

EARLY BIRD WEEKLY



NewbergRotaryEarlybirds.org

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Where Oh Where Is TotaChair?

Eric Bergquam, DMD, and Auggie Gonzales were our presenters last week for our club's TotaChair fund raiser.

Eric brought his daughter, Elsa, who set up his portable clinic in about five minutes while Dad got through his opening remarks.



Eric graduated high school here in Newberg, did biology at Linfield, then OHSU for his dental degree.

Back in Newberg he took over the practice that served him through his childhood, the one owned by John Fawcett on Deborah Rd.

My own story on Fawcett was him giving me a third world crown because I had a third world budget and no insurance. He crafted it in one sitting out of amalgam. It's the ugliest tooth in my mouth, it's been there for over 20 years, and it's staying right there. I'm weirdly proud of that crown. But I digress, again.

Eric started volunteering with Wide Open Humanitarian in 2012 and has been to Guatemala, India, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Nepal, Honduras, and Peru. He's even brought each of his kids on some of these trips.

Many of these locations had never before seen a dentist and this team's actions paved the way



for the return of future volunteer dental and medical professionals.

The Guatemala trip used a \$50,000 grant from Rotary Int'l and a \$125,000* equipment donation from A-dec.

The chair, conceived by Ken Austin Jr, was designed with the express purpose of replacing the existing 65 lb., padded upholstered, folding, metal framed chair with a 21 lb. wood and composite chair made with replacement components that could be easily sourced in the field.

The chair is ergonomically suited to keep the patient comfortable while optimizing the dentist's position for optimal work.

The Pac-1, as A-dec knows it, sells for \$2,800 and is the same as the *Rota-Dent that Newberg's Rotary Clubs sell. A-dec donates the first 100 every year. This fund raiser is like falling off a truck it's so easy and lucrative for the club. A-dec and the Austin Family don't even let us help assemble anymore. All we have to do is pay attention to orders.

Putting a TotaChair and a Rota-Dent unit in the field allows a dentist to provide similar care in the field as in the local office.

Eric looked out at the room and pointed aimlessly, "I was sitting where you are talking about Guatemala service. "Wow," I thought, I would like to get involved in that."

Eventually his thinking changed from wow I could to now I will.

Guatemala was chosen over Mexico by Leroy and Auggie because it had a greater need and the extra travel expense was manageable.

Marni Haley was heavily involved in the Guatemala project and insisted we "pull these people out of poverty. "

So two villages, every year for five years, they tried. It wasn't enough so five more. Then five more.

"Thinking of Marni's vision, have we accomplished it?"



Auggie has been volunteering since 2004 with 8 other volunteers. Most of the dental work then was extractions.

As the years progressed so did conditions. 2005 saw electricity and a first year water project.

His first trips meant masks to keep from breathing volcanic road dust. 12 years later many roads are paved. Though likely for wealthy government officials.

The bamboo walls of many homes are now cinder block

Auggie's son, Ben, was one of the first dental students on the trip and it later grew to six.

His wife, Maureen, works the trip as a physical therapist.

But you don't have to be skilled medial to volunteer. Attorney, salesman, software developer, homemaker, heck, even a structural engineer can be useful (providing he can follow instructions.) ;)

Auggie considers their Guatemala project a beta tester for TotaChair offering useful critique. For one, we now use composite seating surfaces instead of the prettier wood because it stands up better to repeated cleaning

The last 65 lb. metal chairs, durable as they were, are finally all phased out.

TotaChair.com

Rota-Dent.com

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