

Christian Dental Society News-Brief

January-February 2026



This verse from the Psalms beautifully captures the heart of a believer who longs for God's presence and guidance. When we say, "I wait for the Lord," we are recognizing that our lives are often filled with uncertainties and challenges that require patience and trust in God. Waiting on the Lord is not just about sitting idle. It is an active, and sometimes difficult, choice of placing our faith in God's timing rather than our own.

The second part of the verse speaks to our hope, which comes directly from God's Word. In the Bible, God's Word is described as a Lamp to our feet and a Light to our path (Psalm 119:105). It gives us direction, assurance, and comfort during times of waiting. When we find ourselves in a position of waiting, it's a reminder that we are not alone; God's promises to surround us. This scripture encourages us to reflect on how often we lean on our understanding, rather than waiting patiently, with hope, trusting in God's perfect plan for our lives.

The CDS held a well-attended **Zoom Board Meeting on February 14th** and wanted to report that all is well with the CDS. With Dr. David Moretz managing equipment, Dr. Randy Sanders assembling kits, and Tina coordinating the details, the CDS helps encourage and equip dental missions numerous times every month.

Student mission trips to Jamaica, Guatemala, and other sites that are dominated by CDS and CMDA mentors were discussed by the Board. The CDS would like to emphasize that we are not just treating patients and mentoring towards dental excellence yet, of equal or greater importance, is the idea of sharing God's love and mentoring towards spirituality as a Christian organization. With that in mind, the CDS leadership feels it is important, in Christian-based

clinics, that the majority of the mentors, students, and, especially the leaders, should be believers.

CDS members: Dr. T. Bob Davis, Drs. Bob and Diane Meyer, Dr. Jody Yarbrow, Dr. Brett Murphy, Dr. Jennina Townsend, and others will run a large team of over 50 dental and hygiene students with mentors and helpers to the San Raymundo, Guatemala dental clinic on March 21-28, 2026, to examine and treat around 900, mainly children. The plan is to expand the 21-chair clinic with an additional six chairs with an X-ray chair and independent hygiene chairs using portable, self-contained ultrasonics, suctions, and battery-operated polishers as there are eight, second-year hygiene students and 22 dental students.



Dr. Dylan Patrick's Pedro Team in the OR The 21-Chair Clinic in San Raymundo, Guatemala

Following the large student trip in March, Dr. Dylan Patrick will bring a large Pediatric team on April 11-18. Last year's team treated over 50 children in the operating room located on the first floor, along with many in the upstairs clinic. This year, Dr. Dylan has a need for hygienists and other helpers. If interested, please check out his website: www.sanraymundosmiles.com and contact Dr. Dylan.

This Guatemalan clinic is also being used numerous other times during the year. A CMDA-sponsored student trip will be led by Dr. Jon Spenn, our CDS President, from July 11-18.

Dr. Blake Westra, a CDS Board Member, took his whole office to the Guatemala clinic. The CDS wanted to share his story with you so that it might encourage you to do the same in Guatemala or in another place.



Dr. Blake Westra's Team in Guatemala in 2026

“Our trip was wonderful with the help of the CDS. I first got into dentistry on a mission trip in college. It wasn't something on my radar until a random spring break trip my junior year. Ever since then, I have loved missions. I was fortunate enough to go on various trips over the years and bring my wife along for a lot of the trips. Once I started in practice ownership and we started having kids, there was a long season of no trips. It was my goal to take a team of staff from our offices and start a regular trip. We were finally able to get everything scheduled for a trip to a clinic in Honduras. Roughly six weeks ahead of the trip, the host called and had to cancel the trip. I reached out to Jon Spann, and he was able to connect me with Joy in San Raymundo, Guatemala. We changed gears on short notice and made the trip still happen. This is now our second time going. We had half of our team with us from the first trip and half of our team were first timers.



