

# NonprofitProfile

AN INSIDE LOOK AT THE ACTIVITIES AND BENEFICIARIES OF LOCAL NONPROFITS

## VOLUNTEERS WITH THIS INTERNATIONAL DENTAL NONPROFIT SAVE THE WORLD ONE SMILE AT A TIME

### GLOBAL DENTAL RELIEF



THE ESSENTIALS

**MISSION:** TO ENGAGE DIVERSE GROUPS OF DENTAL PROFESSIONALS AND NON-DENTAL VOLUNTEERS TO BRING FREE DENTAL CARE TO CHILDREN IN NEED THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

**MAIN PROGRAMS:** SIXTEEN OPTIONS IN FIVE COUNTRIES TO VOLUNTEER IN A SIX-DAY CLINIC PROVIDING PREVENTIVE CARE AND ORAL HEALTH EDUCATION TO IMPOVERISHED CHILDREN, COMBINED WITH OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPLORE LOCAL CULTURE, FORGE INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIPS AND PARTICIPATE IN GUIDED TRAVEL IN CAMBODIA, GUATEMALA, INDIA, KENYA OR NEPAL.

**CONTACT INFO:** VISIT THE GLOBAL DENTAL RELIEF WEBSITE AT WWW.GLOBALDENTALRELIEF.ORG, EMAIL THE ORGANIZATION AT INFO@GLOBALDENTALRELIEF, OR CALL 303-858-8857.

**HOW YOU CAN HELP:** SIGN UP TO VOLUNTEER, SPONSOR A CHILD, SCHOOL OR CLINIC, DONATE SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT, LEND A HAND OR OFFER EXPERTISE IN GDR'S DENVER OFFICE.

**UPCOMING EVENTS:** THE ANNUAL GATHERING OF FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS IN DENVER WILL TAKE PLACE IN FALL 2015. WATCH THE WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION.

**MAKING A DIFFERENCE** might be as simple as writing a check or volunteering for an evening at a local fundraising event. We've all been there; taking the easy road. Instead, how about globetrotting halfway around the world to a developing country to hold a frightened child's hand during their very first dental exam? That's just one of the many things volunteers in the Global Dental Relief (GDR) association do while taking part in a massive educational initiative. Together, they provide preventive dental care and oral hygiene education to thousands of deprived children around the world.

Denver-based strategic planning associate Kerri Shwayder Greenberg can't say enough about the remarkable kinds of people this type of experience attracts; a fearless new breed—advocates of 'voluntourism.' Approximately half of them are active or retired dental professionals. The rest—a wide range of altruistic, compassionate and adventure-minded individuals willing to cover their own travel expenses to visit impoverished areas in remote places. Once there, housing and meals are provided, as well as training. Destinations include Nepal, India, Guatemala, Vietnam, Kenya and Cambodia. "Global Dental Relief provides an opportunity to give back while exploring the world in a safe environment," said Greenberg. "It's a great situation for individuals who prefer to travel with others."

Years ago, GDR co-founder Laurie Matthews took a sabbatical to Nepal

with dentist Andrew Holocek. His skills were badly needed and he went straight to work, helping where he could. The experience inspired them both to return and do more. "Why not bring our friends to help set up field clinics," thought Matthews. "For children who desperately need early care?"

Established in 2001 with co-founder, Kim Troggio, Global Dental Relief has grown from this simple idea to a full-blown nonprofit slowly changing the world. Where clinics are held, health-care is often substandard, if at all. Local parents, responsible adults, and teachers are introduced to the basics, and are provided with free toothbrushes. Clinics provide routine care like exams, cleaning, fillings and extractions. Since 2001, the group has seen a staggering 93,930 patients. Thousands of children are reached via schools, community agencies and orphanages—all host country local partners. To accomplish this huge task, some 1,553 volunteers to date have added their time and talent. The largest number consistently comes from the United States; the rest from all over the world including Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, or from within the host countries. Colorado boasts 196 volunteers currently, many who take family members and older children—it's a way to model the importance of giving throughout one's life. The only qualification required is the desire to serve and the drive to work hard.

STORY: CORINNE JOY BROWN



GLOBAL DENTAL RELIEF VOLUNTEERS COME FROM A VARIETY OF BACKGROUNDS, AND TRAVEL TO MANY DIFFERENT COUNTRIES. SOME OF THE VOLUNTEERS ON THESE PAGES INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING: **1** DENVER ATTORNEY MARK MATTHEWS IN INDIA **2** COLE FINEGAN WITH A CAMBODIAN PATIENT WHO RECEIVED FLOURIDE TREATMENT **3** MELANIE MELCHER, DAVID MANWARING AND KERRI GREENBERG IN A GUATEMALA CLINIC **4** A GLOBAL DENTAL RELIEF GROUP IN KENYA **5** MARK MATTHEWS IN GUATEMALA

costs to produce these clinics have to cover dental tools, gloves, and training materials, much of which is offset by the volunteers themselves. Other funding comes from sponsorships of children and clinics. A portion of the trip charge includes a "donation fee" for funding the program. Such experiences seem to be great equalizers; people from every walk of life come together to do whatever it takes.

If you have the time and the means and compassion to help others, think beyond the next beach resort, river cruise, or wilderness trek. Sign on for what might be the most satisfying experience of your life. You'll be glad you did.

*Freelance writer and novelist Corinne Joy Brown practically sanctifies those people who can stop what they're doing and get out of their comfort zone to help in meaningful ways. The introduction to Global Dental Relief just raised the bar on volunteerism, making her rethink the leisure time she has and how to spend it. Sometimes it's a real honor to tell a story.*

The effort, reminds Greenberg, is both emotionally and physically challenging, but worthwhile. Once on site, jobs exist for individuals of a wide array of ages, strength and skills.

Over half the volunteers are non-dental, handling day-to-day operations during the six-day clinics. Kenya, for example, some take a safari.

Organizational growth has been steady; in 2010 ten clinics were offered. Projections for 2015 include 16. The