



On a Mission

The year was 1997 when Edward Zebovitz, DDS, first learned about the crucial need for medical and dental care in developing regions of the world such as the Philippines, Caribbean, East Africa, and Bangladesh.

“A colleague of my father’s was doing mission trips, and I knew I had to get involved,” says the oral and maxillofacial surgeon with a practice based in Bowie. The non-profit organization Surgeons for Smiles was born.

Seventeen years later, Dr. Zebovitz and his team of surgeons, anesthesiologists, nurses, and support staff have completed their 34th mission trip. This time they went to Sorsogon, a province on the island of Luzon in the Philippines where genetic facial deformities like cleft lip and cleft palate are common. The team performed 50 cleft lip and palate surgeries on children in just five days.

“The conditions are horrible,” Dr. Zebovitz says of the places he travels. “People’s basic needs, like shelter and food, aren’t always met. It is very sad to see.” They rely on donations to fund the missions. Whatever is not donated, Dr. Zebovitz personally finances.

This spring, Dr. Zebovitz, who is married to OB-GYN Coryse Brathwaite, MD, and has four children ages 18, 20, 21, and 22, will go on another trip. This time, they will go to East Africa.

“I hope to one day retire to Surgeons for Smiles,” says Dr. Zebovitz, with a smile.

📌 Help spread the smiles. Learn more at SurgeonsforSmiles.org.

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Many AAMC physicians and staff do mission work. Read some of their stories at askAAMC.org/Living.