The Guatemalan Clinic in San Raymundo



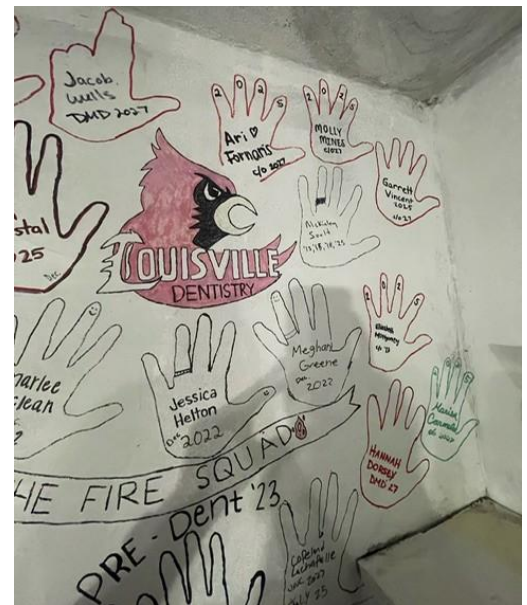
Clinic in a More Remote Area

We worked the first two days in the clinic all together. The third day, we split up the team and half stayed at the clinic while the other half went about an hour up the road to a more remote area. It was a wonderful experience all around. As is often the case, everyone talked about how much more the trip impacted them than what we were able to do clinically. Not every one of our staff on the trip was a Christian, but they got a dose of the Gospel in such a unique way on a daily basis.”



Hurricane Melissa Devastation at the Clinic Location and in Black River

In October 2025, the CDS sent out a call for **assistance regarding the Helping Hands Dental Clinic near Treasure Beach, Jamaica, for Hurricane Melissa Disaster Relief**. Dr. Jim Carney is ecstatic to report that the CDS “Rowe Community Hurricane Relief Fund” has collected \$81,539 for Jamaican Relief efforts for Hurricane Melissa. In July of 2024, Jamaica was hit with Hurricane Beryl and \$39,523 was collected. A sincere thank you to our CDS members for your kind and generous contributions. The two cargo containers Dr. Jim has sent to Jamaica are still tied up at the port, and electricity has not yet been restored to the clinic, but that has not stopped God’s project. This clinic hosted 12 teams of dental students in 2025 and had to cancel three trips due to the hurricane.



University of Louisville Team and the Helping Hands

Dr. Jim Carney’s brief report of their student trip shortly after Hurricane Melissa:

“I had the privilege of working with a group of kind-hearted, dedicated, courageous dental students from the University of Louisville last December 6-13. Just a mere six weeks before we arrived, Hurricane Melissa made a direct hit in Black River and devastated the whole

community. However, our clinic, the adjacent church and Pastor Rowe's home survived with the majority of damage being the surrounding trees and less sturdy structures nearby.

We had no power or water but managed using our clinic generator, which could supply power to the chairs, air compressor and over-head lights. The instrument sterilization had to be done after clinic hours due to heavy electric demand. Also, after hours, local folks were invited to sit in the church while the generator charged their cell phones. The Lord has many ways to gather His children back into His house!

Despite the recent devastation, these brave students felt called to go and be the living hands of Christ, showing His love in the midst of this disaster. There was a palpable joy among the local people when the recurring theme we witnessed was praising God and giving thanks that their lives were spared. We learned volumes about trusting in God's protection and provision even in the darkest times, and the joy we shared was life changing.

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. James 1:2-4.”



Jamaica Clinic with Dr. Jim Leaning Over, Supervising Patient Treatment

This year there are 13 student trips planned so far to Jamaica: February 28-March 7 with Midwestern, March 14-21 with New England, March 21-28 with Detroit Mercy, May 23-29 with North Carolina/Colorado, June 13-20 with British Columbia, June 28-July 4 with the Little Yellow Bird Foundation, July 11-18 with Virginia Commonwealth, July 18-25 with Manitoba, July 25-August 1 with Nebraska, August 1-8 with “Texas, and October 24-31 with Florida. Questions can be directed to Dr. Jim Carney at jamescarney1@sbcglobal.net.

