



TECHNICIANS ON A MISSION

Dental technicians across the country are making a difference in peoples' lives.

87 Partials in 20 Hours: Annual Labor of Love for Connecticut Lab

KIM MOLINARO / MANAGING EDITOR

Every year since 2008, the two-day Connecticut Mission of Mercy (CTMOM) event, sponsored by the Connecticut Foundation for Dental Outreach (CFDO), has provided free dental care to underserved and uninsured state residents with the help of hundreds of volunteer dentists, hygienists and assistants—and just one dental laboratory: Murray Kaizer Dental Laboratory in Farmington, CT.

For the past five years, Owner Jerry Kaizer, CDT, and his 20-person staff have donated their time to fabricate hundreds of free partial dentures—a value of about \$36,000 each year in laboratory

labor and materials. Several manufacturers—including Dart Dental, Dentsply, Heraeus, Ivoclar Vivadent and Zahn—donate materials for Kaizer to use at the event.

The effort is a labor of love for Kaizer and his staff. “It’s really important to give back to people less fortunate than ourselves,” says Kaizer. His staff couldn’t agree more. The first year the lab participated in the event, Kaizer paid his technicians for their time—but when they got their paychecks they protested. “They said, ‘You’re giving back...why can’t we?’” he remembers. Since then, all Kaizer employees have worked the event for free—including a full Saturday.

“Most technicians never get to see their work in someone’s mouth or have the patient walk up to them and give them a hug and say ‘You’ve made my life worthwhile.’ That experience is priceless.”

~ Jerry Kaizer, CDT, Owner, Kaizer Dental Laboratory



Colleen Burns, CDT, and Chris Noga, CDT, poured up models that were then driven to Kaizer Dental Laboratory in Farmington, CT, for partial denture fabrication.



From l. to r.: Amie Zarrella, Dr. Gary Dubin, Emily Kaizer; Sarah Kaizer; Jerry Kaizer, CDT; Colleen Burns, CDT; Chris Noga, CDT; Dr. John Conroy; and Geri Kaizer.



The Prosthetics Department at the 2012 CTMOM event.

The Logistics

At this year's annual CTMOM event in March, a gym at a local University was transformed into a massive dental clinic and over 2,000 patients received free treatment, including cleanings, fillings, extractions and root canals. In total, 1,605 volunteers provided \$1.3 million in donated care; Kaizer fabricated 87 partials in about 20 hours.

Fabricating that many restorations in that timeframe is daunting to say the least. Here's how Kaizer does it: After an initial evaluation, patients in need of a partial are directed to the Prosthetics area for case planning and an impression. The patient is sent home—or to have teeth extracted if needed—and returns the following day for his restoration.

In the meantime, two Kaizer technicians work feverishly in a back room pouring up the models. After they set, the models are packaged in clear plastic bags with a laminated number that indicates the patient ID, then sent to the laboratory for fabrication at its Farmington, CT facility.

While the lab used to fabricate the restorations on site, it found it could control its fabrication process better at its own facility. However, the location of this year's CTMOM event—50 miles from the laboratory—presented a challenge. To solve it, the lab had two drivers—one at the event and one at the lab—meet halfway several times throughout the day to drop off and pick up cases. As 15 Kaizer technicians receive the models at the lab, they begin fabricating the cases and work late into the evening to have them all ready for insertion the next morning.

Since time is of the essence, once the case is at the lab, the staff uses digital photos and email to communicate any questions to Kaizer via his iPhone. Kaizer then finds the dentist who prepped the case, shows him the photo and advises the team back at the lab.

Then comes the best part: on Saturday morning, the staff returns to the event to watch patients receive their restorations. "It's a rare opportunity for my technicians to see the benefit of their skills firsthand, and to feel good about what they do," says Kaizer. "Most techni-

cians never get to see their work in someone's mouth or have the patient walk up to them and give them a hug and say 'You've made my life worthwhile'. That experience is priceless."

Plans for the 2013 CT MOM event are currently underway. To volunteer, contact Jerry Kaizer at 860-677-7700 or jerry@murraykaizer.com; Josephine Bicknell, CFDO, at 860-378-1800, ext. 211, or jbicknell@cfdo.org; or visit <http://cfdo.org/>. ■

Jerry Kaizer, CDT, (left) consults with a patient about repairing his existing partial while Dr. Larry Levy looks on.



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