Moresby, the capital city of Papua New Guinea was ranked the worst city in the world in 2004 by the Economist Intelligence Unit. This was informed to an audience of military personnel and non-governmental organizations onboard the USNS Mercy during the naval briefing. But the image of hundreds of people lining up at makeshift clinics seeking medical attention conveys a different message, one of a desire to seek a better healthcare and a better future.

Along with a lack of health awareness, many Papua New Guineans have severe periodontal disease resulting from years of chewing betel nuts. The chewing of betel nuts is a large part of their culture and is greatly enjoyed in combination with lime from ground coral shells and mustard sticks. Unfortunately, the betel nut contains reddish orange pigment that stains and discolors teeth. Most of these islanders' teeth have been blackened with cement-like coatings and gum recessed to the near bottom of the root. But the team of dentists, hygienist, and assistants worked hard to provide the highest possible quality of care to these patients.

In 14 days, 3,175 patients were seen for dental treatment. Eight different sites were set up onshore to provide immediate care, while patients who needed more extensive treatment were brought onboard the floating hospital ship. People were often intrigued by basic things that we take for granted, such as the use of a toothbrush. It is amazing to think how such basic education can make a difference. "I am glad to have been part of the mission in Papua New Guinea. The people were very hospitable and extremely grateful for our help, and it was a rewarding experience," said Sara Coutts, one of the students on board looking back on her experience.

by Jenna Lau

After almost three months traveling on the Pacific Ocean, the USNS Mercy concluded her Pacific Partnership 2008 at the Chuuk Islands of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). Each day for ten days the medical, veterinarian, and engineering civic action program teams traveled to different islands by smaller boats called bandaid boats. A total of 17 UCSD Pre-Dental Society students were on this mission, along with a few UCSD Pre-Pharmacy students and UCSD Medical School students.

One PDS member, Sammy Baho, had the opportunity to join the fly-away team that traveled to different states of FSM. This team flew on a C-40 aircraft from Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, to their first destination, the island of Pohnpei, FSM. After spending six days in Pohnpei, the crew flew on a C-130 aircraft to the island of Yap for six more days there. Over the entire course of the mission, they treated over 2,400 patients. Of his first-time experience on a fly-away mission, Sammy describes, "This fly away was different than the other missions from the ship because we had more time to interact with everyone and we had liberty in the afternoons so we could explore the town. Unlike in the other countries we were in, we needed no security there since all the places were very safe."



Chuukese boy happily waiting for UCSD PDS student, Martin Weinstein to paint fluoride varnish on his teeth for the prevention of cavities.

During the entire 10-day mission in Chuuk state, the UCSD PDS students assisted over 3000 extractions. They also utilized their time wisely; some observed surgeries in the operation rooms, while others volunteered at the food services.

While hard at work, there were also times when people went off the ship to play soccer and volleyball. The Navy band joined the group and played music while the local Chuukese gathered around and listened. Other recreational events such as bingo nights, poker tournaments, and ice-cream socials added to the experience. With all the effort the PDS students put into this last mission and the previous ones, they have built a strong rapport with the US Navy. On the final day of the mission, a closing ceremony on the flight deck of the Mercy ship, marked the successful conclusion of the Pacific Partnership 2008 humanitarian mission.

Continued on page 9

Mercy Liberty Stops

Continued from page 8

Introduction by Diana Lin

The Mercy ship also made liberty stops in between working countries. During the humanitarian mission it stopped in Singapore, Australia, Guam, and Hawaii. Our students were able to learn about different cultures, eat different types of foods, and explore parts of the world they may not have otherwise. Liberty stops provided much needed time for everyone on the Mercy ship to relax after all of their hard work. Please read as Alan Wong shares his experiences in Singapore.

Singapore by Alan Wong

After a great mission in Vietnam and before we gave it our all in Timor Leste, we stopped in Singapore, a country that is only half of the size of Los Angeles. A group of us traversed through the parts of Little India, toured the marketplaces of Bugis Street, and indulged in the nightlife that is, as their tourism slogan says, "Uniquely Singapore".



UCSD Students John Chan, Brian Huh, Jessica Nguyen, Akta Amin, and Hope Hanford enjoy ethnic foods in Singapore.

Singapore, a true ethnic melting pot in Southeast Asia, is where Asian and Western culture are fused with one another. We had no trouble getting to where we needed to go since English is the primary language. In Little India we had traditional Indian cuisine at the Gandhi restaurant, sans plates and utensils! A little perplexed about using my hands to scoop up food, I quickly got over it as soon as I dug my fingers into their tandori chicken, marinated spinach, and spicy curry.

Some of us went to Sentosa Island for some fun on the beach while others decided to head to Bugis Street to bargain hunt. The marketplace was laden with trendy fashion boutiques. That evening we had the chance to see what the nightlife was like near Clarke Quay, home of the city-state's wharf and beautiful skyline.

Our group of students got together one last time to commemorate the great summer adventures we had shared together on board the USNS Mercy on our last night in Singapore. While some students left the mission in Singapore, some stayed on board, and a new group joined the mission. Though our wallets felt a little empty, our spirits were high and our minds full of optimism. With our new group in tow we got aboard that classic looking hospital ship I grew to adore, eager to start moving again and do as much as we could for the people of Timor Leste.

Events Calendar for Spring 2009

Saturday, April 25th

Free Clinic Benefit Dinner

UCSD Price Center

Contact Kevin Lor for tickets: klor88@gmail.com

Friday and Saturday, May 1st - May 2nd

Thousand Smiles

Ensenada, Mexico

Thursday - Sunday, May 14th - 17th

California Dental Association Convention Anaheim

Anaheim, California

Contact Diana Lin for information: dianagrachelin@gmail.com

April 4th - July 31st

USS Comfort Humanitarian Mission

Haiti, Dominican Republic, Antigua, Columbia, Panama, El Salvador, Nicaragua

June 1st - September 25th

USNS Debuque Humanitarian Mission

Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Samoa

June 6th

Graduation Party

Dr. Silverstein's House

Thursday - Sunday, October 1st - October 4th

American Dental Association Convention Hawaii

Hawaii Convention Center, Honolulu

Every Thursday Night

6:00pm - 9:30pm

Special Speakers Series

Organizational Meeting for Clinics beforehand

UCSD School of Pharmacy, PSB Education Room 2 and 3

For a complete, up to date schedule of events:

<http://fdc-pds.ucsd.edu/calendar.php>

**Congratulations Dr. Irvin Silverstein!
Winner of the ADA Golden Apple Award**



**Congratulations Dr. Irvin Silverstein!
Winner of the Humanitarian of the Year Award!**



**Congratulations UCSD Student-Run Free Clinic Project!
Winner of the San Diego County Project of the Year Award!**



If you would like to get involved, please contact:

Student Director, Abel Monzon, at abmonzon@ucsd.edu or

Director, Dr. Irvin Silverstein at dsilverstein22@cox.net

For more information visit our new website at <http://fdc-pds.ucsd.edu>

Special Thanks to the Writers in this edition!!

Questions or Comments? Contact the Newsletter Coordinator and Editor, Diana Lin, at dianagrachelin@gmail.com