The Board discussed the most exciting annual event that the CDS helps coordinate, the Great Commission Dental Conference (GCDC), which will be held on September 12-13 at the Bent Tree Fellowship Church near Dallas, Texas. This amazing, Christian dental mission

conference connects dentists, hygienists, students, and others from around the world who are interested in using dentistry as an evangelistic outreach.



Pastor Stan Key will return this year to provide Biblical Teaching at the GCDC

The GCDC will feature two days of Bible teaching, singing, fascinating plenary sessions, 32 break-out classes on various, spiritually-inspired, dental mission topics with eight hours of CE credit available, fellowship over delicious meals, and missional exhibit booths.



A room full of instruments and supplies donated and distributed for missions in 2025

Last year, CDS members and others brought \$150,000 of instruments, equipment, and supplies to donate, and it was all distributed to help missions around the world. If you have unused dental items that you would like to get back into circulation, please bring them to the next GCDC. The CDS will feature a donation room to redistribute dental items to missions.



Register for next year's GCDC at: www.cmda.org/gcdc

The CDS will hold its yearly, in-person Board Meeting at the GCDC Fairfield Inn and Suites hotel conference room at no cost to the CDS on Thursday evening at 5:30 p.m. prior to the GCDC conference, with food provided by the CDS. The Board Meeting will be Zoomed for those not able to attend in-person.

The Board discussed who should be the CDS' next Dr. Ron Lamb Missionary Award recipient to be awarded at a GCDC plenary session. Miss Tina Land was nominated for this year. She has been the CDS Executive Secretary for over 30 years and is an invaluable asset to the CDS. Tina has been the lone, dedicated, consistent leader and administrator for the CDS for decades, and she received a unanimous vote of approval. So often, awards are given to the up-front leader, and the crucial support administrators, and coordinators go unnoticed. Tina has provided that support for the CDS for decades, and the CDS is blessed to honor her this year.

The Board is thankful for Mrs. Robbi Jan, a dental therapist/hygienist who discontinued her dental practice and started www.brightsmilesdigital.org, a successful dental social media organization. She was led by God to the CDS booth in Washington DC and she said that the Lord brought her to the CDS so she could help us with social media like Instagram, Facebook, etc. She hired a dental videographer, Aidan (aidan@aquaproductions.com), a strong Christian from Denver, who came and interviewed several CDS members at the Rocky Mountain meeting in Denver, and came to Bob and Diane's house on Feb. 13 to make more videos to help Robbi and Brightsmilesdigital increase the CDS' social media presence. All this is at no cost to the CDS. We look forward to seeing how God assists Robbi in helping the CDS through social media.

Miss Tina Land, CDS Executive Secretary, has a new address and location of the CDS office: 2335 Terrace Drive, Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613. The CDS mailing address is PO Box 1005, Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613. The CDS e-mail and phone number remain the same.

The Board wants you to know that CDS exhibit booths at major dental meetings continue to encourage and assist many towards missions. Since our last meeting, CDS has exhibited at Mesa Hills Bible Church in Colorado Springs, the ADA meeting in Washington DC, the Fort Carson DENTAC, and the Rocky Mountain Meeting in Denver, CO. Upcoming exhibits include Chicago Midwinter, Hinman in Atlanta, San Antonio, Portland Oregon, Anaheim California, GMMA meeting in Anaheim, the Montana meeting, the GCDC meeting, and the Greater New York meeting, so far. The CDS thanks Dr. Tom Love, who has been funding the booth fees at several conferences that are now charging minimal fees to exhibit and has just donated \$4,000 to cover booth fees for 2016.

The Board thanked Dr. Jon Spenn for organizing our Zoom meeting, and Dr. Randy Sanders prayed for individuals as the meeting closed with prayer.



Student Team performing Evangelistic Song and Dance Students Praying

Global Mission Medical Alliance (GMMA) is a national, Christian medical/dental mission organization, currently working in 39 universities, that believes in **mentoring younger, pre-dental and pre-medical students with a heavy emphasis on spiritual mentorship and discipleship while exposing them to medical and dental service.** As such, GMMA, on student trips, has a little different philosophy than the CDS and CMDA, which focuses primarily on dental and hygiene students, mentoring them towards dentistry and spiritual service. Drs. Bob and Diane Meyer would like to share an example of GMMA's most physically challenging mission trip, which headed to remote jungle communities in Southeastern Honduras on January 2-10, 2026.



Long Boats on the Only “Roadways” Isolated Villages in the Rain Forest of Honduras

The 37 pre-dental and pre-medical students from seven different universities across the country, were mentored by Drs. Bob and Diane Meyer dentally, with medical mentors and helpers, doing a medical clinic. Dr. Paul Jo was an amazing, spiritual educator, motivator, and mentor, who discipled these young students for hours each day towards a Christ-centered missional life. The first day, after arriving, started at midnight when we traveled by bus and trucks, for the 12-hour drive to the end of the road. We ate lunch, and then the students presented well-rehearsed, Christian songs, dance, and skits to the local community. We then held a dental and medical clinic with half the students, while the other half held a Bible outreach program, which went on until dark. We then ate dinner (the team brought food and water), and then the team worshiped, prayed, and were discipled until about midnight. Everyone slept on the floor in individual, fold-out mosquito nets, with men on one side of the room and women on the other side. At about four a.m., rather than taking a bus, we were transported to a river, loaded on long boats which transported us for hours down the river, and then climbed up to an isolated village where we ate lunch and repeated the schedule from the previous day. We visited four other villages along the river, repeating the routine before driving back to our base.

This area has never had access to dentistry. With no electricity and the need for extractions to relieve pain being so great, we were only able to provide oral hygiene instruction and tooth extractions. We carried the CDS portable chair and stool in the box, which fit the surgical instruments. A second bag held the pressure pot sterilizer, heated with a small propane stove, and everything else we needed to do gauze extractions. In order to let the village know the number of patients the dentist could treat, we determined how long we had to work until darkness, calculating that we could treat four patients an hour. The need was so great that we had a local official distribute numbered notes, and this worked well. At times, only one family member got a ticket to see the dentist. Several of the pre-medical students who had a heart for missions, after seeing and understanding how easily and quickly a dentist could fix a toothache, considered changing their major to dentistry.



Dr. Bob mentoring Pre-dental and Pre-medical Students about the Lord and Dentistry

The trip was completed back at the missionary complex, where we had spent the first night, where there was a large Christian school and a hospital/dental clinic under construction. We interacted with the students, got a shower, held a prayer walk, prayed, sang, were discipled, and went to a local park with a beautiful waterfall to baptize several of the students.

This mission was challenging physically, yet was probably the most spiritual, uplifting, heartwarming, and encouraging mission trip we have ever been on. No one ever complained, and all were fully engaged throughout the trip. The quality of the Christian students, their preparation for the trip beforehand at their local school chapters, the discipleship emphasis, and mentorship towards Christian living and service were remarkable. GMMA has gone to Honduras at least 20 times, and this is only one type of trip they conduct. They currently train and serve at ten different mission sites each year. Visit www.gmma7.org for schedules or missions@gmma7.org for questions. GMMA has an amazing mission conference every other year and will be held this year on June 26-27 in Southern California: <https://conference.gmma.kingdompla.net>.



Students Performing for the School



Baptism of Students at the End of the Mission

The CDS is truly a non-profit organization and does not spend time or resources raising money to support itself. Tina, our executive secretary, is our only salaried individual, as all

other members pay their own way for administrative, missions, meetings, and other services. The CDS supports itself primarily from member dues, and we are so thankful for our generous members. This is just a final reminder to encourage and remind those who have not renewed their dues for 2026 to please do so either by going on to our website, www.christiandental.org or contacting Tina at 563-578-8887.

God's Blessings to all!

